



January 2012

# Native American Women Perceptions In Pk-12 Administrative Positions In North Dakota Public Schools

Lanelia I. Decoteau

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.und.edu/theses>

---

## Recommended Citation

Decoteau, Lanelia I., "Native American Women Perceptions In Pk-12 Administrative Positions In North Dakota Public Schools" (2012). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1345.  
<https://commons.und.edu/theses/1345>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, and Senior Projects at UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [zeinebyousif@library.und.edu](mailto:zeinebyousif@library.und.edu).

NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN PERCEPTIONS IN PK-12 ADMINISTRATIVE  
POSITIONS IN NORTH DAKOTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

Lanelia Irene DeCoteau  
Bachelor of Science, Mary College, 1980  
Master of Science, Minot State College, 1995

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

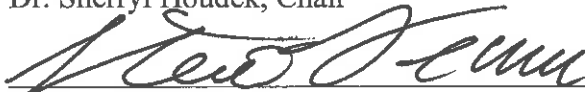
Doctor of Education

Grand Forks, North Dakota  
December  
2012

Copyright 2012 Lanelia Irene DeCoteau

This dissertation, submitted by Lanelia Irene DeCoteau, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

  
Dr. Sherryl Houdek, Chair


  
Dr. Steven LeMire

  
Dr. Pauline Stonehouse

  
Dr. Rilla Anderson

  
Dr. Barbara Combs

This dissertation is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all requirements of the Graduate School at the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.

  
Dr. Wayne Swisher  
Dean of the Graduate School

  
Date

Title Native American Women Perceptions in PK-12 Administrative Positions  
in North Dakota Public Schools

Department Educational Leadership

Degree Doctor of Education

In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate degree from the University of North Dakota, I agree that the library of this University shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor who supervised my dissertation work or, in her absence, by the chairperson of the department or the dean of the Graduate School. It is understood that any copying or publication or other use of this dissertation or part thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of North Dakota in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my dissertation.

Lanelia Irene DeCoteau  
November 15, 2012

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xi
CHAPTER	
I.    INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background of Researcher .....	6
Need for the Study .....	8
Purpose of the Study .....	10
Research Question .....	11
Delimitations.....	11
Assumptions.....	11
Definition of Terms and Acronyms .....	11
Organization of the Study .....	12
II.   LITERATURE REVIEW .....	14
Theoretical frame .....	14
Review of Native American History.....	16
Role of Native American Women in Leadership.....	23
Women and Leadership .....	24
Gender Differences in Leadership .....	24

	Influencing Factors for Native Women in Leadership .....	26
	Barriers of Women in Leadership Positions .....	28
	Chapter Summary .....	32
III.	METHODOLOGY .....	33
	Purpose of the Study .....	33
	Participants.....	34
	Survey Development.....	34
	Data Collection .....	35
	Data Analysis .....	36
	Chapter Summary .....	36
IV.	FINDINGS .....	38
	Introduction.....	38
	Section I – Résumé Comparison.....	38
	Educational Background.....	38
	Work Experience .....	39
	Awards .....	42
	Section II - Survey Responses .....	43
	Chapter Summary .....	52
V.	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	53
	Summary .....	53
	Relationship to Theoretical Framework.....	55
	Relationship to Literature .....	56

Conclusion .....	61
Recommendations for Native Women Entering Educational Leadership Positions .....	62
Limitations .....	63
Recommendations for Future Study .....	64
APPENDICES .....	65
A. Email Request for Survey Participation.....	66
B. Letter to Survey Participants.....	67
C. Survey Questions .....	69
D. IRB Approval.....	70
REFERENCES .....	71



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Influences for success .....	58
2. Barriers Native American women encounter.....	60

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Educational Background.....	39
2.	Initial Career Experiences.....	41
3.	Career Longevity .....	42
4.	Response to Question 1.....	44
5.	Response to Question 2.....	45
6.	Response to Question 3.....	45
7.	Response to Question 4.....	46
8.	Response to Question 5.....	47
9.	Response to Question 6.....	48
10.	Response to Question 7.....	48
11.	Response to Question 8.....	50
12.	Response to Question 9.....	50
13.	Response to Question 10.....	51

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to those people that provided me with the support and encouragement necessary for completion of this study.

To my dear friend and advisor Dr. Sherryl Houdek, who helped make this study and dissertation a reality. Without her encouragement and guidance, it would not have been completed. She kept her promise on helping me through this process. Thank you.

This dissertation is in memory of my parents, Jack and Alma Peterson. Although neither graduated high school, they encouraged all their children to continue with their education. To my sister Mary, my biggest advocate. You are missed.

To my children and grandchildren, thank you for being here for me and know that you too can accomplish what I have. To my husband, Mick, thank you for your support, understanding, encouragement, and love. Without you, this achievement could not have been possible. Know that I will love you always.

Last but not least, to Cohort V, your ideas and support were always welcome!  
Thank you for both.

## ABSTRACT

Historically Native American women have experienced barriers in their rise to Pk-12 educational leadership positions. There is limited research available on Native American women in educational leadership. Therefore, the purpose for this survey study was to discover what inspired current Pk-12 Native American women educational leaders to choose and accept these positions, common leadership attributes they share, and any barriers they may have encountered.

Currently in North Dakota, there are 42 licensed Native American administrators, 22 male and 20 female. Ten of the 20 females are employed as Native American superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant principals in North Dakota Pk-12 public schools. Presently .0010% of licensed female educational leaders in North Dakota are Native American.

A survey was used in the study to explore perceptions of 9 Native American female educational leaders. There were five major themes that emerged from the data: (a) Barriers-there were no substantial barriers identified, (b) Support-conventional support included family, husband, school district, parents, and college professors, (c) Leadership style-two were identified: participatory and collaborative, (d) Personal attributes-included visionary, perseverance, intuitiveness, and collaboration, and (e) Personal motivation characteristics were identified as hard worker, good listener, caring, compassionate, honesty, and organized.

The survey study identified an understanding of the perceptions on successful Native American women in Pk-12 educational leadership positions in North Dakota public schools.

(Native American Women, Native Women in Educational Leadership Positions)

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Women have historically experienced barriers in their rise to Pk-12 school educational leadership positions. Often times these barriers may be self-imposed and include: family responsibilities, inability to relocate for job advancement, lack of access to professional networks, and lack of mentorship (Derrington and Sharratt, 2009).

Women leadership barriers also indicate socialization and stereotyping. The traditional roles assigned to women often impede their growth opportunities (Chenoy, 2012). Native American women often face barriers due to the conflicts between their own values and those of the mainstream culture (Turner, 2007).

Recent research questions the absence of representation of women in school leadership positions (Fitzgerald, 2006). Although representation of women school leaders has increased in the past 20 years, women still do not fill administrative positions proportionally to men; however, women in the United States are represented more in classroom teaching positions than males (Shakeshift, 2007).

Preparation for administrative positions has been dominated by males teaching male-based approaches to administer school systems; it was presumed that women were particularly suited to teaching, not to manage and lead a school (Regan & Brooks, 1992). There are still beliefs about who can lead a school, and stereotypes and biases still exist. Many people think male when they think leader, but many successful women find these

attitudes only minor obstacles as they attempt to lead. They do not let stereotypes and biases become major roadblocks to their achievement (Smith, n.d.).

Becoming a Pk-12 school superintendent may be one of the most powerful and prestigious positions a man or woman can hold (Grogan, 2000). Women in leadership positions are subject to constraints regarding men's ways of knowing and leading and are thought to be in trouble with their challenges and practices (Fitzgerald, 2006). People believe that men can lead more effectively than women and frown upon women leaders. "Native women face a triple bind. First, they are Native in a predominantly white world. Second, they are women in systems that value patriarchal leadership. And third, they are also subject to the judgments of others: all males, white males, and white women" (Fitzgerald, 2006).

Although women prepare for advancement in educational leadership, they continue to be underrepresented as the chief education officer. They are overrepresented in teaching and underrepresented in administration (Grogan, 1999). It is assumed that for women to move up, it is essential they move along in a way that they could assume positions of leadership, accruing more and more power. It is believed that women in higher positions follow an orderly path of advancement (Kirschstein, 2004). Times have changed; instead of women following paths of advancement, they should be appointed to leadership positions, thus discovering that there are more goals they can attain (Kirschstein, 2004).

This underrepresentation of qualified women in leadership positions has created a gender gap. Society has determined that only males make good leaders; therefore, it denies access to women seeking leadership roles because they do not fit the norm (Growe

& Montgomery, 1999). Women are applauded as having the right combination of skills for leadership but often come in second to men in competitions to attain leadership positions (Eagly, 2007).

Women leaders who work in male dominated organizations may be perceived as weak, simply because of gender bias (Eagly, 2007). Women in leadership positions feel that this gender bias influences how others view them as leaders (Kawulich, 2009). Tears may be perceived as a weakness, and what is viewed in a male leader as taking charge, may be viewed in a female leader as being overbearing (Kawulich, 2009). Gender bias is a social categorization of a physical body that places a person into one classification or another, male or female (Christman & McClellan, 2008).

Leadership has historically been depicted primarily in masculine terms, and many theories of leadership have focused mainly on masculine qualities (Eagly, 2007). The traditional masculine and feminine traits are stereotyped in terms of leadership potential. Women in leadership positions are expected to demonstrate masculine traits such as decisiveness, authoritativeness and directness (Levitt, 2010) while also remaining feminine.

As research increases on women in leadership, the knowledge of Native American women and their involvement within their communities does as well (Fitzgerald, 2003). In traditional Native American cultures, women have always had a leadership presence, either in a formal or informal manner (Day, 2010). Although colonization has impacted Native communities, the inherent value of women persists and can be seen in the way in which Native American women lead (Day, 2010). While there is a great deal of diversity in the lifestyles among the different Native tribes, Native women have always had a rich



history of political involvement in their communities and have struggled to attain tribal sovereignty, control over native lands and resources, and cultural preservation (McCollum, 2005).

Native American women traditionally belonged to a culture that gave them respect wherein they possessed power, autonomy, and equality (Popick, 2006). Native societies in the past were not based on a hierarchical system, and there were few important divisions between men and women. The work of the two genders often differed, but neither gender dominated the other (Popick, 2006).

Native American women have regained prominence within their culture and their communities (Prindeville, 2004). During the time of cultural genocide, it was the Native American women who were responsible for preserving the values and culture as well as taking care of their families (Pember, 2008). The values Native American women hold and how they view leadership may be based upon their own ethnic culture and influences (Kawulich, 2009). Native American women are extensions of their tribal nation socially, emotionally, historically, and politically (Portman & Garrett, 2005). For many Native Americans, cultural identity is rooted in tribal membership, community, and heritage (Portman & Garrett, 2005). Native American women are more likely to organize around issues that impact children and issues regarding tribal rights. Many female elders find that their status as elders enhances the political participation and contributions to future generations (Langston, 2006).

Women often underestimate their leadership capacity, not because of humility but because of internalized oppression (Day, 2010). Preconception and the belief that women are less competitive, less productive, or less capable are serious impediments that affect

women leaders (Chenoy, 2012). The traditional roles assigned to women often impede their growth opportunities as they do not consider their skills and expertise as valuable (Chenoy, 2012). Studies have revealed that women leaders are devalued compared with men (Hoyt, 2013). While there is learning in higher education, how a person uses such learning in cultural settings must be considered carefully (Day, 2010). Native American women must forge their pathways, although confronted with roadblocks that may deter success. For example, their cultural differences present great challenges, particularly in the workplace (Turner, 2007).

There are barriers such as stereotyping, role perceptions, and socialization that may limit Native American women from becoming top leaders in education positions (Napier, 1995). Historically Native American women have exerted a significant amount of social and political influence within their tribes (Napier, 1995). Although less true today, it is important for Native and non-Native groups to understand that Native American women have been educated in predominately white educational institutions and have developed a unique insight to the operation of bureaucracies (Napier, 1995).

Assuming traditionally defined leadership roles run counter to women's development and their orientation toward relationship (Levitt, 2010). Traditional masculine and feminine traits are stereotyped in terms of leadership potential (Levitt, 2010). Women's traits of care and relational orientation may be inconsistent with the traditional concept of masculine leadership (Levitt, 2010).

Within some Native American groups, there has traditionally been more flexibility in male and female roles and behaviors, as well as more acceptance of power and success by women (James, 1994). Leadership from a Native American perspective, a

foundational value, is viewed as a shared vision and responsibility (Portman & Garrett, 2005). The unique social and cultural patterns of Native Americans are a resource that could help increase the vitality and adaptiveness of many organizations and institutions (James, 1994). Today's technology supports a team-based approach, and many Native American cultures tend to promote an orientation toward cooperation and group cohesiveness, a type of work structure that would be an advantage for any organization (James, 1994).

Limited research on Native American women in educational leadership positions exists. Therefore, this study was completed to explore what inspires Native American women to choose and accept Pk-12 leadership positions, what attributes they share, and if there are any barriers they encounter as Native American women in educational leadership positions.

### **Background of Researcher**

The researcher is a female-enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe and has 31 years of experience in education. She has worked exclusively with Native American children in Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, private schools, and tribally-contracted public schools.

The researcher's leadership skills were developed at a very young age, since she was considered the most responsible of her eight siblings. She enjoyed school and liked helping with younger children, so one year she donated my time at the local hospital thinking she might like to be a nurse. The next year the researcher donated her time after school to her local head start program where she met a teacher who enjoyed her job and

students. Because of that encounter, the researcher knew that she was meant to be a teacher. Her career decision has never waived.

The researcher's career began as a first grade teacher working with Native American students for 11 years. She then began working with gifted and talented Native American students in a school located within the boundaries of a reservation. She was encouraged to apply for an administrative assignment as an assistant principal at a large Bureau of Indian Education school and remained in that position for four years. The researcher then moved into a principalship at a predominately Native American public school located 14 miles from the reservation. She remained in this position for five years becoming the first female Native American superintendent of the same school for an additional six years. Currently she is the superintendent of a BIE school district which is also a tribally-contracted public school.

The researcher encountered many challenges when she chose to accept her first educational leadership position. She had friends, who she supervised, that expected preferential treatment. Some staff believed that she was not experienced enough, and others believed the position was too stressful for a woman. When the researcher accepted her first principal position, it was understood that she should clean the place up and get control of the students and staff. She stayed at that school for five years as principal and six years as superintendent. This school has since been recognized by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction as one that has made tremendous gains in school improvement through its Title I program. The researcher has been in school administration for 18 years and although she misses the classroom, she knows she is helping more students now.

Professionally and personally her biggest support group has been her family. The researcher's parents did not have the opportunity to complete high school so her going to school was never questioned. Her husband and children are patient and supportive with her endeavors. She has a few close friends that are supportive as well. Female networks were not available for her to utilize when she began her leadership career and are still limited. The researcher did know a male superintendent in a nearby school and was comfortable calling him for questions when she needed help.

Her biggest challenge was going to school while caring for a husband and family. Her husband would care for their children while she attended evening classes to further her education. Money was another challenge; they were young when she was in school and he was working. The researcher and her husband had two children, and they struggled to make ends meet each month. With her husband's help, she was able to attain her goals in education.

The researcher is a Native American woman in an educational leadership position and has excluded herself from the study. However, she has chosen to provide detailed information about herself to recognize the possibility that bias may exist in this study.

### **Need for the Study**

When people think of a typical educational leader, often they assume the leader is male, as there is a lack of female educational leaders within our society (Fitzgerald, 2003). Traditionally males dominate administrative leadership positions overall, while females outnumber males in teaching (Tallerico & Blount, 2004). Men traditionally spend five years in the classroom in conjunction with coaching or some type of athletic activity before pursuing an administrative position outside of the classroom (Glass,

2000). This type of pattern has established men as leaders within a school and women as leaders of curriculum instruction. There is limited literature addressing the issue of why women do not advance in educational leadership positions at a faster pace.

Native women generally tend to achieve higher education levels than Native men, which would give them greater access to most types of higher level positions. However, rural unemployment is greater because there are simply fewer opportunities in rural areas. Most large employers are in metropolitan areas (James, 1994). Women have reported that caregiving roles conflict with the restraints imposed by extreme time demands and work pressure associated with their leadership positions (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006). This conflict continues to be a source of forced choice between family responsibilities and career advancement (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006). Often Native American women must be willing to relocate to gain the experience needed to reach their professional goals (Melendez, 2008), and some are denied promotions because they are valuable where they are (Melendez, 2008).

Blackmore (as cited in Fitzgerald, 2003) has identified ways in which power dynamics are maintained within schools. These dynamics, such as masculinity and leadership, have created assumptions regarding the normative role and position of the male leader. Inference qualities, such as nurturing, caring, and feminine, describe women leaders; these qualities are labeled as inferior to normal leadership traits. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the pedagogy of leadership is in the domain of men, and the pedagogy of teaching is essentially the responsibility of women.

Although women leaders as a group might experience a sense of belonging to a minority group, indigenous women are a minority group within a minority setting

(Fitzgerald, 2006). Indigenous women face a double dilemma as women in hierarchies dominated by Caucasian males and as women in marginal positions. The assumption is created that minority school systems are the appropriate places for minority administrators (Glass, 2000). Consequently, women from minority groups are underrepresented both in research and leadership positions.

In a study conducted by a professional job listing service regarding barriers that kept women from securing the superintendency in 1993 and again in 2007, the findings indicated that the importance of individual barriers changed even though surrounding perceived barriers remained the same (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009). Self-imposed barriers ranked as one of the two most difficult barriers. Self-imposed barriers are those which cause a person to avoid the superintendency due to family responsibilities, such as relocation (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009).

The need for more licensed Native American females in educational leadership positions is vividly shown by the lack of licensed Native American female administrators in North Dakota. Of the 291 licensed North Dakotan female educational leaders, there are 20 Native American women who currently hold an administrative license and position in North Dakota. Native women leaders face the aforementioned double dilemma as they struggle to survive in two worlds: Native and white (Fitzgerald, 2003).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this survey study is to identify perceptions about Native American women in current Pk-12 educational leadership positions.

There are more than 10, 971 licensed teachers, counselors, and administrators in the educational field in North Dakota. There are 42 Native American administrators, 22

male and 20 female. Of those 20, there are nine female Native American superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant principals in Pk-12 public schools in North Dakota (Bucholz, 2011). For this study, 10 female Native American educational leaders in North Dakota were identified, including the study researcher, by DPI public documents. The researcher explored the 7 Native American women's perceptions by emailing survey questions and a review of their current résumés. The researcher requested survey response data from 9 of the 10 female Native American educational leaders in North Dakota (ND) as the researcher is exempt from her own study. The researcher is the 10<sup>th</sup> female ND Native American educational leader.

### **Research Question**

What are the similarities, differences, and perceptions among current Pk-12 Native American women educational leaders?

### **Delimitations**

This study examines only Native American women in educational leadership positions in Pk-12 public schools in North Dakota, limiting the participants to nine.

### **Assumptions**

1. The participants answered honestly.
2. Department of Public Instruction data is accurate on identifying Native American women in educational leadership positions in North Dakota.

### **Definition of Terms and Acronyms**

The following definitions and acronyms will aid the reader in the narrative of the study.

*BIA*: Bureau of Indian Affairs



*DPI*: Department of Public Instruction in the state of North Dakota

*Educational Leadership Positions*: superintendent, assistant superintendent, principals, and assistant principals

*Inspirational Leadership*: employees are driven by values and principles to do the right thing

*Native American*: reference to American Indian/Alaska Natives

*Participatory Leadership*: based on respect and engagement in a democratic manner; creates shared responsibility for action

*Principal*: educational leader of a Pk-12 school

*Situational Leadership*: not following a specific style of leadership; leadership is task-relevant

*Superintendent*: the governing official of a school district

*Team-Based Leadership*: a synthesis of emergent and (American Indian) traditional values, traits, and behaviors of the community

## **Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I provides the reader with an introduction to the study, background of researcher, purpose of the study, need for the study, research questions, delimitations of the study, and definition of terms and acronymns in the study.

Chapter II presents a literature review including (a) theoretical frame, (b) review of Native American history, (c) Native American Women in Educational leadership, (d) leadership in PK-12 schools, (e) gender differences in leadership, f) influencing factors in

leadership, (g) barriers in leadership for women, and (h) barriers in leadership for Native American women.

Chapter III presents the methodology used in the study. It includes (a) the purpose of the study, (b) a discussion about survey data, (c) data collection, (d) survey development, (e) data analysis, and (f) chapter summary.

Chapter IV presents data from the survey responses in narrative and table format. An examination of the Native American women educational leaders' résumés is included. Chapter IV begins with (a) an introduction, (b) a profile of each Native American women educational participant, (c) analysis and data, (d) the coding process, and (e) emergent themes from the data.

Chapter V presents (a) a summary, (b) conclusions and recommendations, (c) relationship of the findings to theoretical framework, (d) relationship to the literature, (e) recommendations for Native American leaders, and (f) recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature relating to women and leadership, Native American women and leadership, and their roles relevant to the research topic. This chapter also provides a historical overview of Native American people with references to early education of Native Americans.

#### **Theoretical Frame**

Research about Native American women and their career paths is almost nonexistent (Napier, 1995). Native American Indian education studies have produced little theories unique to Native American educational issues (Huffman, 2010). Much of the theories in Native American education appear disjointed, inconsistent, and too frequently not particularly useful (St. Germaine, 1995). This study utilized a survey method for research to identify similarities and differences between 9 identified Native American women educational leaders.

The social role theory described by Alice Eagly (2001) is often thought of as a framework for gender differences (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Each gender learns different skills and acquires disparate qualities through the socialization process (Moss, 2008). The concept of this theory is understanding gender differences and that male and female leaders have different leadership qualities. It suggests that most behavior differences between male and female are the result of cultural stereotypes and the roles that are taught to youth. The expectations of men and women's social behavior is

historical in that men will often assume duties outside of the home, and women assume responsibilities within the home (Moss, 2008). Some feminists fear that the perceptions of sex differences in leadership attributes can provide a rationale for excluding women from opportunities and especially from male-dominated leadership roles (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Social role theory is identified in support of the literature eliciting gender bias in educational leadership positions. As Eagly (2007) states:

Women on the one hand are lauded as having the right combination of skills for leadership, yielding superior leadership styles and outstanding effectiveness. On the other hand, there seems to be widespread recognition that women often come in second to men in competition to attain leadership positions. (p. 1)

Leadership had historically been depicted primarily in masculine terms and many theories of leadership have focused mainly on stereotypically masculine qualities (Eagly, 2007).

According to Growe & Montgomery (1999), literature has shown that society has determined that only males make good leaders; therefore, it denies access to women seeking leadership roles because they do not fit the norm (Growe & Montgomery, 1999). Women are more likely than men to lead in a style that is effective under contemporary conditions, and women have some advantages in typical leadership style but suffer some disadvantages from prejudicial evaluations of their competence as leaders, especially in masculine organizational contexts (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Despite doubts about women's competence as leaders, one might expect that highly competent leaders would be able to overcome such difficulties (Eagly & Carli, 2003).

## **Review of Native American History**

The following review of Native American education provides the reader with knowledge of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' attempts of deculturalization of Native Americans beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Many Native American people are cautious with white institutions due to the destruction of culture, language, and human lives inflicted on Native American populations (Pewewardy & Frey, 2004).

Historically, American Indians have endured phenomenal change despite efforts to assimilate them and terminate their nations (Reyhner, 1992). Efforts to educate Native Americans have focused on civilizing and assimilating them into the white society (Reyhner, 1994). Native people have been subjected to many different federal and state policies. The organization of education in particular has been frequently utilized to implement policy directives whether they are assimilation or self-determination (Huffman, 2010).

After the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), the United States sought to assimilate the Native population (Prindeville, 2004) by displacing many of the Native American tribes to reservations, which was considered an ethnic cleansing. Of the 400 plus treaties that were established between the tribes and government, 120 contained educational provisions to move Native Americans toward civilization (Reyhner, 1994). To deal with the Native Americans, the government established the Indian Bureau in 1849, since renamed the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) (Reyhner, 1994). The BIA is still housed within the Department of Interior (Reyhner, 1994). Reservations came from the result of land cessations by the Native Americans to the U.S. government. Reservations in early days were formed chiefly as a result of cessations of land; thus, a tribe, in ceding

land that was held by original occupancy, reserved from the cessations a specified and definite part thereof. Such part was held under the original right of occupancy, but with the consent of the government as stated in the treaty defining the boundaries, that portion of the ceded land was reserved or allotted to the Native Americans (Hodge, 1907). This placement of Native Americans onto reservations was the beginning of cultural genocide, and a new policy of assimilation was issued by the federal government to mainstream the Native Americans into the American culture. Through the use of schools, the government hoped that American Indians could be stripped of their native languages and cultures and be forced to adopt the white man's religion and way of life (St. Charles, 1995).

Through the establishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and signed treaties between tribes and BIA, boarding schools were established for the Native American students with the belief that removal of the Native children from their parents would help assimilate the children into the white society more rapidly. Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, the first boarding school off reservation land, was established in 1879 by U.S. Army Captain Richard Pratt. The goal was to assimilate Indian people into the melting pot of America by placing them in institutions where their traditional ways could be replaced by those sanctioned by the government. The off reservation boarding schools were designed to carry out cultural genocide. As quoted by Captain Richard Pratt, such schools were to "kill the Indian and save the man" (Reyhner, 1994, p. 12).

Students of Native American descent were automatically subjected to inferior treatment and seemed incompatible with school success in the white world (Reyhner & Singh, 2010). Many of the teachers at the boarding schools were hired due to their political connections rather than their educational qualifications (Reyhner, 1994).

Many of the children who were sent to non-reservation boarding schools were separated from their parents and siblings at a very young age. A selection process on who was to attend boarding school did not exist. If the children were old enough for school, they were sent to boarding school. Once they arrived at their destination, the children were forbidden to speak their native languages or practice their traditional religious beliefs. Students were severely punished if they did. Boys were required to cut their hair, and the clothes they wore to the schools were burned upon arrival (Fann, 2004).

Boarding schools provided education and religion, but it was education and religion typical of the Caucasian race. The Native children did not enjoy the religious freedom they once knew (Hart, 2006). Often children did not go home for many months, and some stayed at the schools for years. Once they did return home, many of them did not remember their family or their language. Many of the Native children who spent their formative years in boarding schools grew up unable to fit in comfortably with either Indian or non-Indian society. Although the overt policy of assimilation in this manner was reputed in 1936, Native Americans and their communities are still dealing with these schools' long-lasting and profoundly negative influences (St. Charles, 1995).

The setting aside of reservations was discontinued by treaty in 1871. With the inauguration of Franklin Roosevelt in 1933, a new era and attitude toward Native Americans arose: terminate the reservations and finalize their cultural assimilation by relocating the Native Americans to larger cities for jobs and training (Reyhner, 2011). Although the relocation program offered Native Americans assistance with employment, job training, and financial aid, it was inadequate to overcome the cultural and social upheaval to which they had been subjected (St. Charles, 1995). The objective of the BIA

schooling during the 1950s was to prepare Indian children to live in urban areas and join the urban labor pool under the Relocation Act (Lynch & Charleston, 1990). The relocation of Native Americans that was initiated in the 1950s was more subtle and a less coercive form of control and exploitation (James, 1994). Unlike the previous generation of Native Americans who were sent to boarding schools, this generation of people returned home to the reservations.

During the time of forced assimilation, the Native American women were responsible for preserving the values and culture as well as caring for their families (Pember, 2008). Increasingly, women have become the teachers, the community organizers, and more and more, the ones to receive broader education or work experience beyond the reservation (Davey, 2006). The values Native American women hold and how they view leadership may be based upon their own ethnic culture and influences (Kawulich, 2009). Traditional Native American Indian leadership displays several distinct characteristics such as spirituality, honorability, generosity, and kindness (*Traditional American Indian Leadership*, 2011). Barriers such as stereotyping, role perceptions, and socialization may limit Native American women from becoming top leaders in educational positions.

Beginning in the 1960s with American Indian political activism and self-determination, Native Americans drew upon their own unique history of continued resistance and conflict over land and resources. In 1961 the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) was founded in Gallup, New Mexico. Led by Shirley Hill Witt (Iroquois), a founding member, NIYC began holding meetings on reservations, and all meetings included traditional songs and drum ceremonies (Langston, 2006). Other Native



American female leaders during the American Indian political activism period included Belva Cottier (Lakota) who was included in the initial symbolic takeover of Alcatraz in 1964. Dr. Dorothy Lone Wolf Miller (Blackfoot), another Native female leader, procured an education grant to start Rock School on the island of Alcatraz (Langston, 2006). Local, tribal, and national Native leaders demanded that their concerns be heard, and the American public seemed to become more receptive to their messages (Lomawaima, 2002). During this time of the Indian movement, Native Americans were more focused on cultural integrity than on integration with the dominant society (Langston, 2006). Since they were owners of land and resources, they were more concerned over their treaty rights, not civil rights. “Alcatraz made it easier for us to remember who we are,” stated Winton (as cited in Langston, 2006).

On July 8, 1970, President Richard Nixon declared, “The time has come to break decisively with the past and to create the conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian act and Indian decisions” (Reyhner, 1994). This reversal in Native American policy proved dramatic. President Nixon and his staff repudiated the policy of termination and instead protected tribal rights. They also encouraged reservation Indians to run many federal programs themselves (Kotlowski, 2003). This form of self-determination further enhanced the education system by the passing of the Indian Education Act in 1972 and the Indian Self-Determination and Assistance Act in 1975.

The Indian Education Act of 1972 was the first federal legislation to support Native American bilingual and bicultural materials development, teacher preparation, and parent and community involvement. The Indian Self-Determination and Assistance Act

in 1975 was passed to formalize the procedures for tribes and Native communities to contract the operation of social and educational programs. Together these two acts provided the legislative framework for placing Native American education under community control (Lomawaima, 2002). The acts centered around the idea that Native American people, not the U.S. government, should decide what is best for Native Americans.

One of the first schools to become tribally controlled and operated was Rough Rock school in Arizona. This school is operated by the Navajo community which employs staff that are all selected by the Navajo people. The role of the professionals has changed from one of control to one of assistance. Students at the school are exposed to both Native American culture and the dominant society culture (Roessel, 1968).

History has shown that Native Americans were required to attend boarding schools while refraining from speaking their language and participating in cultural practices. The intention of these requirements was for Native American cultural assimilation into the white culture. Although American Indian children in schools today may not experience the degree of overt and concerted assault on their language and culture as in prior generations, they still endure less academic expectation from their teachers along with the loss of social and cultural development (St. Charles, 1995). Indian students throughout North America have experienced disproportional school failure in educational systems controlled by members of the dominant group (Reyhner, 1992).

Many Native Americans still distrust education and question whether educational models based on dominant societal values are appropriate for Native people (Weaver, 2000). The persistent theme is that Native American children are handicapped by values and

behaviors that conflict with the expectations of the majority of American society. These include values of sharing, noncompetitiveness, politeness, reluctance to speak out, and avoiding self-attention (Whitebeck, 2001).

The cultural discontinuity concept posits that minority children, raised in distinctive cultures, are often thrust into a school system that promotes cultural values reflective of the dominant society; this is a reality for Native American children (Christman & McClellan, 2008). Although these barriers posed by cultural conflict are not experienced by all Native American students, past research has demonstrated a link between cultural conflict and poor persistence in higher education (Huffman, 2001). The disjunction between non-Native cultural expectations institutionalized in higher education and Native American cultural traditions initially place many Native Americans at a disadvantage for success in college (Huffman, 2001).

Native American people realize the atrocities that have been committed against them far better than the larger society (Pewewardy & Frey, 2004). Freire (as cited in Pewewardy & Frey, 2004) maintains that this type of education, in which students are required to view cultural knowledge as unrelated units, reinforces the perception of marginalized populations as naive, lazy, and of lower capabilities compared to dominating populations (Pewewardy & Frey, 2004).

Although Native Americans have been plagued by poverty and other social problems, they still survive. Most significant for Native American leaders is the unique political status of Native American people who see their very survival dependent on maintaining their Native lands, language, religious beliefs, culture, and tribal sovereignty

(Prindeville, 2003). By recovering the past through a strong sense of identity and culturally relevant education, Native Americans can again reclaim their self-worth.

From 1970 to the present, Native Americans have had opportunities to implement what has been their will and wish for more than 200 years: to take leadership roles in educational systems, to guide and design policy, and to implement innovative and locally responsive curricula and pedagogies (Lomawaima, 2002). Despite the United States government's efforts to assimilate Native Americans into the dominant culture, there are still 560 federally-recognized Indian tribes considered sovereign nations within the United States (Statistics, 2005).

### **Role of Native American Women in Leadership**

Native American women were historically responsible for preserving the values and culture as well as taking care of their families (Pember, 2008). Cultural valuation variation is very likely among the 560 federally-recognized Indian tribes in the United States (Tyler, 2008). There are some cultural values that span the majority of Native American tribes including sharing, cooperation, respect for elders, and a strong reverence for family (Tyler, 2008). Increasingly, women have become the teachers, the community organizers, and more and more, the ones to receive broader education or work experience beyond the reservation (Davey, 2006). Traditional learning has been the means by which Native American women have established and maintained their voices thereby assisting them in self-empowerment in gender roles. However, Western-based education under government control has been implemented to destroy the traditional power of Native American women (Deirdre, 1997).

## **Women and Leadership**

Strong leadership is a major factor in survival, growth, and decline of societies (Marshall, 2009). Successful leadership allows people to achieve specific goals and objectives. Not everyone is born a leader, but anyone can be prepared to lead (Marshall, 2009). Since all Native American tribes are different, a woman may not seem traditional to some, but within the Lakota teachings, a woman is required to do what she can with what she has (Davey, 2006). Evidence proves that when an organization gives women opportunities to succeed, its members realize significant performance benefits (Kolb, Williams, & Frohlinger, 2010). These are the organizations that support the women they select for their leadership roles. Prejudicial attitudes can limit a woman's access to leadership roles and can foster discriminatory evaluations when women occupy leadership positions (Eagly, 2007).

Various factors are limiting women's potential to aspire to positions of leadership. Women face the patriarchal system where decision-making powers are in the hands of males (Kiamba, 2008). Confining women's identities to the domestic sphere is one barrier for them. Administrative leadership positions require strenuous work, long hours, and stressful commitments. For women this burden is conjoined with child care, home, and family responsibilities (Kiamba, 2008).

## **Gender Differences in Leadership**

Studies of women in leadership positions have examined gender differences in leadership styles, often trying to identify whether there are differences between men and women's styles of leadership in any given profession (McCollum, 2005). The results of these studies have found that women's leadership styles are more cooperative,

collaborative, and oriented toward enhancing a person's self-worth (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

How women enact their role as a leader is intertwined with the basic realization that they are women bringing stereotypical baggage that comes with gender roles (Yoder, 2001). Social status and power in leadership roles are usually intertwined with gender. Therefore, the equality of any leadership position is already skewed for women leaders before they even begin a leadership position (Yoder, 2001). While women at every level are considered superior to their male counterparts, the gender imbalance both in the public and private sectors remains (Wurtz, 2012).

The gender system is deeply intertwined with social hierarchy and leadership because gender stereotypes contain status beliefs that associate greater status worthiness and competence with men and women (Ridgeway, 2001). Status beliefs are cultural schemas about status position in society pertaining to groups based on gender, race, ethnicity, education, or occupation (Ridgeway, 2001). Evidence suggests that gender stereotypes do contain status beliefs that men are more associated with mechanical skills, women with domestic skills (Ridgeway, 2001). When status beliefs develop, they ground inequality between group members; thus, ultimately wealthy, powerful women are disadvantaged by gender status beliefs compared to their wealthy, powerful male peers (Ridgeway, 2001).

An educated person as identified by R.S. Peters (as cited in Martin, 1981) is one who has a body of knowledge and conceptual scheme to understand this knowledge and has principals for organizing the facts of things. The educated person understands what he or she knows and knows how to do things while applying his or her knowledge to

specific situations. The intellectual disciplines which a person must be introduced to in order to become an educated person, excluding women, construct the female to the male image of her and disallow the truly feminine qualities she possesses. When gender is thought to make no difference, women's lives, experiences, and activities are overlooked, and an ideal is constructed in terms of men and the roles for which they have been traditionally suited (Martin, 1981).

In contrast, selection of women for leadership positions can increase an organization's chances of obtaining leaders who are especially effective under modern conditions (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Relative effectiveness of male and female leaders has been assessed and shows that females are just as effective as males in leadership (Northhouse, 2013). Women are applauded as having the right combination of skills for a leader, yet often come in second to men for leadership positions (Eagly, 2007). However, women are less effective if the leadership role is masculinized as in military positions (Northhouse, 2013).

### **Influencing Factors for Native Women in Leadership**

Past researchers have found that people think male when they think leader and that this result transcends many cultural differences (Lips, 2009). Because of a perceived incompatibility between femininity and leadership, women feel they must soften their leadership styles to get the approval of their peers (Lips, 2009). Traditional perspectives of leadership center on masculine-oriented concepts of authoritarian and task-oriented behavior (Burns & Martin, 2010). Oftentimes when women are placed in leadership positions and strive to become effective leaders, they become known as bossy, dominating, aggressive, or opinionated. There are two competing pressures for women:

(a) to prove one's ability while remaining warm and giving and (b) to demonstrate how strong and smart they are resulting in being labeled too forceful or assertive (Eagly & Carli, 2009).

Female leaders have been forced to pattern their leadership styles based on successful male leadership behaviors (Burns & Martin, 2010). Expectations of women's performance must consistently be exceeded, and women wishing to advance are forced to learn to communicate in a manner that is comfortable for males (Williams, 2010).

Women must have the ability to be a woman per se while maintaining the competence of strong leadership.

Leadership from a Native American perspective, a foundational value, is viewed as a shared vision and responsibility. Although there are individual and tribal differences among Native American groups, this perspective is consistent with a cultural view (Portman & Garrett, 2005). Traditional Native American leadership is based upon the core of spirituality, and while Native American communities are spiritual communities, they are not all alike. Leadership within a Native American community is distributed based on the skills and experience an individual accumulates (Warner & Grint, 2006). Native American women have been consistently involved in leadership throughout indigenous history (Portman & Garrett, 2005). Leadership skills of patience and listening are the characteristics of many Native American female leaders (Portman & Garrett, 2005).

In North Dakota there are more than 10,971 licensed personnel in the education field, including teachers. Of this amount, 729 of them are licensed administrators such as



superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant principals of which 483 are males and 246 are females.

The need for more licensed Native American females in educational leadership positions is vividly shown in the lack of licensed Native American female administrators which is only .0010% of the licensed female educational leaders in North Dakota. Native women leaders face a double dilemma as they struggle to survive in two worlds, native and white (Fitzgerald, 2003). Of the 246 licensed females, 20 Native American women currently hold an administrative license in North Dakota.

### **Barriers of Women in Leadership Positions**

An invisible barrier known as the glass ceiling is preventing professional women from attaining their goals. It is a rigid barrier that obstructs career advancement for women, allowing them to see men rising above them in leadership positions (Phillip, 2009). Professional women are opting out, being bypassed, or simply disappearing from the workforce (Williams, 2010). In 1995, 45.7% of America's jobs belonged to women, and more than half of the women had master's degrees. However, 95% of the managers were men with women earning 68% of what their male counterparts earned ("The Conundrum of the Glass Ceiling," 2005). Today, women still lag behind men in gaining leadership positions in both K-12 and higher education. In the United States, the majority of teachers are female, but under 22% of school superintendents are female (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011).

The glass ceiling phenomenon is proving persistent despite diversity programs entering into the workforce ("The Conundrum of the Glass Ceiling," 2005). Women are leaving the workforce for a number of reasons including home and family life. Some are

leaving to become self-employed consultants and entrepreneurs, roles where they can have greater freedom to manage their lives (“The Conundrum of the Glass Ceiling,” 2005). Women who take time off from their positions find it hard to reenter the workforce and usually enter at a lower level of pay upon their return (Northhouse, 2013).

A metaphor for the glass ceiling phenomenon might be a labyrinth, a contemporary symbol that conveys the idea of a complex journey toward a goal worth achieving (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Passage is not direct and requires persistence. For women who aspire to top leadership roles there are multiple twists and turns both expected and unexpected. Because a labyrinth has a viable route to the center, it is understood that goals are attainable. The metaphor acknowledges obstacles but is not ultimately discouraging (Eagly & Carli, 2007). One explanation for the labyrinth is that women have less human capital investment in education, training, and work experience compared to men. This supposed lack of human capital is said to result in a shortage of qualified women.

Another metaphor is called a pipeline and refers to the number of available women in the pool of those “promotable” (Kolb, Williams, & Frohlinger, 2010, p. 3). However, looking closer at the numbers reveals that women are in the pipeline, but the pipeline is leaking (Hoyt, 2013). Women are obtaining undergraduate degrees at a higher rate than men as well as professional and doctorate degrees at a rate greater or equal to men (Hoyt, 2013). However, they are still vastly underrepresented in top leadership positions (Hoyt, 2013).

Traditionally men spend more time at work than women (Grogan, 1999). Men have a casual approach towards household chores and childcare, leaving many

responsibilities of chores and childcare to women. This in turn molded the traditional discourses of the family leaving women with necessary work to do at home. Therefore, women are more than twice as likely to work part time (“The Conundrum of the Glass Ceiling,” 2005). Domestic and child-rearing expectations impose the added burden on women who wish to climb the leadership ladder (Hoyt, 2013). Traditional work norms increase difficulty for professional women to advance in the leadership rank making it nearly impossible for them to break the glass ceiling.

Although representation of women in all levels of school administration has increased, little significant progress has been made in district organizations at more senior positions such as school principal and superintendent (Bjork, 2000). Leaders occupy roles defined by their specific positions in hierarchy and function under the constraints of their gender (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Even when a woman holds the same managerial position as a man, the woman typically has less power and authority (Eagly & Carli, 2009). Women often believe that in order to be hired for administrative positions, they must be better prepared than men; therefore, more women than men may seek a doctorate degree (Logan, 1998). The more prestigious the university from which they earned their doctorate, the more quickly they advance to the superintendency (Melendez, 2008).

Traditionally, leadership roles have been highly masculinized. Most men follow a hierarchical organization that defines leadership behavior in terms of power (Yoder, 2001). Studies on women in leadership suggest that women find themselves torn between demands of administration and societal expectations in terms of family responsibilities (Hoff, 2011). However, Melendez (2008) states “if you are motivated to become a

superintendent, then you are most likely a natural leader and risk taker” (Melendez, 2008, p. 25). Women, much more than men, must recognize how to balance family responsibilities in order to pursue leadership positions (Hoff, 2011). When leadership is viewed as a personal attribute for a single person, it is understood that competition and power exist within that leader. The collaborative approaches of working together that are taught during a person’s childhood may become secondary.

In the United States during the 1960s, women were concentrated in a limited range of fields: education, English, fine arts, nursing, and home economics (Jacobs, 1996). Wars tend to create more educational opportunities for women as shown during the Second World War where women’s enrollment at colleges increased dramatically (Jacobs, 1996) as did their job possibilities (Tallerico & Blount, 2004).

As Regan and Brooks (1992) have noted, it has been less than two decades since women have begun to make their way into the male-dominated career of public school administration (Regan & Brooks, 1992). During the early years when women desired to further their education in school administration, they were met with closed doors, male-dominated faculties at the colleges, and little to no support.

Women have historically experienced barriers in their rise to educational leadership positions, and there is a need to increase the knowledge of the characteristics of successful female Native American educational leaders. This knowledge should add to the limited amount of data available. Indicators lead to a conclusion that there is an urgent need for Native American leadership in schools and districts serving populations of Native American students (Christman & McClellan, 2008).

## **Chapter Summary**

Chapter II presented a literature review including (a) theoretical frame, (b) review of Native American history, (c) review of Native American women in educational leadership positions, (d) leadership in Pk-12 schools, (e) gender differences in leadership, (f) influencing factors in leadership, and (g) barriers in leadership for women.

Chapter III presents the methodology used in the study. It includes (a) the purpose of the study, (b) a discussion about survey data, (c) participants, (d) survey development, (e) data analysis, and (f) chapter summary.

Chapter IV presents data from the survey responses in narrative and table format. An examination of the Native American women educational leaders' résumés is included. Chapter IV begins with (a) an introduction, (b) a profile of each Native American women educational participant, (c) survey responses and (d) emergent themes from the data.

Chapter V presents (a) a summary, (b) conclusions and recommendations, (c) relationship of the findings to theoretical framework, (d) relationship to the literature, (e) recommendations for Native American leaders, and (f) recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this survey study is to explore similarities and differences of Native American women currently in educational leadership positions. There are approximately 10,971 licensed personnel in the educational field in North Dakota. There are 42 Native American administrators, 22 male and 20 female. Of those 20, there are 10 female Native American superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals and assistant principals in Pk-12 public schools in North Dakota. The remaining nine female Native American educational leaders in North Dakota were surveyed.

This study uses a survey method of research which was designed to generate and identify common characteristics among participants by using two forms of data: email surveys and personal résumés. The survey study was used to develop and employ theories so that a sample may be generalized to a population. This was done by conducting surveys with open-ended questions. Assumptions are identified in this type of data with an understanding that a subjective meaning of engaged experiences is used. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researchers to look for the complexity of views. The goal of research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2003).

## **Participants**

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) was contacted by email with a request of names, position titles, and email addresses of Native American females who are identified on the public MISO1 forms (state identification system) as current superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant principals. The information showed that there were 291 females identified as school administrators. The list of names was reviewed and only those who were identified as Native American women administrators were selected. For this study, 10 female Native American educational leaders in North Dakota public schools were identified by DPI public documents. As one of those 10 identified, the researcher is excluded from the survey. One of the 10 declined to participate. One of the 10 agreed to participate but sent in no responses. Thus, only 7 of the 10 (.07%) North Dakota Native American women responded for the study. Each of the Native American women educational leaders were contacted via email (Appendix A) informing them of the study and a request for their participation.

## **Survey Development**

A survey (Appendix C) was developed containing 10 open-ended questions. These survey questions were created through (a) a review of the literature, (b) a review of other similar studies, (c) speaking with Native American educational leaders, (d) speaking the researcher's advisor, (e) consulting the researcher's doctoral committee, (f) Institutional Review Board (IRB) course discussions, and g) piloting the questions with six additional Native American North Dakota female educational leaders who did not participate in the study. Limited changes in wording of the questions were indicated

from the pilot participants. Each participant was also asked to submit a personal résumé. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix D) was requested and received prior to any data collection from the participants.

### **Data Collection**

Once permission was granted for participation, a consent form was emailed (Appendix B) assuring strict confidentiality of the study. The participants were asked to answer 10 open-ended survey questions (Appendix C) and to submit a current résumé for review. The participants would need approximately 30-40 minutes to complete the survey. Only one of the participants denied my request for participation in this study and one participant did not respond.

Once consent was received from an individual participant, the email was printed and placed in a folder kept in a securely locked location. Then the survey was sent via email for completion. The email was followed up by a phone call to ensure delivery of the survey. Any questions from the participants regarding the survey were answered. Once again strict confidentiality was assured. Finally, the participants were asked that the survey be completed within 10 days.

If the survey was not submitted within 10 days, the participant was called to promptly complete the survey. If the survey was not received within five days after the second phone call, the participant was again contacted via email. Once the completed survey and résumé were submitted, the participant received a follow up phone call for any clarification on the information she sent. Clarification was needed from participants who gave just one or two responses for the survey questions, one participant needed



clarification on leadership styles, and one stated to refer to other survey questions she had already answered.

### **Data Analysis**

Data for this study was generated from two sources, which included the surveys and each participant's résumé. From the collected participants' résumés, their information was placed into the following demographic categories: education background, number of years in education, college(s) attended, work experience, and leadership positions held.

Seven responses per survey question from each participant were analyzed. The responses were put on one piece of paper numbering the survey questions and adding the participant's responses under the correct number. The collected responses were reviewed and divided into sections. Similarities and common words among the participants were highlighted. These words were then charted on another paper and analyzed again. In the second analysis, similar words and phrases that each participant expressed for each of the survey questions were identified. Once again similarities and differences among the participants were noted. These similarities and differences identified among the participants were then used to identify the emergent themes from the study.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter III presented information on the purpose of the study, data identification and collection, survey development, and analysis of the data.

Chapter IV encompasses the data from the survey. It includes an introduction, a profile of the participants, the results, the coding process, and emergent themes from the study.

Chapter V presents an overview of the entire study with a summary, conclusions, relationship of the finding to theoretical framework and the literature, recommendations for Native American women Pk-12 educational leaders, and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Findings**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the data from the survey responses and the participants' résumés used in this study. Chapter IV presents the participants' answers in both narrative and table format. The results are presented by individual survey questions.

The purpose of this survey study is to discover similarities and differences of Native American women currently in educational leadership positions. Since the researcher was one of the 10 identified, she was excluded from the survey. There were 9 women who were asked to participate in this study. The Native American women Pk-12 educational leaders who participated provided their information in a timely manner; I received all of the participants' information within two weeks. The information on education background and work experience was collected from only 7 participant résumés.

#### **Section I – Résumé Comparison**

##### **Educational Background.**

Seven of the participants, enrolled members of a federally-recognized tribe within North Dakota as identified on the state MISO1 forms, returned current résumés. Two participants received their bachelor's degrees from the University of Mary (U of M), two

from the University of North Dakota (UND), one from North Dakota State University (NDSU), one from Mayville State College, and one from Dickinson State College. Three participants attended the University of Grand Forks (UND) for their master’s degrees, one received her master’s degree from the University of South Dakota, two of the women attended North Dakota State University (NDSU) for their master’s degree, and one attended the University of Mary for her master’s degree. Three participants received their Doctorate of Education from UND. Table 1 identifies the participants’ educational background.

Table 1. Educational Background. (n=5)

	Dickinson	Mayville	NDSU	U of Mary	UND	U of SD
BS	1	1	1	2	2	
Master’s			2	1	3	1
Specialist						
Doctorate					3	

Table 1 indicates that all seven of the participants completed a Bachelor of Science degree at North Dakota colleges. It also specifies that all 7 of the participants have their master’s degrees, and three have their doctorate degrees.

**Work Experience.**

The longest educational career of the participants is 41 years, and the shortest educational career is 15 years. Four participants have worked in three or fewer districts throughout their career. Two participants have worked out of state for one year then

returned to North Dakota to continue their educational careers. One participant has worked in four different districts all in North Dakota. Longevity within the same districts includes 1 year, 7 years, 13 years, 15 years, 17 years, and 20 years.

In the following narrative, each of the individual participants are identified by using P1 for participant 1, P2 for participant 2, P3 for participant 3 and so forth. I received seven résumés from the participating Native American women educational leaders.

Participant 1 (P1) began her work experience as a classroom teacher and progressed into leadership roles including: a program director, elementary principal, reading specialist, assistant principal, and superintendent. She has 33 years of work experience. Participant one belongs to numerous professional organizations and has received a number of awards for her work as an employee and teacher.

Participant 2 (P2) began her work experience as a teacher and progressed into a program director, assistant professor, and elementary principal. This participant has 41 years of work experience.

Participant 3 (P3) began her work experience as a preschool home educator and progressed into a substitute teacher, classroom teacher, assistant director, and elementary principal. This participant has 31 years of work experience.

Participant 4 (P4) began her work experience as a physical education teacher and progressed into a guidance counselor, assistant principal, program director, and principal. This participant has 26 years of work experience.

Participant 5 (P5) began her work experience as a teacher and progressed into a principal, program director, principal again, and Indian education director at her school. This participant has 36 years of work experience.

Participant 6 (P6) began her work experience as a paraprofessional and progressed into a resource teacher, program coordinator, and elementary principal. This participant has 22 years of work experience.

Participant 7 (P7) began her work experience as a program director and progressed into a technology coordinator, federal program coordinator, elementary principal, superintendent and curriculum director. This participant has 15 years of work experience.

Table 2 presents the results of the participants' initial career experiences.

Table 2. Initial Career Experiences. (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Paraprofessional						X	
Teacher	X	X		X	X		
Preschool			X				
Director							X

Table 2 indicates that four participants initially began their careers as a teacher. One began as a paraprofessional, one as a kindergarten director, and one as a preschool home educator prior to becoming educational leaders at their current schools. Each of the participants eventually became principals at one point in time.

Table 3 presents information related to longevity of working prior to becoming a principal within a public school setting.

Table 3. Career Longevity. (n=7)

Years	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
5-10	X				X		
11-15						X	X
16-20			X				
21-25		X		X			

Table 3 indicates P1 and P5 had the shortest amount of work, 5-10 years, before becoming principals. P2 and P4 identified the longest amount of work, 21-25 years, prior to becoming principals. When reviewing the participants' résumés, P2 and P4 were directors of other programs; one participant was a director in her school, the other was a director in her community 21-25 years before becoming principals. P6 and P7 both worked as teachers and coordinators for 11-15 years prior to becoming principals. P3 worked as a teacher and as a college professor 16-20 years prior to becoming a principal.

#### **Awards.**

Four of the participants did not list any awards on their résumés. The other three participants each received numerous awards. All three of the participants received Indian Educator of the Year award during their careers. Two participants received Outstanding Administrator award. One received Outstanding Service to Employer, Community, and School award. One received the Milken Family Foundation award. One received the

Women of America award. One received North Dakota National Distinguished Principal award. One participant received the Title I Caught in the Act award. One received the Golden Apple for Multicultural and Multicultural Bell Ringer award. The Milken Family Foundation award is nominated by the North Dakota Department of Instruction. The Golden Apple for Multicultural and Multicultural Bell Ringer award is a local school award. These awards are given to outstanding educators in the profession of teaching, administration, and leadership.

## **Section II - Survey Responses**

The following information captures the participants' responses from each survey question. There were limited responses to the survey questions, thus limited data.

Survey Question 1. As you reflect back on your career, describe what influenced you to become an educational leader? And why.

The following influences are a collection from the participants' responses: 1 of the participants identified an aunt who was already in education, and the participant wanted to be like her. This participant had always desired to become a teacher, and she still desires to make education enjoyable for students. A second participant had a principal who was a good role model and made leadership appear easy. The participant felt she could do the same; she became a teacher and an educational leader. A third wanted to have an impact on more students, knew the importance of education, and wanted to help students succeed in school and after graduating.



Table 4. Response to Question 1: As You Reflect Back On Your Career, Describe What Influenced You to Become an Educational Leader? And Why. (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Desire	X	X	X		X		
Make a difference				X	X		
Helping students succeed						X	X

Survey Question 2. What personal leadership traits do you attribute to your success?

Some common attributes exist among the women; two of the participants stated that collaboration, working with others, and being a team player is important. Taking action in a timely manner was also expressed by two of the participants along with being a good listener. Others listed personal leadership traits include having vision and integrity, being collaborative, objective, honest, caring, compassionate, courageous, curious, and resourceful. One participant stated that her life skills of perseverance and common sense helped with her leadership. Another participant stressed the importance of organization, grasping opportunities as they arise, and having good rapport with staff, student, and parents.

Survey Question 3. What were your leadership experiences along your career path?

The participants' experiences range from paraprofessional, coach, grant writer, teacher, and director. Educational leaders for the purpose of this study include superintendent, principal, and assistant principal. The participants include two superintendents and five principals. In comparison the survey responses are more

elaborate than what is on each résumé. One of the participants wrote an elaborate response for this question but submitted a scant résumé.

Table 5. Response to Question 2: What Personal Leadership Traits Do You Attribute to Your Success? (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Visionary	X	X			X		
Listener	X						
Action in timely manner			X	X			
Having integrity		X				X	

Table 6. Response to Question 3: What Were Your Leadership Experiences Along Your Career Path? (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Paraprofessional						X	
Teacher	X		X			X	
Director		X				X	
Principal	X	X	X	X		X	X
Superintendent	X						X

Survey Question 4. Identify and describe barriers you encountered along your career path.

The participants identified barriers along their advancement including jealousy, small town politics, and living in their home communities. P1 sensed that her friends were jealous of her success. In one's home community, expectations to succeed and prove oneself are high. P2 and P6 identified family as a barrier since the participants were

required to leave their homes and families to pursue their educational goals. P2 and P4 identified the barrier of raising a family and leaving each day to work. One participant stated that she felt alone with no support (P3). One identified her own degree of motivation as a barrier (P5). Another participant identified the challenge of acceptance into the male-dominated field of administration as a barrier (P4).

Table 7. Response to Question 4: Identify And Describe Barriers You Encountered Along Your Career Path. (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Jealousy	X						
Leave family		X				X	
Degree of motivation					X		
Small town politics	X						X
Male dominated field			X	X			

Survey Question 5. Identify and describe your support system along your career path.

The support systems identified by the participants included people who supported them during their career advancement. Four of the participants named their husband as giving the most support, two named their family, two named administrators, two named their college advisors, one named her parents, and one named her secretary. One of the participants felt fortunate to work in education and always utilized a network of administrators willing to help. One of the participants named her school district that allowed her a leave of absence to obtain her doctorate degree. All of the participants gave extensive responses to this question.

Table 8. Response to Question 5: Identify And Describe Barriers You Encountered Along Your Career Path. (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Husband	X				X	X	
Secretary	X						
Family		X				X	
School district		X				X	
Parents			X				
Administrators				X		X	X
College professor					X		

Survey Question 6. Describe your personal motivation factors in becoming an educational leader.

This survey response identified the reasons why the participants wanted to become educational leaders. P1 wanted to give back to her community, P2 thought she could contribute more to improve student learning, P3 and P4 wanted to make education fun, P6 enjoys seeing the difference that success can make in a student’s life, P7 loves the opportunities for the kids, and P5 had no response to this question. All of the participants gave one and two sentence responses to this question.

Survey Question 7. Describe your leadership style.

This survey question sought to identify what the participants’ leadership style is as well as which leadership traits the participants share. One participant answered that she practices situational leadership which is identified as task-oriented. She expressed that

Table 9. Response to Question 6: Describe Your Personal Motivation Factors In Becoming An Educational Leader. (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Wanted to give back	X						
Make education fun		X	X				
Believed in learning							X
Share with others				X			X
See a difference in education						X	
Student success						X	X

there is no single correct style of leadership. Effective leadership is task-relevant, and the most successful leaders are those that adapt their leadership style to their current goal. They must be willing to take responsibility for the task and the group they are attempting to lead. Effective leadership varies based on the task that needs to be accomplished.

Another participant stated that she practices inspirational leadership in which the organization’s employees are driven by values and principles to do the right things even in extremely difficult situations. It is a leader’s responsibility to inspire those values in each individual. Values are at the root of inspiration.

The next participant identified her leadership style as effective. Effective leadership is generally someone that leads by example and other people tend to follow because they believe that the leader is doing the right thing.

Two participants listed participatory leadership. Participatory leadership is based on respect and engagement. A more democratic and more effective model of leadership, it harnesses diversity, builds community, and creates shared responsibility for action.

One participant listed team player as her leadership style which is defined as a way to lead someone or a group while providing guidance, instruction, and direction.

Finally, cooperative was identified as one participant’s leadership style.

Table 10. Response to Question 7: Describe Your Leadership Style. (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Team player				X			
Cooperative							X
Participatory	X		X				
Situational		X					
Inspirational					X		
Effective						X	

Survey Question 8. Describe how you entered into your current leadership position.

This survey response identified six of the participants as applying for their current leadership position and four of the six receiving interviews prior to becoming a current educational leader. One of the six applied for her current position and was hired without an interview, and one was called by the superintendent and asked to take the position. One participant did not answer the question.

Survey Question 9. What would you advise the next generation of Native American women aspiring to become Pk-12 educational leaders?

The participants all wrote explicit responses to this question for advice to future Native American leaders. Two of the participants stated “go for it!” (P1 & P7). Another

Table 11. Response to Question 8: Describe How You Entered Into Your Current Leadership Position. (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Applied	X					X	
Interviewed			X		X	X	
Asked by others		X		X			

participant stated “have integrity and be trustworthy” (P2). Other comments from participants are “focus on youth” (P3), “communicate effectively” (P5), “make good decisions” (P2), “believe in yourself” (P4), and “continue your education” (P6).

Table 12. Response to Question 9: What Would You Advise The Next Generation of Native American Women Aspiring to Become Pk-12 Educational Leaders? (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Go for it!	X						X
Have integrity		X					
Focus on youth			X				
Believe in yourself				X			X
Best decisions for students		X					
Communicate effectively					X		
Continue your education						X	

Survey Question 10. What else would you like to share about yourself as a Native American woman in educational leadership?

The participants identified the following qualities about themselves and would like to share them with other Native American educational leaders. Native women are

strong leaders and can multitask. They encourage all to have inner strength to move forward, be positive when working with Native American students, take opportunities that are given, believe in oneself, keep abreast of education, and be glad to come back to your home as an educational leader and role model. Other insights they shared are that we as Native Americans are only different if we think we are, and we should take the necessary steps to progress in our positions.

Table 13. Response to Question 10: What Else Would You Like to Share About Yourself as a Native American Woman in Educational Leadership? (n=7)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Have an inner strength	X			X			
Take opportunities			X				
Believe in oneself				X	X		
Keep abreast of education						X	X
Return home to be a role model		X	X				

A data review showed that all seven of the participants had the desire to eventually become educational leaders. The participants had common traits such as caring, honest, organized, and hard worker. The participants' leadership experiences were common as they all had opportunities to work in schools. Some of the barriers the participants shared were jealousy, leaving family, and working while raising a family. The support systems the participants shared were family, husband, parents, administrators, and school systems. Personal motivational factors were desiring to give back, wanting to share, and seeing students succeed. The participants' leadership style was participatory, situational, and inspirational. The participants' career ladders were



similar. Six of the participants applied for their positions and were hired. Four of the participants were interviewed prior to being hired, and one of the participants did not answer that particular survey question. Advice to the next generation of educational leaders was to have a motivated attitude, focus on youth, believe in your abilities, and continue your education. The participant shared that Native women are capable and different from others. They emphasized that each Native woman should believe in herself.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter IV contains the survey data collected through ten open-ended research questions from seven Native American women educational leaders within North Dakota Pk-12 public schools. Individual résumés from the participants were also used in the study. The data was organized by reviewing the responses of the ten open-ended questions and by writing down similar and common words which resulted in ten focus collections as identified in Table 4-13. The educational background of each participant is identified in Table 1. Table 2 identified the participants' work experience which lists employment as a paraprofessional, teacher, preschool teacher, and director all prior to becoming educational leaders, specifically a principal. Table 3 identified the length of work years the participants completed prior to becoming a principal. These years range from five years as the shortest amount of time to twenty five years as the longest amount of time.

Chapter V is an overview of the study including summary, conclusions, relationship of the findings to the theoretical framework and literature, recommendations for women Pk-12 educational leaders, and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter V**

### **Summary, Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations**

The purpose of this survey study was to discover similar attributes and differences among Native American women currently in educational leadership positions. The participants are comprised of Native American women in Pk-12 educational leadership positions throughout North Dakota. Educational leadership positions are defined as superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and assistant principals. In this chapter, discussion about the data is presented, followed by the relationship of the findings to the theoretical framework and the literature. Further recommendations for Native American women entering educational leadership positions and recommendations for further research are included.

#### **Summary**

In review of the participants' responses to the research questions, none of the participants provided negative responses for their educational experiences during their ascent to their current position. This could be associated with the participants knowing the researcher personally and not wanting to share information. It could also be due to participating in a public study, and the participants did not want any possibility of being identified. The participants identified some barriers in their ascent which include leaving their family to attend school, working in one's home community, friends having higher expectations, and small town politics. All of the participants expressed the desire to seek.

career advancement and aspire to make education better for students. Two participants mentioned a positive role model who influenced their careers. One wanted to see student success, two wanted to give of themselves and accomplish more, one wanted to make student education fun, and one was encouraged by others to become an educational leader. Each of the seven participants described support systems that were available along their career path. External supports include husbands, family, parents, administrators, current school systems, and college professors. Only one of the participants mentioned professional networks as a support system.

There were numerous personal similarities the participants identified for their success as educational leaders. Some similarities were vision, perseverance, intuitiveness, and collaboration. The participants listed personal motivation factors such as being a hard worker, a good listener, caring, compassionate, honest, and organized. The participants mentioned that they are always learning and evaluating, practicing objectivity, trying to make decisions in a timely matter, and committing to being intuitive.

Participatory appeared to be the predominant leadership style. All participants identified different leadership styles; one listed situational, two participatory, one inspirational, one effective, one cooperative, and one team player. Some similarities were experienced among the participants on their career path. Five of the participants began their careers as teachers, one as a paraprofessional, and one as a program director. Three of the participants identified receiving North Dakota Indian Educator of the Year award, and each of the participants partake in educational professional organizations throughout North Dakota.

As identified with the literature, the participants met barriers upon their career path and while obtaining their education. None of the participants mentioned a glass ceiling as a barrier, but they did mention having to leave their families and working while going to school. All of the participants experienced strong support systems while obtaining their education and meeting their career goals. The participants chosen for this study answered informatively with lengthy responses. Their résumés displayed their high level of education and dedication to their educational leadership positions

### **Relationship to Theoretical Framework**

Native American Indian education studies have produced little theories unique to Native American educational issues (Huffman, 2010). Few of the theories in Native American education appear disjointed, inconsistent, and too frequently not particularly useful (St.Germaine, 1995). The theoretical framework for this study was Eagly's (Ball, 2010) social role theory. The concept of this theory is understanding gender differences, as male and female leaders have both identifiably different leadership qualities. It suggests that most behavioral differences between males and females are the result of cultural stereotypes and the roles that are taught to young people. The expectations of men and women's social behavior are historical in that men will often assume duties outside of the home, and women assume responsibilities within the home (Moss, 2008).

In relationship to the current study, only one of the participants mentioned gender differences between men and women. Gender roles may spill over to organizational settings, and a leader's gender identity may constrain his or her behaviors consistent to his or her own gender role. The role congruity suggests that female leaders' choices are constrained in that their gender role can produce a failure to meet requirements of the

leadership role (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Leadership roles provide norms that regulate the performance of many tasks, which would be accomplished by male and females (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

### **Relationship to Literature**

The literature review has shown that Native American women are underrepresented in educational leadership positions in Pk-12 schools in North Dakota. Some leadership barriers involve socialization and stereotyping, studies imply that perceived barriers, possibly explaining the underrepresentation, are family restrictions, jealousy, higher expectations, and small town politics (Chenoy, 2012). Native American leaders must earn the trust and support not only of school personnel and students but also the community (Christman, 2008). Other barriers still exist in achieving leadership positions, such as stereotyping, differing role perceptions, and socialization issues (Napier, 1995). While three of the participants experienced barriers, four of the participants did not share any significant barriers to overcome. Not one of the participants mentioned her gender as a barrier to their ascent in their current positions.

The study of leadership among Native Americans is very complicated and requires the researcher to look at social, economic, and political factors within the community. One persistent commonality in American Indian literature is concern over lack of educational achievement among Native American students (Huffman, 2010).

In a study compiled by Glass (2000), most minority administrators currently work in a majority minority school district under less than perfect conditions for any type of professional development. These schools often have less fiscal resources and perpetual conflict. Executive summary data compiled by Montenegro (1993) tracked the

representation of minority women in school administration. The findings concluded that Hispanic and Native American assistant principals, principals, assistant superintendents and superintendents were more highly represented in the mountain states which include Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. These areas were highly populated in Native American people that depend upon federal aid to maintain their school systems. She also believes that “overall, the increases in the representation of women are greater than the increase in the representation of racial minorities” (p. 18). The participants in this study attended schools with less than perfect conditions, and succeeded with their educations, accomplishing their goals with desire, ability, and wanting to help others.

Given the historical trauma suffered by Native American people in the name of education and the incongruity between mainstream and indigenous value systems, the decision to attend college will continue to be difficult for tribal students. Brayboy (as cited in Krusemark, 2012) discovered in a 1990s study exploring experiences in several American Ivy League institutions that Native American students experienced marginalization, surveillance, and oppression in their campus environments. The students navigated their private spaces to maintain their cultural identity (Krusemark, 2012). The participants in this study all attended college away from home, many of them leaving their families, but once their educational goals were met, they moved back home to help their own people.

Education was a key component in the plan to eliminate Native American sovereignty (Deirdre, 1997). The use of boarding schools and relocation programs were meant to eliminate the Native American culture and language. However, as second

generation people, this form of destruction gave Native American students the fortitude to continue with their schooling and become educational leaders of their communities.

During the forced assimilation of Native Americans, the women were the ones responsible for preserving the values and culture of their tribes. Native American women continue to play an important role in the education of their people (Deirdre, 1997). Native American women maintain their responsibilities as the keepers of their culture, language, and religious practices. Native women have an inner strength, the same strength that sustained Native American women in boarding schools (Deirdre, 1997). With a goal of empowerment, education can serve as a vehicle for the Native American women to reclaim their cultural heritage while gaining strength in the process (Wexler, 2006).

Figure 1 identifies the influences that may help Native American women succeed in educational leadership positions.

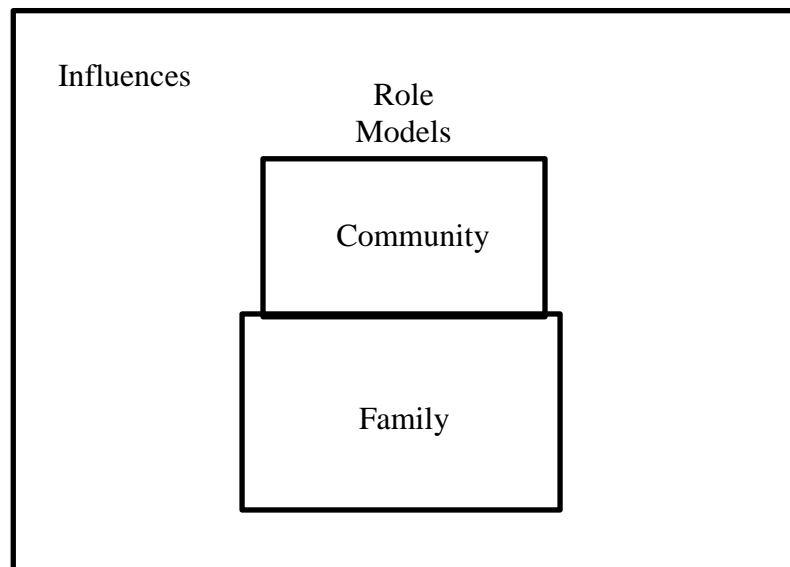


Figure 1. Influences for success.

Attending college for Native American students can be compared to international exchange. Leaving the reservation represents entering another world, separating from extended family, culture, and sometimes language (Fann, 2004). Native American women often hold positions of authority and participate in decisions affecting their family (Pember, 2008). Five of the participants identified family as their support system during their career path. Community expectations, responsibilities, and accountability place considerable demands on Native American women, yet Native women have a deep compassion and commitment to community (Fitzgerald, 2006).

The entire group of participants moved to their home community after receiving their degrees, and two still live and work in their home communities. Two of the participants identified a principal that was a good role model and an aunt that was already a teacher. Another stated that she was encouraged by others to enter into a leadership position.

Women continue to encounter impediments to leadership within organizations, but many of these impediments can be removed by organizational changes designed to improve women's access to and success in leadership roles (Eagly, 2007). Allowing leaders some freedom to choose the way they fulfill their roles may be an organizational change. Given the profound changes in women's roles and the cultural construal of good leadership, women will continue their ascent into leadership positions (Eagly, 2007).

Figure 2 identifies the barriers Native American women encounter prior to entering into educational leadership positions.



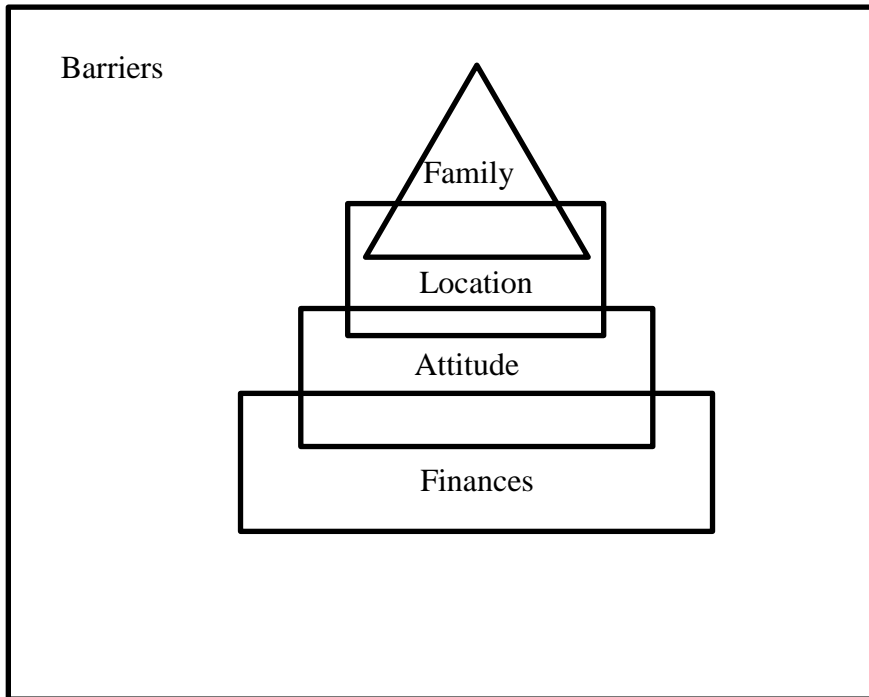


Figure 2. Barriers Native American women encounter.

The participants' environments such as historical background, expectations of men and women, cultural genocide, and academic expectations will influence their behavioral deterrents such as their genetic predispositions, goals and expectations, their purpose or reasons, and their self-imposed barriers. These barriers will influence their level of job satisfaction.

Confining women's identity to the domestic sphere is one barrier to women's entry into politics which, by its nature, catapults one into public life where cultural attitudes toward women are hostile (Kiamba, 2008). Some women are able to transcend cultural barriers and rise to positions of leadership, but they are forced to juggle cultural expectations with their leadership roles (Kiamba, 2008). In many cultures, paid employment was seen as the domain of men while family responsibilities belonged to women (Kolb, Williams, & Frohlinger, 2010, p. 11).

This study was not intended to prove differences between men and women in leadership qualities or styles. The literature has simply shown there is a difference between genders. This study was intended to suggest self-imposed barriers among the participants. These barriers include family responsibilities, relocation for job advancement, lack of access to professional networks, and lack of mentorship (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009). It also showed that the women participating in the study have common attributes such as being a good listener, caring, compassionate, and organized while possessing the ability to learn, evaluate, and work with students, parents, and staff. More similarities include honesty, timely decision making, team work, having vision, and taking action when necessary. The participants shared their inspirations as the desire to be a teacher, family influences, improve student learning, make a difference in a student's life, and help students succeed.

### **Conclusion**

The participants in this study did not state any perceived barriers. Overall, the exploration of the participants' responses led to the following conclusions: (a) there were no stated substantial barriers for the Native American women in Pk-12 educational leadership positions throughout North Dakota, (b) conventional support sources included family, husband, school district, parents, and college professors, (c) participatory leadership appeared to be the predominant style for the participants, (d) personal attributes included vision, perseverance, intuitiveness, and collaboration, and (e) personal motivation factors were identified as being a hard worker, a good listener, caring, compassionate, honest, and organized.

Although Native American students experience disproportional school failure in educational systems controlled by members of the dominant group (Reyhner, 1992), the participants in this study did not indicate that they experienced adversity while receiving their education. They all had personal motivational factors that helped them continue with their education, as well as strong support systems. The participants had positive influences and worthy role models that encouraged them to work with students within a school setting. The participants mentioned wanting to be more influential and make a difference (P2, P5). They wanted to make education fun (P3), be a good leader (P1), and see students succeed (P6, P7).

An important aspect of any profession is the preparation of those who will practice that profession. The participants all attended colleges within the state of North Dakota for their bachelor's degrees, and three of the participants have their doctoral degrees from the University of North Dakota. All of the participants worked in school systems prior to their current educational leadership positions. Five of the participants began their careers as teachers, one as a paraprofessional, and one as a program director. All of the participants indicated belonging to numerous professional state and national organizations within the educational field, and three of the participants identified receiving awards in their ascent to their current positions.

### **Recommendations for Native Women Entering Educational Leadership Positions**

Recommendations for Native American women entering educational leadership positions from the participants include (a) decisions should always be based on what is best for students, (b) take care to keep integrity intact, (c) lead by example, (d) continue

with education, (e) take opportunities as they come, and (f) appreciate blessings and support.

Three of the participants stated that they are “blessed” (P3), thankful (P6), and fortunate (P7) to have had the opportunities they have encountered. Native American women “are very capable, strong leaders” (P1), “in general have a different focus than a man” (P4), and “are different from everyone else only if we believe we are” (P5). As P5 states, “you have to believe in yourself. . . . Then make the supreme effort to prove yourself right!”

Successful school leaders respond productively to challenges and opportunities created by the accountability-oriented policy context in which they work (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Leaders do not impose goals on followers but work with others to create a shared sense of purpose and direction (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Native American women seeking educational leadership positions should possess the attitude that if they believe they can, they can. They should not be afraid to become more than they are. Native women educational leaders must seek out other Native women leaders who are willing to help. They are encouraged to further their education and become role models for other women and children. In traditional Native American culture, being a true leader is about a person’s concern for the greater whole, not what leadership brings a person as an individual (Day, 2010).

### **Limitations**

Limitations to the survey included (a) limited participants of only 7 out of a possible 9 responses, (b) there were only 10 identified North Dakota Native American

women in Pk-12 schools, (c) the survey was sent via email and not face to face, and (d) limited responses may be due to the knowledge that the study would become public.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

One recommendation would be to conduct a study with non-Native American women educational leaders in Pk-12 North Dakota schools and compare the findings with this study. This could identify the relationship between Native American women educational leaders to non-Native women educational leaders. Another recommendation would be to conduct a study of North Dakota Native American women educational leaders who desired an educational leadership position but were unsuccessful in their quest. Another recommendation would be to conduct a comparative study of North Dakota Native American male and female educational leaders. This could identify similarities and differences between genders in educational leadership experiences. Allowing more Native American school administrators in public schools with significant Native American populations might well reduce the high turnover rates among non-Native administrators who may have no vested interest in these Native communities (Christman, 2008).

## APPENDICES

**Appendix A**  
**Email Request for Survey Participation**

Good afternoon,

My name is Lana DeCoteau, and I am currently a student in the Educational Leadership Doctoral program at the University of North Dakota. I will soon begin my dissertation to complete my Doctorate in Educational Leadership.

My dissertation title is “Perspectives of Native American Women in Pk-12 Administrative Positions in North Dakota Public Schools.” Using the North Dakota public information system (MISO1 form), DP has identified you as a Native American woman in an administrative position in a Pk-12 public school.

I would like you to participate in my study. If you agree to participate, I will email you a consent form along with the ten open-ended survey questions. Please respond to this email by return email, and I can proceed. No names will be used in my dissertation, so I will assure you of confidentiality.

Thank you for your time and help in this last endeavor of mine.

Sincerely,

Lana DeCoteau  
lana.decoteau@sendit.nodak.edu

## **Appendix B**

### **Letter to Survey Participants**

Dear Educational Leader:

My name is Lana DeCoteau, and I am currently a student in the Educational Leadership Doctoral program at the University of North Dakota. I am inviting you to participate in a research study about North Dakota Native American women in PK-12 educational leadership positions. You were selected because you have been identified as a North Dakota Native American woman in a PK-12 educational position through the Department of Public Instruction.

The purpose of this research study is to discover similar attributes of Native American women currently in educational leadership positions. There will be nine people who will take part in this study at the University of North Dakota. Your participation in the study will be approximately one (1) hour in length to complete the survey. You will be contacted by me via email for your consent to participate. After I receive your signed consent form, I will email you with 10 open-ended survey questions to complete and ask that you email back to me your written or typed responses. I will also ask for a current résumé. I will then contact you by phone for clarification or additions to the 10 questions if needed. This phone call would only take about 10-30 minutes.

You may experience frustration or discomfort when completing this survey due to the sensitive nature. Please skip any question you would prefer not to answer. If you become upset by the questions, you may stop at any time. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings, you are encouraged to contact the UND's counseling center at (701) 777-2127.

You may not benefit personally from participating in the study. However, other Native American women may learn from your experiences and be encouraged to apply for educational leadership positions.

If you choose to participate in the study, you will not be identified. The records of this study will be kept in the researcher's office in a locked cabinet for three years and then will be shredded. All information will remain confidential with the researcher, advisor, and UND Institutional Review Board (IRB) and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, please contact Lana DeCoteau during the day at (701) 550-0026, my advisor Dr. Sherryl



Houdek at (701) 777-2394, or the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at (701) 777-4279.

Thank you for your participation in this study. Please email your responses to [lane.decoteau@sendit.nodak.edu](mailto:lane.decoteau@sendit.nodak.edu).

Sincerely,

Lana DeCoteau  
[lane.decoteau@sendit.nodak.edu](mailto:lane.decoteau@sendit.nodak.edu)

Dr. Sherryl Houdek  
[sherryl.houdek@email.und.edu](mailto:sherryl.houdek@email.und.edu)

**Appendix C  
Survey Questions**

1. As you reflect back on your career, describe what influenced you to become an educational leader. And why?
2. What personal leadership traits do you attribute to your success?
3. What were your leadership experiences along your career path?
4. Identify and describe barriers you encountered along your career path.
5. Identify and describe your support system along your career path.
6. Describe your personal motivation factors in becoming an educational leader.
7. Describe your leadership style.
8. Describe how you entered into your current leadership position.
9. What would you advise the next generation of Native American women aspiring to become Pk-12 educational leaders?
10. What else would you like to share about yourself as a Native American woman in educational leadership?

**PLEASE ATTACH A CURRENT RÉSUMÉ WITH YOUR RESPONSES**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION! If you would like a copy of the  
results, please let me know.**

## Appendix D IRB Approval

### REPORT OF ACTION: EXEMPT/EXPEDITED REVIEW University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board

Date: 2/28/2012 Project Number: IRB-201203-306

Principal Investigator: DeCoteau, Lanelia

Department: Educational Leadership

Project Title: Perspectives of Native American Women in PK-12 Administrative Positions in North Dakota Public Schools

The above referenced project was reviewed by a designated member for the University's Institutional Review Board on \_\_\_\_\_ and the following action was taken:

- Project approved. **Expedited Review** Category No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Next scheduled review must be before:  
 **Copies of the attached consent form with the IRB approval stamp dated \_\_\_\_\_ must be used in obtaining consent for this study.**
- Project approved. **Exempt Review** Category No. \_\_\_\_\_  
This approval is valid until September 1, 2012 as long as approved procedures are followed. No periodic review scheduled unless so stated in the Remarks Section.  
 **Copies of the attached consent form with the IRB approval stamp dated \_\_\_\_\_ must be used in obtaining consent for this study.**
- Minor modifications required. The required corrections/additions must be submitted to RDC for review and approval. **This study may NOT be started UNTIL final IRB approval has been received.**
- Project approval **deferred. This study may not be started until final IRB approval has been received.** (See Remarks Section for further information.)
- Disapproved claim of exemption. This project requires Expedited or Full Board review. The Human Subjects Review Form must be filled out and submitted to the IRB for review.
- Proposed project is not human subject research and does not require IRB review.
  - Not Research
  - Not Human Subject

**PLEASE NOTE: Requested revisions for student proposals MUST include adviser's signature. All revisions MUST be highlighted.**

- Education Requirements Completed. (Project cannot be started until IRB education requirements are met.)

cc: Sherryl Houdek, Ed.D.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Designated IRB Member  
UND's Institutional Review Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If the proposed project (clinical medical) is to be part of a research activity funded by a Federal Agency, a special assurance statement or a completed 310 Form may be required. Contact RDC to obtain the required documents.

(Revised 10/2006)

## REFERENCES

- Ball, L. (2010, July 2). *Profile: Alice Eagly*. Retrieved from Psychology's Feminist Voices: <http://www.feministvoices.com/alice-eagly/>
- Bjork, L. (2000). Introduction: Women in the Superintendency-Advances in Research and Theory. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 5-17.
- Bucholz, B. (2011). *North Dakota Department of Public Instruction*. Bismarck: Department of Public Instruction.
- Burns, G. & Martin, B. N. (2010). Examination of the Effectiveness of Male and Female Educational Leaders Who Made Use of the Invitational Leadership Style of Leadership. *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice*, 29-55.
- Butterfield, R. A. (1994). Blueprints for Indian Education: Improving Mainstream Schooling. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED372898)
- Chenoy, C. (2012). Women in Leadership. *Women in Leadership*, 1-2.
- Christman, D. & McClellan, R. (2008). "Living on Barbed Wire:" Resilient Women Administrators in Educational Leadership Programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 3-29.
- Christman, D. G. (2008). A Model of American Indian School Administrators: Completing the Circle of Knowledge in Native Schools. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 53-72.

- Creswell, J. (2003). *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oakes: SAGE.
- Davey, M. (2006, February 4). As Tribal Leaders, Women Still Fight Old Views. *The New York Times*, pp. 1-2.
- Day, P. (2010). Leadership From an American Indian Perspective. In H. & Vakalahi, *Women of Color on the Rise* (pp. 137-153). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deirdre, A. A. (1997). The Hidden Half: A History of Native American Women's Education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 757-771.
- Derrington, M. L. & Sharratt, G. (2009). *Female Superintendents: Breaking Barriers and Challenging Life Styles*. Austin: Delta Kappa Gamma.
- Dunbar, D. P. & Kinnersley, R. T. (2011). Mentoring Female Administrators Toward Leadership Success. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 17-24.
- Eagly, A. H. & Carli, L. (2003). The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 807-834.
- Eagly, A. H. & Carli, L. (2007). Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 1-4.
- Eagly, A. H. & Johannesen-Schmidt, M. (2001). The Leadership Styles of Women and Men. *Journal of Social Issues*, 781-797.
- Eagly, A. H. (2007). Female Leadership Advantage and Disadvantage: Resolving the Contradictions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 1-12.
- Eagly, A. H. & Carli, L. (2009). Navigating the Labyrinth. *The School Administrator*, 10-16.

- Fann, A. (2004). *Forgotten Students: American Indian High School Students' Narratives on College Going*. Los Angeles: UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies.
- Fitzgerald, T. (2003). Changing the Deafening Silence of Indigenous Women's Voices in Educational Leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 9-23.
- Fitzgerald, T. (2006). Walking Between Two Worlds. *Education Management Administration & Leadership*, 201-213.
- Glass, T. E. (2000). *The Study of the American School Superintendency*. Arlington: American Association of School Administrators.
- Grogan, M. (1999). Equity/Equality Issues of Gender, Race, and Class. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 518-536.
- Grogan, M. (2000). Laying the Groundwork for a Reconception of the Superintendency From Feminist Postmodern Perspectives. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 117-142.
- Grove, R. & Montgomery, P. (1999). Women and the Leadership Paradigm: Bridging the Gender Gap. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED452614)
- Hart, J. (2006). Exploring Tribal Leadership: Understanding and Working with Tribal People. *Journal of Extension*, 1-9.
- Hodge, F. (1907). *Handbook of American Indians North of New Mexico*. Washington: Government Printing Office.
- Hoff, D. M. (2011, March 3). *In Search of Leaders: Gender Factors in School Administration*. Retrieved from Advancing Women in Leadership: <http://www.advancingwomen.com>

- Hoyt, C. (2013). Women in Leadership. In P. G. Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice* (pp. 349-365). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Huffman, T. (2001). Resistance Theory and the Transculturation Hypothesis as Explanations of College Attrition and Persistence Among Culturally Traditional American Indian Students. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 1-39.
- Huffman, T. (2010). *Theoretical Perspectives on American Indian Education*. New York: AltaMira Press.
- Jacobs, J. (1996). Gender Inequality and Higher Education. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 153-185.
- James, K. W. (1994). *Barriers to Work Advancement Experienced by Native Americans*. Boulder: U.S. Department of Labor.
- Kawulich, B. (2009). Giving Back to the Community Through Leadership. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 1-15. Retrieved from Advancing Women in Leadership Journal.
- Kiamba, J. (2008). Women and Leadership Positions: Social and Cultural Barriers to Success. *Wagadu*, 1-9.
- Kirschstein, R. (2004). Women in Leadership. *National Research Council (US) Committee on Women in Science and Engineering* (pp. 1-2). Washington: National Academies Press.
- Kolb, D. M., Williams, J., & Frohlinger, C. (2010). *Her Place at the Table*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Kotlowski, D. (2003). Alcatraz, Wounded Knee, and Beyond: The Nixon and Ford Administrations Respond to Native American Protest. *Pacific Historical Review*, 201-227.
- Krusemark, S. (2012). The Campus as Stage: A Qualitative Study of Hypervisibility and Invisibility of African American Female Identity in the Built Campus Environment. *Journal of Research on Women and Gender*, 25-51.
- Langston, D. (2006, March 21). *American Indian Women's Activism in the 1960s and 1970s*. Retrieved March 15, 2011, from Indybay:  
[http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/03/21/18095451.php?show\\_comments=1](http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/03/21/18095451.php?show_comments=1)
- Leithwood, K. A. & Riehl, C. (2003). *What We Know About Successful School Leadership*. Philadelphia: Laboratory for Student Success, Temple University.
- Levitt, D. (2010). Women and Leadership: A Developmental Paradox? *American Counseling Association*, 66-75.
- Lips, H. (2009, April 2). *Women and Leadership: Delicate Balance Act*. Retrieved April 21, 2011, from Womensmedia: <http://www.womensmedia.com/lead/88-women-and-leadership-delicate-balancing-act.html>
- Logan, J. (1998). School Leadership of the 90's and Beyond: A Window of Opportunity for Women Educators. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 1-9.
- Lomawaima, K. T. (2002). When Tribal Sovereignty Challenges Democracy: American Indian Education and the Democratic Ideal. *American Indian Research Journal*, 279-305.



- Lynch, P. D. & Charleston, M. (1990). The Emergence of American Indian Leadership. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 1-6.
- Mahitivanichcha, K. & Rorrer, A. K. (2006). Women's Choices Within Market Constraints: Re-Visioning Access to and Participation in the Superintendency. *Education Administration Quarterly*, 483-517.
- Marshall, J. I. (2009). *Leadership Lesson of Crazy Horse the Power of Four*. New York: Sterling Publishing Company Inc.
- Martin, J. R. (1981). The Ideal of the Educated Person. *Educational Theory*, 31(2), pp. 97-109.
- McCollum, P. (2005, July 1). *Review of Literature on Leadership: An Excerpt From the New Book "The Ohtli Encuentro-Women of Color Share Pathways to Leadership"*. Retrieved April 22, 2011, from IDRA: [http://www.idra.org/IDRA\\_Newsletter/June\\_-\\_July\\_2005\\_Self\\_-\\_Renewing\\_Schools\\_Leadership\\_Accountability/Review\\_of\\_Literature\\_on\\_Leadership/](http://www.idra.org/IDRA_Newsletter/June_-_July_2005_Self_-_Renewing_Schools_Leadership_Accountability/Review_of_Literature_on_Leadership/)
- Melendez, T. (2008). Opening Up the Superintendency. *Leadership*, 24-27.
- Montenegro, X. (1993). *Women and Racial Minority Representation in School*. Arlington: American Association of School Administrators.
- Moss, S. (2008, October 17). *Social Role Theory*. Retrieved from Psychlopedia Everything Psychology: <http://www.psychology.com.au/Psychlopedia/article.asp?id=77>
- Napier, L. (1995). Educational Profiles of Nine Gifted American Indian Women and Their Own Stories about Wanting to Lead. *Roepers Review*, 38-52.

- Northhouse, P. (2013). *Leadership Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Pember, M. (2008). Changing Roles in Indian Country. *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, 11-12.
- Pewewardy, D. & Frey, B. (2004). American Indian Students' Perceptions of Racial Climate, Multicultural Support Services, and Ethnic Fraud at a Predominantly White University. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 32-60.
- Phillip, D. (2009, March 22). *Through the Labyrinth: Real Answers on How Women Become Leaders*. Retrieved from LLRX.com:  
<http://www.llrx.com/features/womenleaders.htm>
- Popick, J. (2006). Native American Women, Past, Present and Future. *Lethbridge Undergraduate Research Journal*, 1-5.
- Portman, T. A. A. & Garrett, M. T. (2005). Beloved Women: Nurturing the Sacred Fire of Leadership From an American Indian Perspective. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 284-291.
- Prindeville, D. (2003). Identity and the Politics of American Indian and Hispanic Women Leaders. *Gender and Society*, 591-608.
- Prindeville, D. (2004). Feminist Nations? A Study of Native American Women in Southwestern Tribal Politics. *Political Research Quarterly*, 101-112.
- Regan, H. B. & Brooks, G. H. (1992). Out of Women's Experience: School Leadership for Women and Men. *American Educational Research on Women in Education* (pp. 1-29). University Park: Viewpoints.

- Reyhner, J. & Singh, H. K. (2010). Cultural Genocide in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States: The Destruction and Transformation of Indigenous Cultures. *Indigenous Policy Journal*, 1-26.
- Reyhner, J. (1992). Teaching American Indian Students. In J. Reyhner, *Teaching American Indian Students* (pp. 7-9). Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Reyhner, J. (1994). *American Indian/Alaska Native Education*. Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.
- Reyhner, J. (2011). American Indian/Alaska Native Education: An Overview. *American Indian Education*, 1-15.
- Ridgeway, C. (2001). Gender, Status, and Leadership. *Journal of Social Issues*, 637-655.
- Roessel, R. A., Jr. (1968, May). An Overview of the Rough Rock Demonstration School. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 7(3).
- Shakeshift, C. B. (2007). Increasing Gender Equity in Educational Leadership. In C. B. Shakeshift, *Handbook for Achieving Gender Equity Through Education* (pp. 103-129). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Smith, M. (n.d.). *Women and Leadership*. Pennsylvania: Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.
- St. Charles, J. C. (1995). *Research Into Practice: an Overview of Reading Research for Washington State*. Olympia: The Evergreen Center for Educational Improvement.
- St.Germaine, R. (1995). Drop-Out Rates Among American Indian and Alaska Native Students: Beyond Cultural Discontinuity. Charleston, West Virginia, USA.

- Statistics, N. C. (2005, August). *Status and Trends in the Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives*. Retrieved March 30, 2011, from National Center for Education Statistics: [http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/nativetrends/ind\\_1\\_3.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/nativetrends/ind_1_3.asp)
- Tallerico, M. & Blount, J. M. (2004). Women and the Superintendency: Insights From Theory and History. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 633-662.
- Turner, C. (2007). Pathways to the Presidency: Biographical Sketches of Women of Color Firsts. *Harvard Educational Review*, 1-38.
- Tyler, K. U. (2008). Cultural Discontinuity: Toward a Quantitative Investigation of a Major Hypothesis in Education. *Educational Researcher*, 280-297.
- Unknown. (2005). The Conundrum of the Glass Ceiling. *The Economist*, 1-9.
- Unknown. (2011). *Traditional American Indian Leadership*. St. Paul: American Indian Policy Center.
- Warner, L. S. & Grint, K. (2006, July 15). American Indian Ways of Leading and Knowing. *Sage Publications*, pp. 225-244.
- Weaver, H. (2000). Balancing Culture and Professional Education: American Indians/Alaska Natives and the Helping Professions. *Journal of American Indian Education*.
- Wexler, L. (2006). Learning Resistance: Inupiat and the US Bureau of Education, 1885-1906—Deconstructing Assimilation Strategies and Implications for Today. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 17-51.
- Whitebeck, L. H. (2001). Traditional Culture and Academic Success Among American Indian Children in the Upper Midwest. *Journal of American Indian Education*.

Williams, R. (2010). Why Has the Glass Ceiling Become Impenetrable? *Psychology Today*.

Wurtz, L. (2012). *Where are the Women?* Bismarck: Otto Bremer Foundation-Ready to Run-North Dakota Project.

Yoder, J. (2001). Making Leadership Work More Effectively for Women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 815-828.