

Mentoring matters: An exploratory survey of educational leadership doctoral students' perspectives

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Abstract:

There is limited research on quantitative differences between men and women's experiences in doctoral programs. We aim to fill that gap by sharing findings from a web-based exploratory survey of perceived gender differences on quality mentoring in educational leadership doctoral programs. According to survey results, there is limited statistical significance in terms of gender differences in programmatic supports and scholarly progress. However, women experience feelings of self-doubt due to negative experiences with advising and mentoring, including difficulties making connections to a quality mentor. Furthermore, both female and male participants shared common definitions of what constitutes quality mentorship and believed mentorship was important, but lacking in varying degrees. Finally, all participants agreed that their educational leadership preparation programs should provide additional support in terms of writing and research development. Participants also shared important recommendations for strengthening mentoring experiences as well as future research methods and foci.

Keywords: gender | doctoral students | educational leadership | exploratory survey

Article:

Efforts to increase the numbers and success of female scholars in tenure-line faculty positions have spurred debates concerning recruitment, preparation, and retention as well as the appropriateness of focusing on women given their growing presence in higher education. In the United States, female graduate student enrollment presently exceeds that of males (Aud et al., 2013; National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2009). Conversely, women make up only 33% of full-time tenure-line faculty in American higher education—an increase of only 7% over the past 75 years. Thus, it is ever more critical to recruit and retain female professors who serve as mentors for the next generation of women leaders. Interestingly, the number of women-earning doctorates surpassed those received by men in 2002, and has continued to grow. While in 2008, 67% of doctorate degrees in education were granted to women (NCES, 2010),

scholars continue to find that, regardless of the program emphases, female graduate students experience substantial differences in mentoring and other resources when compared to their male counterparts (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Johnsrud, 1990; Mansfield, Welton, Lee & Young, 2010; Meyerson & Ely, 2003; Paglis, Green, & Bauer, 2006; Rayle et al., 2006; Rusch, 2004). Given these concerns, more research is necessary to further understand perceived gender inequities in higher education mentoring. There is evidence to suggest that gender inequities exist across fields of study, but this project was concerned expressly with educational leadership preparation programs.

Educational leadership preparation programs vary depending on the institution, but usually consist of graduate-level programs that train students to become school principals, superintendents, policy analysts, higher education administrators, and future educational leadership professors. While important work has been done in schools of education (Creighton, Creighton, & Parks, 2010), research specific to educational leadership graduate students' gendered experiences is relatively sparse (Mansfield et al., 2010). While there are ongoing discussions evaluating educational leadership preparation programmatic quality (Orr, 2012), few scholars examine mentoring approaches (Sherman & Grogan, 2011). Importantly, researchers are increasingly calling for an expansion of intentional conversations concerning gender identity in educational leadership preparation programs (Killingsworth, Cabezas, Kensler, & Brooks, 2010; Mansfield et al., 2010), along with work that looks at gender and other identity complexities such as race/ethnicity within academe as a whole (Davis, 2008; Harden, Clark, Johnson, & Larson, 2009; Mansfield et al., 2010; Reddick, 2011; Schlosser & Foley, 2008).

Likewise, researchers have called for the diversification of the methodology used to research the experiences and progress of women in academe. For example, Paglis et al. (2006) forwarded that researchers should continue to move beyond the use of small, narrow samples, and examine the extent to which their results are externally valid and can be generalized to broad student populations. Researchers should also consider executing longitudinal studies to construct appropriate controls to test the predictive validity of mentoring (Paglis et al., 2006). Moreover, since most researchers use qualitative approaches to explore mentoring women in academe, there is limited research on quantitative differences between men and women's experiences in doctoral programs. We aim to fill that gap by sharing findings from a 30-item web-based exploratory survey of perceived gender differences vis-à-vis quality mentoring in educational leadership doctoral programs.

The purpose of this study was fourfold. First, we wished to understand educational leadership graduate students' conceptions of mentorship as well as give them an opportunity to describe their mentorship experiences. Second, we hoped to better understand whether definitions and experiences with mentorship varied according to gender. Third, we use this exploratory survey process to inform the design of future studies on mentoring in educational leadership preparation. Finally, by exploring possible gender differences in mentoring needs and perspectives, we hoped to make recommendations for ways in which educational leadership professional organizations and university departments might enhance mentorship experiences for all students generally and women specifically.

Literature Review

Mentoring is considered the most essential element to doctoral students' success in academe (Brooks & Young, 2008; Creighton et al., 2010; Davis, 2008; Harden et al., 2009; Johnson & Huwe, 2003; Kurtz-Costes, Helmke, & Ulku-Steiner, 2006; Lunsford, 2012; Reddick, 2012). Unsurprisingly, researchers have attributed the high attrition rates for female doctoral candidates' program non-completion to the lack of mentors and quality mentoring programs (Dixon-Reeves, 2003; Edwards-Alexander, 2005; Garcia, 1999; Garvey, 1999; Hanna, 2005; Maher, Ford, & Thompson, 2004; Manuelito-Kerkvliet, 2005; Schwartz, Bower, Rice, & Washington, 2003). Several scholars illustrate how the academy is primarily a white-male experience (Brooks & Young, 2008; Kurtz-Costes et al., 2006; Lovitts, 2001; Mansfield et al., 2010; Moyer, Laovey, & Casey-Cannon, 1999; Reddick, 2011, 2012). The academy is changing, but change is slow due to the time it takes for generational turnover in the professorial ranks. For example, in addition to the growth in female graduate student enrollment, there has also been significant growth of first-generation college students and students who identify as black, Latino, and Asian. However, faculty diversity remains relatively stagnant. As a result, according to Ladson-Billings (1997), a type of *intellectual segregation* ensues when there is a lack of faculty mentors who share similar backgrounds and research interests. Several scholars agree with Ladson-Billings' assertions (Brooks & Young, 2008; Grant, 2012; Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Mansfield et al., 2010; Moyer et al., 1999; Patton, 2009; Reddick, 2011, 2012).

Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

While educational leadership programs vary in terms of delivery, those that focus on preparing K-12 leaders have structural and programmatic similarities. Most K-12 leadership preparation programs offer a degree en route to obtaining administrative licensure, and contain some form of practice-oriented experience such as internships and field-based work (Preis, Grogan, Sherman, & Beatty, 2007). The coursework is typically divided into two areas: The coursework and the internship (Preis et al., 2007). Scholars on K-12 educational leadership preparation make several recommendations for preparing administrators who will have the greatest opportunity to make a positive impact on school culture and student achievement. Some of these recommendations include establishing partnerships between school districts and universities in order to strengthen the quality of the professional pipeline (Hitt, Tucker, & Young, 2012), and developing a signature pedagogy for educational leadership preparation that "acknowledges leadership work as an ethical and moral craft that draws from conceptual and abstract knowledge, engages in ongoing critical-reflective inquiry, and is practice based within diverse school-community environments in a larger social political milieu" (Black & Murtadha, 2007, pp. 10–11).

Given this need to ensure educational administrators can lead in shifting social, cultural, and political contexts, it is also recommended educational leadership preparation make social justice and equity a foundational framework for program design (Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010), especially as it pertains to poverty (Rodriguez & Fabionar, 2010); race and racism (Jean-Marie & Mansfield, 2013), serving students with special needs (Capper, Rodriguez, & McKinney, 2010), language minority students (Scanlan & López, 2012; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011), and sexual identity (Koschoreck & Slattery, 2010). While less attention is given to gender in leadership preparation programs, there are scholars calling for a resistance to the prevailing gender-blind

stance in schools, and recognition that girls' and boys' treatment in schools, and access and achievement differ in important ways (Marshall & Young, 2013; Mansfield & Newcomb, 2014).

Women in the K-12 Setting

According to the recent 2011–2012 data, 76.3% of K-12 public school teachers in the United States are women, and that same year women held close to 52% percent of the principal positions in public schools, which is an increase from 34% in 1993–1994 (NCES, 2012). This considerable shift in opportunities for women in the principalship aligns with increased attention to mentoring to both encourage women to enter and retain educational administration positions (Peters, 2003; Sherman, Muñoz, & Pankake, 2008). Despite the growth in the number of female principals, the superintendency—one of the highest positions of institutional power to direct policies and practices within our nation's schools—is still dominated by men (Grogan & Brunner, 2005; Robinson, 2013). For example, in the most recent *American School Superintendent: 2010 Decennial Study*, among a survey of 2,000 superintendents, only 24% were women. This survey data are consistent with the most recent national data indicating less than a quarter of superintendency positions are held by women (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Given this *glass ceiling* for women who strive to ascend from the principalship to the superintendency (Garn & Casey, 2008), mentoring programs across the country have been designed to specifically encourage women's interests in the superintendency and help them build networks in the job search process (Kamler, 2006). Additionally, peer support networks, or relational mentoring, are essential to retain women in the superintendency (McClellan, Ivory, & Dominguez, 2008).

A majority of researchers on mentoring and gender in educational leadership have focused on one segment of the educational leadership pipeline: K-12 administrators. District-sponsored academies designed solely for the development of female administrators is recognized to be an effective form of mentoring (Sherman, 2005); especially, if women—especially women of color—are able to develop a collegial, non-authoritative relationship with their mentor that is a departure from the pervasively white-male-dominated professional spaces in which they must navigate (Peters, 2003). As a result, small gains have been made in extending the pipeline for women in the field of educational leadership (Grant, 2012; Tillman, 2001).

Increased programmatic emphasis on mentoring women in educational administration is vital, but relatively little attention has been paid to the graduate student experience and the supports necessary to prepare women for research careers (Mansfield et al., 2010). As such, more research is needed to understand the professoriate and the importance of mentorship in the graduate program generally and women specifically (Mansfield et al., 2010; Reddick, 2011).

Defining Effective Mentorship in Graduate Education

According to Williams-Nickelson (2009), a mentor is a person who works towards integrating a neophyte into a professional capacity. Furthermore, a mentoring relationship ebbs and flows over time, and is the “intentional process of nurturing, support, protection, guidance, instruction, and challenge within mutually agreed upon and ethical parameters that include the integration of personal and professional aspects of an individual's life” (Williams-Nickelson, 2009, p. 286).

The evolution of the mentor–mentee relationship is essential to the in-depth learning process, professional and research preparation, and overall experience of a doctoral program. Rosser (2004) found that successful mentor–mentee relationships eventually grow from a more one-sided give-and-take relationship into something that is more bi-directional, cooperative, and fosters mutual empowerment through dialog, feedback, and reflection. Thus, the synergism created enables growth and advancement for both parties.

The research is consistent in its definitions of mentoring in graduate education; however, the meaning of faculty–student mentoring and the format of its provision vary radically from institution to institution (Campbell, 2007). Some institutions label typical faculty advising as mentoring (Lunsford, 2012; Schlosser & Foley, 2008). Other institutions determine quality faculty–student connections by evaluating how personal, significant, and lengthy the mentoring relationship is between them (Campbell, 2007). Some universities provide an elaborate matching program between mentors and mentees as a structured design to the relationship (Campbell, 2007). Researchers have posited that formal, structured, and intentional mentoring programs are best designed to meet the goals of retention, academic performance, and placement in graduate school and that the institutional context influences how the faculty–graduate student mentorship relationship is defined (Creighton et al., 2010; Davis, 2008; Lunsford, 2012; Marcellino, 2011; Schlosser & Foley, 2008).

Mentoring Activities and Advantages

It is important for mentees to reflect on the direction and process of pursuing all forms of academic and professional socialization and preparation available as part of their graduate experience, as it is multilayered and can come in different forms from different sources (Driscoll et al., 2009; Mansfield et al., 2010). The mentor models the processes involved with honing the skills necessary for a doctoral student to “develop and integrate their professional identities of researcher, teacher, and engaged public scholar” (Colbeck, 2008, p. 14). As graduate students navigate the duality of roles as student and scholar, faculty mentors should “provide doctoral students with rigorous and constructive feedback on their academic work and writing. They should stimulate and push the student’s thinking intellectually” (Rosser, 2004, p. 30). This level of support is significantly important because graduate students who receive quality mentoring demonstrate greater research productivity, higher quality training, and extensive professional and networking opportunities compared to graduate students without a faculty mentor (Kurtz-Costes et al., 2006). Mentors should also assist the mentee with job search details such as salary negotiations when a job prospect arises (Williams-Nickelson, 2009). Ultimately, female doctoral students must emulate prolific scholars, if their goal is to become researchers (Colbeck, 2008; Rosser, 2004).

Mentoring and Identity Issues

There is a rise in research and discourse on what constitutes quality in terms of theoretical foundations, curriculum, instruction, professionalization, and standards for educational leadership preparation programs (Hackmann & McCarthy, 2011; Hitt et al., 2012), but minimal attention is given to the encompassing identity politics involved—especially gender. Consequently, research concerning graduate students’ gendered experiences in educational

leadership programs is relatively sparse. In response, an increase in research devoted to mentoring women students in educational leadership preparation is emerging (Killingsworth et al., 2010; Mansfield et al., 2010).

Gender

Research on the benefits of same gender mentoring varies. Kurtz-Costes et al. (2006) found that mentors' gender was not the most significant issue. Rather, "it was the overall supportiveness of the mentor—including attitudes about balancing professional and personal lives—that influenced students' stress and career commitment" (p. 151). However, Maher et al. (2004) and Moyer et al. (1999) found that mentoring relationships with female faculty were fundamental to graduate school completion for female graduate students. Other scholars have found that women scholars (students in the case of Mansfield et al., 2010 and new faculty in the case of Driscoll et al., 2009) purposefully forged peer-mentoring relationships with similarly positioned women in order to "navigate the lonely sea" of academe (Driscoll et al., 2009, p. 6).

Race/ethnicity

The racial/ethnic homogeneity of the professoriate is generally concerning (Davis, 2008) especially among the ranks of educational leadership scholars (Mansfield et al., 2010). Yet, more recent scholarship has taken a more optimistic stance (Reddick, 2011). Reddick found that sharing a cultural identity and having a common experience of being a person of color in a primarily white institution, contributed to the bonding and level of trust that could be forged between professorial mentors and their student mentees. Like others, Reddick also found that race was not a single, unifying factor between faculty and students. Rather, age, gender, and social class all interacted and presented both challenges and opportunities to the mentor-mentee relationship (e.g. Mansfield et al., 2010; Reddick, 2011; Young & Brooks, 2008). However, Reddick also found serious challenges to black faculty's ability to mentor black students, with the biggest challenge being time constraints due to the demands placed on young, tenure-track faculty. As alluded to prior, the professorial ranks are changing, but not changing fast enough. While there is hope for advancing students of color via mentorship with faculty of color, there is also a threat of burn-out since most faculty of color are new to the professoriate and stretched thin. All new faculty need mentoring from senior faculty. Coupled with the sometimes hostile work environment that faculty of color encounter, this sub-population of the professoriate is especially at risk for burn-out as they are most often called upon to provide a nurturing environment for the growing ranks of students of color (Peters, 2014).

Methodological Issues

In addition to concerns about the diversity of who constitutes the leadership ranks in both K-12 and higher education settings, researchers have called for the diversification of the methodology used to research the experiences and progress of women in educational leadership. A broader scope of methodological tools have been used to examine the quality and effectiveness of educational leadership preparation programs by conducting program evaluations using survey (Buskey & Karvonen, 2012; Orr, 2012) mixed methods (Huang et al., 2012); case study (Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010); and action research (Orr, Doolittle, Kottkamp, Osterman, &

Silverberg, 2004). Also, survey design has been used in a general way to capture an overall picture of faculty who teach in educational leadership preparation programs (Hackmann & McCarthy, 2011), while Rusch (2004) used survey design more specifically to hone in on faculty's perceptions and discourse about gender and race in educational leadership classrooms.

As the above discussion suggests, a variety of methods have been used to study educational leadership preparation programs. However, most researchers studying the experiences of women use qualitative data collection tools such as interviews and focus groups, along with survey questionnaires that implement open-ended questions and descriptive statistical analyses (deCasal & Mulligan, 2004; Mansfield et al., 2010). Moreover, most of these studies have relatively small sample sizes (<30), which provide a micro-perspective of women's experiences in specific cases. As such, the field would benefit from studies utilizing a more robust sample size and a methodology to gather a macro-perspective, and provide information that may have potential for generalizability.

Methods

In order to begin addressing the above methodological concerns, we designed an exploratory web-based survey. This study is exploratory in that it does not aim to draw conclusions, but offers a first attempt to more fully probe the nature of phenomena and better define the issues in need of further study (Babbie, 2007). Exploratory research typically uses smaller sample sizes, such as the one used in our study, to gain insight on an issue within a population that is understudied. Furthermore, exploratory research enabled us to assess the appropriateness of methodological techniques in order to inform future research designs (Babbie). Also, survey methodology was an appropriate choice for this project since our goals included drawing more generalizable inferences about a specific population (Czaja & Blair, 2005). The following questions guided the construction, interpretation, and presentation of the research:

1. How do graduate students in educational leadership define mentorship?
2. What specific mentorship activities do educational leadership graduate students experience?
3. Are there differences in experiences according to gender?
4. How can the present study methodology be strengthened in future research endeavors?

The design of the survey was based upon findings from our previous qualitative case study of the lived experiences of 12 female doctoral students in one educational leadership preparation program (Mansfield et al., 2010). Female doctoral students in our prior qualitative study articulated that the amount of formal mentoring they received (or did not receive) was not adequate, and that formal mentoring should commence as soon as students enter doctoral programs. After completing this qualitative case study, it became apparent that expanding our investigation to include a larger sample across a variety of institutions could prove fruitful. In addition, thematic qualitative analysis from the case study helped us identify and determine what constructs and supporting questions should be examined in the present study.

Developing the Instrument

Prior to administering the survey, a group of cross-generational female scholars examined a draft of the survey instrument during planned work sessions at two major professional conferences—University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) and American Educational Research Association (AERA)—during the 2009–2010 academic year. This group of over 20 women shared constructive feedback to increase the validity of the instrument prior to launch of the exploratory survey. Feedback from experts verified face and construct validity by garnering the quality of survey construct development as well as cultural relevance to the lived experiences of the sub-sample (Mertens, 2010).

The final product was a 30-item web-based survey—consisting of mostly closed-ended questions and a few open-ended questions—that included multi-item measures based on a Likert scale, and questions that required the participant to either report a frequency, answer *yes* or *no*, or select any responses from a list that apply (see Table 1). The survey consisted of a set of questions focused on factors that accelerated or hindered the student’s program progress, indicators of academic productivity such as number of publications or conference participation, job- and funding-related issues, programmatic support to succeed in the field, students perspectives on quality mentorship, and the nature of mentor–mentee relationships and connections. Participants were also given opportunities to give feedback on the survey instrument as well as foci for future study. The research reported in this article was conducted during the 2010–2011 academic year.

Table 1. List of Questions and Statistical Analyses

Question topic	Types of questions	Reported as	Statistical analysis
Factors accelerating program progress	Likert scale	Percentages	Crosstabs
Factors hindering student program progress	Likert scale	Percentages	Crosstabs
Publication and conference presentations	Frequency	Frequency, percentages	Crosstabs
Job- and funding-related issues	Yes or No	Frequency, percentages	Crosstabs
Program support for success in the field	Likert scale	Mean, standard deviation	Independent sample <i>t</i> -test
Students’ perspectives of quality mentorship	Select applicable responses	Frequency, percentages	Crosstabs
Relationship between mentor & mentee, part 1	Yes or No, Select applicable response	Frequency, percentages	Crosstabs
Relationship between mentor & mentee, part 2	Likert scale	Mean, standard deviation	Independent sample <i>t</i> -test
Connections to mentors	Select applicable responses	Frequency, percentages	Crosstabs

Population and Sample

The survey participants were selected with a combination of purposeful, random, and convenience sampling. First, in order to place brackets on the population of graduate students, we chose to focus on doctoral students enrolled in educational leadership preparation programs at UCEA member institutions. This decision was purposeful in that it provided access to students in 90 institutions varying in size or total enrollment and type (e.g. public vs. private). Thereafter, institutions were contacted to obtain the contact information of doctoral students enrolled in their educational leadership programs. From this list, we randomly sampled and invited students to

participate in the survey. Since participation was voluntary, only those willing to participate were included in the final sample, which means the final selection of 78 survey participants was determined as a matter of convenience.

Analysis

We reported each of the set of questions as descriptive statistical analyses such as frequency, mean, standard deviation, and percentages in SPSS version 13. Demographic data were reported as percentages. All data were analyzed using frequency, crosstabs, or independent sample *t*-test. Any statistically significant data were reported at either a $p = .05$ (*) or $p = .01$ (**) level of statistical significance. Finally, for the independent sample *t*-test, we calculated the Cohen's *D* effect size to measure the strength of the relationship in differences between men and women. When interpreting the magnitude of the Cohen's *D* effect size we categorize .2 as small, .5 as medium, and .8 as large (Cohen, 1988). In Table 1 we provide a list of the various statistical analyses conducted for each corresponding set of questions.

Limitations

Finally, we recognize limitations in using survey methodology to understand issues of equity and access specific to gender. Survey methodology is unable to measure a number of contextual nuances and complexities female graduate students may experience with mentoring in an educational leadership preparation program (e.g. Bussey, 2008). For example, an individual's identity is often more complex, and the fixed, categorical nature of survey items do not fully capture multiple identity intersections (Mansfield et al., 2010; Warikoo & Carter, 2009). Furthermore, each educational leadership preparation program has its own context specific social, cultural, and political dimensions that are in flux and difficult to fully capture in a single or even longitudinal survey administration (e.g. Bussey, 2008).

Survey Results

Participant Demographic Information

Table 2 provides demographic information of the doctoral students who participated in our exploratory survey, illustrating the representation of women, 52, was more than twice that of men, 26. This sample distribution is on par with national trends where in 2010 approximately 66.7% of students enrolled in doctoral programs in the field of education were women (Gonzalez, Allum, & Sowell, 2013). In all, a total of 78 doctoral students participated in this survey. The programmatic emphasis (Table 3) of participants varied from a focus on: K-12 leadership studies (69% of male vs. 40% of female); educational policy studies (31% vs. 29%, respectively); higher education administration policy (19% vs. 23%, respectively); community college leadership (4% vs. 2%, respectively); superintendency preparation (12% vs. 2%, respectively) and; curriculum and instructional leadership programs (19% vs. 17%, respectively). More female students enrolled in higher education administration policy, while more male students were in superintendency preparation programs. It should be noted that participants were able to select more than one programmatic emphasis. Additionally, according to Table 4, a

majority of the participants were from public universities. All male participants were enrolled at public universities while 85% of female participants were enrolled in public universities.

Table 2. Participants’ Race/Ethnicity and Gender

	Gender					
	Male			Female		
	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%
Asian American	26	3	12	52	6	12
Black or African-American	26	3	12	52	5	10
Hispanic or Latino	26	2	8	52	1	2
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	26	1	4	52	0	0
White or Caucasian (not Hispanic origin)	26	16	62	52	38	73
Multiple races	26	1	4	52	2	4

Table 3. Participants’ Educational Leadership Preparation Program of Emphasis

Emphasis of program	Gender					
	Male			Female		
	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%
K-12 leadership studies	26	18	69	52	22	42
Educational policy studies	26	8	31	52	15	29
Higher Ed admin policy	26	5	19	52	12	23
Community college leadership	26	1	4	52	1	2
Superintendency preparation	26	3	12	52	1	2
Curriculum/instructional leadership	26	5	19	52	9	17

Table 4. Participants’ Institution Type

	Gender					
	Male			Female		
	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%
Public institution	26	26	100	52	44	85
Private institution	26	0	0	52	8	15

Race/ethnicity distribution of doctoral students

As previously noted, women represent the majority of students who participated in the study; most of who self-identified as white (see Table 2). White males were the second largest group in the sample (62%) behind white females (73%). Overall, the male students comprised: 62% white; 12% Asian, 12% black or African-American, 8% Hispanic, 4% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 4% multi-racial. Within the female sample, 73% of participants identified as white, 12% Asian, 10% black or African-American, 2% were Hispanic, and 4% identified as multi-racial.

Parents’ education information

In Table 5, we display the educational levels of the doctoral students’ parents, disaggregated by gender. Approximately two-thirds of parents’ education levels fall between some college and bachelor, master or a PhD degree and one-third of doctoral students’ parents highest level of

education was a high school diploma or less. The proportion of female students' mothers with a Master or PhD degree is 11% higher than male students. Furthermore, 31% of female students' fathers have some college or bachelor's degree compared to 39% of male students' fathers. Thirty-six percent of female and twenty-seven percent of male students' fathers have a Master or PhD degree. Finally, 15% of the participants' fathers received a PhD degree, whereas only 5% of their mothers finished their PhD.

Table 5. The Educational Levels of Doctoral Students' Parents Disaggregated by Gender

	Gender					
	Male			Female		
	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%
<i>Mother education levels</i>						
Less than high school	26	1	4	52	1	2
High school diploma or GED	26	8	31	52	15	29
Some college	26	9	35	52	9	17
BA/BS	26	4	15	52	12	23
Masters	26	3	12	52	11	21
PhD/JD/MD	26	1	4	52	3	6
<i>Father education levels</i>						
Less than high school	26	4	15	52	4	8
High school diploma or GED	26	5	19	52	12	23
Some college	26	8	31	52	3	6
BA/BS	26	2	8	52	13	25
Masters	26	3	12	52	11	21
PhD/JD/MD	26	4	15	52	8	15

Factors Accelerating Program Progress

Doctoral students who participated in this survey reported that their primary goal was to complete their program of study. Using a three-item Likert scale that indicated the choices: A great extent, to some extent, and not at all; overall, students (61% of males and 67% of females) agreed to a great extent that support from their spouse/partner, parents, friends, or other students facilitated their progress as indicated in Table 6. Their capabilities of making the *system* work for them were also important to accelerating the advancement of their programs (54% of the men and 42% of the women). Approximately, 39% of male and 40% of female doctoral students agreed to a great extent a supportive, helpful, or actively involved advisor or mentor assisted in helping them move forward toward graduation; and 42% of both male and female respondents agreed to a great extent help or support from other doctoral students was influential. Finally, both male and female students reported financial aid received from sources outside of the university was the least important factor for their degree progress.

Table 6. Factors Accelerating Program Progress

	Gender							
	Male				Female			
	<i>n</i>	Not at all	Some extent	Great extent	<i>n</i>	Not at all	Some extent	Great extent
Financial aid from leadership program or university	26	46	35	19	51	37	31	31
Financial aid from sources outside university	26	35	23	42	52	29	27	44
Supportive, helpful, or actively involved advisor and/or mentor	26	15	42	39	52	12	46	40
Support, help, or pressure from spouse, parents, friend, etc.	26	8	31	61	51	12	19	67
Help or support from other doctoral students	26	8	50	42	51	8	50	42
Your capabilities for making the system work for you	26	11	35	54	52	15	42	42
Productive research experiences during program	26	19	46	35	50	23	42	31
Productive professional experiences during program	26	11	54	35	50	15	56	25
Plenty of relevant, useful coursework in doctoral program	26	8	61	31	51	10	56	33

Note. Results reported as percentages.

Table 7. Factors Hindering Student Program Progress

	Gender							
	Male				Female			
	<i>n</i>	Not at all	Some extent	Great extent	<i>n</i>	Not at all	Some extent	Great extent
Doubts or uncertainties about ability to earn a doctoral degree	26	58	38	4	51	60	27	13
Erratic funding insecure funding or lack of funding	26	46	54	0	52	46	40	14
Child care responsibilities*	26	50	42	8	52	75	13	12
Caring for parent other family members are not your own children	26	73	27	0	51	75	21	4
Marital or family obstacles/problems**	26	50	50	0	51	73	15	12
Personal illnesses or injuries	25	85	12	0	52	81	17	2
Poor or inattentive advising or mentoring services	26	73	23	4	50	67	21	12
Not finding the right mentor advisor early enough	26	62	27	11	50	60	31	9
Few or no productive research experiences opportunities	26	50	42	8	51	64	21	14
Time-consuming research appointments irrelevant to progress	26	65	35	0	52	71	21	8
Time-consuming outside employment irrelevant to progress	26	31	42	27	52	52	29	19

Note. Results reported as percentages.

Factors Hindering Program Progress

For this category of questions participants' responses were categorized by using a three-item Likert scale consisting of: A great extent, to some extent, and not at all. Overall, most participants selected *not at all* for all questions within this category (see Table 7). However, 14% of female students reported their program progress was to a great extent constrained by erratic funding, insecure funding, or lack of funding, while none of the male students reported likewise. Concerning familial relationships, 12% of female students and none of the male students reported to a great extent marital or family problems constrained their program progress. Overall, less often (not at all) did students report that: personal illness or injuries (85% of males vs. 81% of females); caring for a parent or other family members (73% of males vs. 75% of females); poor or inattentive advising or mentoring services (73% of males vs. 67% of females), or; time-consuming research appointments irrelevant to progress (31% of males vs. 52% of females) hindered them from advancing. Finally, it should be noted that statistics reported for child care responsibilities and marital or family obstacles/problems were statistically significant.

Publications and Conference Presentations

Although preparing and writing publications were deemed one of the essential elements for quality mentorship, doctoral students indicated they did not receive enough support in that area from their mentors (see Table 8). Thus, it was not surprising to find that overall; a large proportion of doctoral students reported a low-publication rate. For example, 81% of male and 73% of female students have not published any articles in peer-review journals during their doctoral studies. However, 23% of female students reported publishing one to two journal articles in comparison to 19% of their male counterparts. More surprising was the revelation that more than half of all students have not presented a single research paper at a regional or national academic conference. Meanwhile, the other 42% of respondents reported presenting between one and five papers at professional meetings.

Table 8. Publications and Conference Presentations

	Gender					
	Male			Female		
Peer reviewed journal articles	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%
0	26	21	81	50	38	73
1-2	26	5	19	52	12	23
3-4	26	0	0	51	2	4
5 or Greater	26	0	0	50	0	0
<i>Papers presented at conferences</i>						
0	26	13	5	52	28	54
1-5	26	11	42	52	22	42
10-Jun	26	1	4	52	2	4
11 or Greater	26	1	4	52	0	0

Job and Funding-related Issues

In Table 9, when examining the rate students secured fellowships and grants, we found that 42% of male students received fellowships or grants in comparison to 31% of female students. While males reported securing a higher rate of fellowships and grants in comparison to female students, the data show that 54% of women held an assistantship at least one semester during their studies in comparison to 42% of the men. Only 25% of female students had internship or practicum experiences while 31% of male students did. Over 73% of both male and female students work at full-time positions (more than 30 h a week) during their doctoral programs. A higher proportion of male students, more than 73%, were employed by their institutions, while a lower proportion of female students, 44%, were employed by their universities. Female students (29%) were more likely to hold a position outside of the university than male students (4%) did. Concerning the interruption of doctoral studies during at least one semester, four of 26 males (15%) and six of 52 females (12%) reported the need to do so. Statistics reported for whether participants held a position inside or outside the university were statistically significant.

Table 9. Job- and Funding-related Issues

	Gender					
	Male			Female		
	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%
Have you received any fellowships grants?	26	11	42	52	16	31
Do you currently or have you ever held an assistantship?	26	11	42	52	28	54
Did you have an internship or practicum experience?	26	8	31	52	13	25
Did you work in a full-time 30 h a week job at anytime?	26	20	77	52	38	73
Held position inside of university**	26	19	73	52	23	44
Held position outside of university**	26	1	4	52	15	29
Did you interrupt your doctoral studies during a Fall or Spring semester?	26	4	15	52	6	12

* $p = .05$

** $p = .01$.

Program Support for Success in the Field

Respondents were asked what services their program provided to enable them to succeed in the field. In Table 10, responses from male students are mostly consistent with female students' viewpoints. Both male ($\mu = 2.38$) and female ($\mu = 2.22$) respondents, as a group, reported their educational leadership doctoral programs offered academic support, as well as opportunities to garner advice and hone the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary for success in the educational leadership field. However, when it came to research and scholarship skills, such as preparing and writing publications and grant proposals (men $\mu = 2.15$ and women $\mu = 1.71$), and guidance on conference and research presentations (men $\mu = 2.19$ and women $\mu = 1.63$), students alike stated that their programs provided a lesser amount of support and instruction. All participants (men $\mu = 1.77$ and women $\mu = 1.68$) reported that their doctoral program provided limited emotional support and displayed limited interest in their personal lives. Additionally, knowledge, training, and advocacy toward obtaining funding for their doctoral studies (men $\mu = 1.58$ and women $\mu = 1.51$), as well as networking and building professional relationships (men $\mu = 2.08$ and women $\mu = 1.67$), was lacking to varying degrees for all student respondents. The results for networking and building professional relationships, support for instruction to prepare and write publications, and guidance on conference and research presentations were statistically significant. Finally, academic support and advice, emotional

support and interest in personal life, opportunities to discuss skills and knowledge, and instruction on how to write grant proposals all have Cohen's *D* effect sizes at or below .2, indicating the strength of the relationship between the differences in men and women's responses is relatively small. Networking and building professional relationships, instruction to prepare and write publications, guidance on conference and research presentations, and opportunities to gain skills, knowledge, and experiences all have Cohen's *D* effect sizes approximately at or slightly above .5, indicating that the strength of the relationship between the differences in men and women's responses is in the medium range.

Table 10. Program Support for Success in the Field

	Gender						Cohen's <i>D</i>
	Male			Female			
Services of leadership preparation programs	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Academic support & advice	26	2.38	.804	50	2.22	.679	.215
Networking & building professional relationships	26	2.08*	.686	52	1.67*	.76	.566
Advocacy toward funding my doctoral studies	26	1.58	.809	51	1.51	.784	.088
Emotional support & interest in personal life	26	1.77	.908	50	1.68	.741	.109
Instruction to prepare & write publications	26	2.15*	.732	52	1.71*	.936	.524
Guidance on conference & research presentations	26	2.19*	.749	52	1.63*	.886	.683
Opportunities to discuss skills & knowledge	26	2.19	.801	52	1.98	.804	.262
Opportunities to gain skills, knowledge, and experiences	26	2.27	.724	52	1.92	.813	.455
Instruction on how to write grant proposals	26	.92	.891	52	.83	.678	.114

* $p = .05$.

Table 11. Students' Perspectives of Quality Mentorship

	Gender					
	Male			Female		
Quality mentorship	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%
Professional support	26	24	92	52	45	87
Constructive feedback & critiques	26	26	100	52	52	100
Development of research ideas	26	25	96	52	51	98
Development of leadership skills	26	16	62	52	28	54
Personal care & support	26	14	54	52	28	54
Work-related emotional support	26	13	50	52	30	58
Connections to financial support	26	10	38	52	30	58
Emotional support for personal issues	26	8	31	52	14	27
Provides career counseling	26	17	65	52	31	60
Networking	26	24	92	52	43	83
Grant writing & publishing	26	19	73	52	39	75
Develop writing expertise	26	19	73	52	35	68
Assists with presentation skills	26	19	73	52	27	52
Resolves conflict	26	8	31	52	15	29
Fosters integrity & ethical behaviors	26	20	77	52	37	71

Students' Perspectives on Quality Mentorship

Doctoral students were asked to share their definitions of mentorship and their perceptions of a quality mentor relationship between faculty and student. The total percentage for each option

added up to 100% because participants were allowed to choose as many options as applied to them and their educational leadership program. All doctoral students strongly agreed (Table 11) that a quality mentor should provide constructive feedback and critiques. Almost equally, a substantial proportion of male and female doctoral students—over 80%—highly recommended that a quality mentor should: Encourage development of research ideas; provide professional support; and assist with networking. Over 70% of all participants indicated that guidance in grant writing and publishing as well as modeling integrity, and ethical behaviors are integral components of quality mentorship.

Moreover, students reported quality mentorship necessitates a commitment to and skill development in resolving conflicts, but students less frequently identified providing emotional support around personal issues as essential to mentoring. Respondents were considerably concerned about receiving quality professional and career development from their mentor. At large, respondents reported that a quality mentor provides moderate assistance in the development of leadership skills as well as provides career counseling. Students also indicated that they would appreciate some emotional support around work-related issues from their mentors. Concerning the mentor's role in assisting students with presentation skills, 52% of female students deemed this important in comparison to 73% of male students. Conversely, 58% of female students stated a mentor should provide them connections to financial support, while only 38% of male students agreed.

Relationship between mentor and mentee

Since all sub-questions assessing the relationship between mentor and mentee allowed participants to select multiple responses, the percentage of each option added up to 100% (see Table 12). Overall, 89% of male students and 67% of female students have informal or formal mentors, and this reported data are statistically significant. However, there was a notable difference between male and female students, and the locale of their faculty mentor: 81% of male students reported their mentors are at their universities, while 65% of female students had mentors at their institutions. There were also differences between the men and the women and the frequency in which they met with their mentors. Over half, 54%, of male respondents and only 25% of female students reported meeting with their mentors monthly. Fifteen percent of female and thirteen percent of male students met with their respective mentors weekly. All statistics affiliated with the sub-item *meets with the mentor once per year* were statistically significant.

Participants were asked to report their thoughts concerning their mentor–mentee relationship. Using a four-item Likert scale in Table 13, we coded strongly agree as 3, agree as 2, disagree as 1, and strongly disagree as 0. On average, both male ($\mu = 2.64$) and female ($\mu = 2.32$) students strongly agreed their mentors helped them improve their work product (see Table 13). Male ($\mu = 2.61$) and female ($\mu = 2.46$) students reported their mentors were supportive, encouraging, and motivating. Furthermore, all students on average (male ($\mu = 2.52$) vs. female ($\mu = 2.46$)) described their mentors as accessible and able to provide constructive and useful critiques of their work. Additionally, male ($\mu = 2.48$) and female ($\mu = 2.57$) participants felt that their mentors demonstrated content expertise in their area of need. On the other hand, the data also showed that male ($\mu = 2.13$) and female ($\mu = 1.94$) doctoral students on average minimally

considered their mentors as friends. Male ($\mu = 2.35$) and female ($\mu = 2.03$) students thought their mentors were less effective in providing direction and guidance. Overall, male students felt less comfortable sharing personal information with their mentors. The mean score on perceptions of the mentor and mentee relationship level is higher for male students across all items except the statement that their mentor demonstrated content expertise in the area of need. Finally, all doctoral students indicated a desire for more networking opportunities, e.g. that their mentors could help them make additional professional contacts. Most of the Cohen's D effect sizes for this set of questions are approximately at or below .2, indicating that the magnitude of the effect between the differences in men and women's responses is relatively small. The effect size for *my mentor was helpful in providing direction and guidance* is .392, which is between .2 and .5. However, the effect size for *my mentor helped me improve my work product* is .483, and when rounded up to .5 indicate that the relationship between the differences in men and women's responses is in the medium range.

Table 12. Relationship between Mentor and Mentee

	Gender					
	Male			Female		
	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%
Currently have informal/formal mentor*	26	23	89	52	35	67
Mentor at same institution	26	21	81	52	35	65
Meet with mentor weekly	26	3	12	52	8	15
Meet with mentor monthly	26	14	54	52	13	25
Meet with mentor once per semester*	26	4	15	52	12	13
Meet with mentor once per year	26	1	4	52	1	2
Almost never meet with mentor	26	1	4	52	0	0

* $p = .05$.

Table 13. Relationship between Mentor and Mentee

	Gender						Cohen's D
	Male			Female			
	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>	M	SD	
Mentor was accessible	23	2.52	.665	35	2.46	.561	.1
Mentor demonstrated content expertise in area of need	23	2.48	.79	35	2.57	.558	.131
Mentor supportive, encouraging, and motivating	23	2.61	.583	35	2.46	.657	.241
Mentor helped improve work product	23	2.64	.581	34	2.32	.727	.483
Mentor helped me network	22	2.22	.736	35	1.97	1.243	.245
Mentor helpful providing direction & guidance	23	2.35	.775	35	2.03	.857	.392
I consider mentor a friend	23	2.13	.92	35	1.94	.802	.22
Mentor provided constructive & useful critiques of work	23	2.57	.59	35	2.42	.657	.24

Connections to mentors

Finally, all survey items in Table 14 asked questions related to the doctoral students' connections to their mentors. Descriptive statistics indicate that 38% of male students and 56% female students are assigned doctoral program advisors. However, all students reported formal mentoring programs were a rarity. In terms of making initial mentoring connections, 35% of male students and 21% of female students took the initiative to approach their mentors based on

personal interests in their mentors' work. Approximately, 11.5% of male and 17% of female students reported their mentors approached them to form a research or professional collaboration. Only 4% of both female and male students were introduced to their mentors by another individual, professional network, or organization.

Table 14. Connections to Mentors

	Gender					
	Male			Female		
	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%	<i>n</i>	Frequency	%
Mentor is assigned program advisor	26	10	38	52	29	56
Mentor assigned through formal mentoring program	26	3	12	52	1	2
I approached mentor due to interest in his/her work	26	11	42	52	12	23
Mentor approached me to begin research/professional collaboration	26	3	12	52	9	17
I was introduced to my mentor by individual or organization	26	1	4	52	2	4

Discussion and Lessons Learned

In this section, we revisit the purpose of the exploratory research project and reflect on what we have learned about: Differences in mentoring experiences according to gender; ways doctoral students define effective mentoring, and; how we can improve upon the present project in future research efforts.

Differences in Experiences According to Identity Factors

One purpose of this study was to examine the following research questions: *What specific mentorship activities do educational leadership graduate students experience, and are there differences in experiences according to gender?* While findings pertaining to gender differences in programmatic support and assistance with publications and conference presenting lacked statistical significance, the men in this study reported greater opportunities to fund their doctoral education via fellowships and grants. Females in this sample obtained more assistantship opportunities, whereas males obtained more internship opportunities. Importantly, females, more so than males, reported their assistantship was unrelated to their doctoral studies and future plans. Furthermore, a greater proportion of males than females were employed by their university while pursuing doctoral studies. Additionally, a higher percentage of female students held employment outside of their university. Thus, according to our survey results, the level of opportunities and experiences fluctuates for female doctoral students in educational leadership programs when compared to men. Could it be that female students worked for irrelevant assistantships merely to secure tuition funding, while the male students transitioned to full-time internships instead? It is unclear at this point. However, it is apparent in this sample of doctoral students from UCEA-affiliated institutions' males reported receiving fellowship funding in greater proportions than female respondents.

Even though assistantships (teaching and research) require a student to be employed concurrently with their doctoral studies, assistantships provide doctoral students valuable socialization and professionalization for a career in academia and have a positive effect on degree progress and completion (Bair & Haworth, 2005; Lovitts, 2001). However, fellowships provide financial support without employment as a contingency, enabling students to solely focus on their doctoral

studies. As a result, doctoral students in assistantship positions typically take longer to complete their degree than those who obtain a fellowship (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992). Considering a number of women in our survey reported that they were engaged in assistantships unrelated to their studies, or held positions outside of their university, rather than fellowship opportunities, further investigation is necessary to explore this issue.

The limited gender differences in terms of scholarly publication and presentation activities contrast with prior research that suggest male students have more opportunities to publish with their advisers (Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001). Tenenbaum et al. (2001) collapsed the mentoring experiences of doctoral students in a variety of departments in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. However, in our study, we focused solely on students in educational leadership; therefore, research that further contextualizes the experiences of doctoral students is necessary to further elucidate the limited gender differences our sample of doctoral students.

Female participants reported their progression through the doctoral program was impeded by struggles with self-doubt and negative experiences with advising and mentoring. This finding further corroborates the theme *questioning self* that emerged from our previous study on female doctoral students in educational leadership (Mansfield et al., 2010). Struggles with securing resources, supports, and connecting to a mentor in their educational leadership program elicited feelings of self-doubt from female doctoral students (Mansfield et al., 2010). Female professors, more so than men, struggle with fear of success and a specific form of self-doubt, coined the *imposter phenomenon*, because they attribute their success to external factors or chance, not to their hard work and talent (Lin, 2008; Young, 2011). However, there is limited research on the imposter phenomenon as it pertains specifically to graduate students (e.g. Gibson-Beverly & Schwartz, 2008). Thus, further study is needed to examine what departmental culture and climate factors, such as gender stereotypes, may precipitate the imposter phenomenon among female doctoral students (Gibson-Beverly & Schwartz, 2008). Finally, counter to the women in our study, men did not express deficiencies in mentorship, but instead reported issues with research opportunities and concerns about funding. Interestingly, all participants who were connected to a mentor reported positive mentor-mentee relationships. Thus, conclusions cannot be generated with surety; rather, additional study is needed.

Defining Mentorship

Additionally, we aimed to understand *how educational leadership graduate students define mentorship and explain their mentorship experiences*. All participants agreed that mentorship should include guidance in professionalization, developing research ideas, writing, publishing, networking, fostering integrity and ethical behaviors, career support, and leadership development. Similarly, participants in Grant and Simmons' (2008) study on mentoring female, African-American doctoral students in educational leadership departments identified academic development as an integral component of quality mentorship. Academic development includes crafting a doctoral student's writing and research skills as well as providing entrée to scholarly networks that offer additional resources and experiences that would make the doctoral student a desirable candidate for a tenure-track faculty position. This macro-level investigation suggests further attention is warranted in improving the writing and research skills of graduate students in

educational leadership programs. The career goals of educational leadership doctoral students vary. Nevertheless, all students in a doctoral educational leadership program must complete a dissertation, treatise, or capstone, for which sufficient writing and research support is critical.

Concerning the level and type of mentorship received, a larger percentage of females than males report that they have not been connected to a mentor or had to seek mentorship outside of the home institution. Additionally, according to survey results a higher proportion of male graduate students were assigned program advisors, were more likely to meet with their mentors regularly, and developed stronger relationships with their mentors than female students. According to Johnsrud (1990), collaboration, connectedness, caring, and values are essential to quality mentoring relationships. Nevertheless, the disparate mentoring connections reported by survey participants is consistent with research that suggest female doctoral students in educational leadership programs are considerably *othered* by faculty and peers (Killingsworth et al., 2010; Mansfield et al., 2010). The mentoring deficiencies female survey participants experienced may stem from reinforced traditional gender roles that silence the voices of female doctoral students in educational leadership classroom settings (Killingsworth et al., 2010). Similarly, female doctoral students in our former study report they are further excluded from opportunities critical to the progression of their educational leadership studies because of their complex, intersecting identities (race, social class, sexuality, and language status) (Mansfield et al., 2010).

Lessons Learned for Future Research

In order to examine our final research question *how can the present study methodology be strengthened in future research endeavors?*, participants provided constructive feedback on their experiences completing the online pilot survey. Twenty-six out of seventy-eight participants responded with critiques that varied from survey question design and content, the length of the questions, and general evaluation constructs. For example, three participants said the survey did not explore variances in educational leadership doctoral programs and criticized the implicit assumption of a “monolithic program and faculty for a particular institution” or that “some questions were too *dichotomous*.” Two additional participants commented that the survey length was problematic and might possibly deter participation, while six others indicated they did not like the “forced” response and would like a “not applicable” option. Thus, the original online survey will need to be modified to reflect how educational leadership programs vary in their resources, capacity, program content, and overall purpose. In addition, we need to revisit the philosophy behind a “forced” response as well as consider shortening the survey to make participation more likely.

Seven participants indicated the survey asked “important” or “interesting” questions that are “relevant to a doctoral program.” Six of the comments referenced the difficulty of separating issues of identity due to the intersectional nature of race, gender, language, religion, and so on. In open-ended responses, some participants expressed specific concerns of racial and gender inequalities in mentorship and opportunities in their doctoral program, while others noted that while “social justice” is emphasized in their doctoral program, “certain social justice issues” are given more emphasis. For example, one participant commented, “I think it is very ironic that at my school that touts social justice as a mission, only race is ever discussed. Class and gender

issues are invisible!” It would be interesting to follow up with interviews to explore these comments more fully, as it has become clear that a survey alone will not suffice.

Prior to administering the survey to a larger sample, further investigation on the demographic context of educational leadership preparation programs is needed. Participants who identified as white and female represented a majority of the pilot survey sample. Based on existing literature on gender differences in graduate education, we anticipated both gender and racial/ethnic differences would emerge in the pilot survey. Due to limited gender differences presented in the results and the majority female sample, we now question what implications the demographic context of the educational leadership program has for how participants respond to the survey questions. Social theory argues the context or habitus shapes experience and knowledge (e.g. Bourdieu, 1977). Further exploration is needed to examine how context impacts the educational leadership preparation experience. Some possible context questions to explore in the survey would be the demographic enrollment of the doctoral program, course offerings, and even regional differences. The context of the doctoral program can be examined by collecting demographic and programmatic documentation on educational leadership programs and including context questions in the survey.

Taking in account the pilot survey results and participant recommendations, we propose strengthening the methodology by conducting a mixed method research design in future research. In addition to increasing the overall sample size of doctoral students, we propose conducting case studies at four institutions located in different geographical regions. The cross-case study could include: (a) the shortened survey; (b) in-depth interviews with doctoral students; (c) document analysis of mission statements and curricular offerings; and (d) demographic enrollment information in addition to situating the particular leadership preparation program in its political/social/historical context. This mixing of data types, also referred to as data triangulation methodology, will strengthen the validity and reliability of the study as well as produce detailed comprehensive results (Creswell, 2002).

Recommendations and Conclusions

With an increase in female graduate student enrollment in educational leadership programs, exploring gender differences in doctoral students’ definitions of quality mentoring as well as their perceived level of mentoring resources permits us to configure what additional supports university departments and professional organizations could provide female doctoral students and their mentors. Female doctoral students, more so than male respondents, in our survey sample expressed contentions in terms of establishing quality connections to a mentor. Most research on women in educational leadership centers on the professoriate (Mertz, 2009; Sherman & Grogan, 2011; Sorcinelli & Yun, 2007) or women in K-12 leadership positions such as the principalship or the superintendency (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000; Sherman, 2005; Sherman, Muñoz, & Pankake, 2008). Research on female doctoral students in educational leadership is scant (e.g. Grant, 2012; Mansfield et al., 2010), and findings from this survey make it apparent that further research should examine issues related to mentoring earlier in the educational leadership pipeline.

Provide Opportunities for Networking and Professionalization

There are organizations that contribute considerable outreach to graduate student development in the field of educational leadership. The David L. Clark scholars¹ program, jointly sponsored by AERA's Divisions A (Administration), L (Policy), and UCEA; the *Mentoring Mosaic* sponsored by National Council of Professors in Educational Administration (NCPEA); the William L. Boyd National Educational Politics Workshop² sponsored by the Politics of Education Association and UCEA, and the Barbara L. Jackson scholars³ sponsored by UCEA are programs instrumental in preparing hundreds of educational leadership doctoral students for the professoriate, the fourth program providing mentoring for doctoral students of color (e.g. Grant, 2009; Grant & Simmons, 2008; Young & Brooks, 2008). These graduate student development programs and professional organizations gather graduate students together to share their research and aspirations. Each program assigns faculty mentors who encourage high expectations for success in research and doctoral program completion, facilitate peer mentoring, and accelerate student networking and socialization into the discipline.

Several scholars would agree establishing a mentoring network at professional organizations and conferences is essential for women to understand the “written and unwritten rules of the academy” (Rosser, 2004; Sherman & Grogan, 2011; Simmons & Grant, 2008; Tillman, 2012, p. 125). Nevertheless, female doctoral participants in our survey as well as our previous research (Mansfield et al., 2010) express difficulty with networking and making connections to mentors. While, the David L. Clark program, the William L. Boyd National Educational Politics Workshop, the Barbara L. Jackson scholars program, and NCPEA's Mentoring Mosaic assist in the elevation of numerous doctoral students to the professoriate, it is recommended professional organizations place establishing the mentoring networks of women to the forefront by designing mentoring programs specifically for female doctoral students.

Employ a Feminist Approach to Mentoring

Although women represent the majority of United States graduate school enrollment—and in the field of education specifically—it remains questionable whether the male-centric ideology of academe is challenged. A new approach advocated by some feminists (Belenky, Bond, & Weinstock, 1997; Humble, Solomon, Allen, Blaisure, & Johnson, 2006; Meyerson & Ely, 2003) calls for those interested in change to use difference to make a difference (Meyerson & Ely, 2003). This framework advocates eradicating structural barriers in educational leadership preparation programs that exclude anyone who continues to be challenged in terms of extended

¹ The David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Educational Administration & Policy, sponsored by the UCEA, Divisions A and L of the AERA, and SAGE Publications, brings emerging educational administration and policy scholars and noted researchers together for two days of presentations, generative discussion, and professional growth. Many of the graduates of this seminar are now faculty members at major research institutions across the globe.

² The William L. Boyd National Educational Politics Workshop offers accessing to scholarly presentations at AERA, research and service awards, mentoring and networking opportunities for beginning faculty and graduate students, networking opportunities at national conferences.

³ The Barbara L. Jackson Scholars Network provides formal networking, mentoring and professional development for graduate students of color who intend to become professors of educational leadership. Through this effort, UCEA has facilitated the development of a robust pipeline of faculty and graduate students of color in the field of educational leadership, and, in turn, Barbara Jackson Scholars and Alumni have enhanced the field of educational leadership and UCEA with their scholarship and expertise.

time-to-degree, degree completion rates, and unequal representation in academe (Humble et al., 2006), and are traditionally underrepresented in leadership and organizational roles because they do not fit the traditional leadership discourse. This is accomplished by recognizing that people who are different (whether female, black, gay, or from non-middle-class backgrounds) have perspectives, styles, and insights that are valuable to a profession and may actually change how the status quo on who does leadership and how they do it.

Likewise, there is a significant distinction between feminist mentoring and non-feminist mentoring (Humble et al., 2006). Feminist mentoring extends beyond the analytical and technical skills necessary for research and writing by providing graduate students with encouragement and nurturing. Feminist mentors use their authority not as a position of power but instead as a position of knowledge to help graduate students negotiate academic spaces by aiding them in progressing in new and empowering ways (Humble et al., 2006). Feminist mentors also practice full disclosure with graduate students by sharing their lived experiences and expressing honesty about the challenges of academic life (Humble et al., 2006). Finally, feminist mentors encourage their graduate students to “act and work with integrity” and know when to “speak up for feminist concerns” and when to “challenge institutional practices or expectations” (Humble et al., 2006, p. 3). Despite the limited gender differences presented in our pilot study, we suggest a developmental leadership/feminist approach to mentoring should be adopted to create a safe haven for female doctoral students to reflect, exchange ideas, collaborate, empower, and support each through the journey of becoming a scholar in the field of educational leadership (Belenky et al., 1997). Moreover, university professors should be provided professional development opportunities to help them strengthen their mentoring efforts.

Provide Opportunities to Seek Out Mentoring

Although university departments and professional organizations must increase efforts to formally and informally provide mentoring opportunities for women interested in pursuing an academic career in educational leadership, doctoral students must bear some onus in their academic and professional pursuits. In a personal essay on the strategic mentoring and socialization received throughout the ascension to the professoriate, Rosser (2004), early on in her doctoral studies, assertively expressed her long-term goals and intentions toward pursuing a career in academia to her adviser. Dr. Rosser purposefully selected an adviser who:

was the most constructive and rigorous instructor in the classroom and in grading my papers ... she was an exemplary teacher ... she was a productive scholar ... some of our interests were similar ... she believed in, exhibited, and wrote about mentoring, socialization, and the professional development of doctoral students. (p. 28)

Rosser (2004) suggested female doctoral students ascertain their goals, and Sherman and Grogan (2011) contend faculty should reciprocate this assertiveness via a social justice oriented agenda. Faculty should seek out and professionally elevate women and students of color as protégés because students from these groups are continually excluded from mentoring networks.

Conclusion

The demographic scale is tipping toward a more balanced representation of female faculty in educational leadership departments. As such, it is time to also feminize departmental cultures by cultivating collegial environments where faculty and doctoral students work in concert on mutually beneficial scholarly endeavors. This level of feminist mentoring (Humble et al., 2006) would require educational leadership departments to make major structural changes such as lowering faculty to student advising ratios so then faculty have more individualized time to refine a doctoral student's fortitudes in research and the professionalization necessary for an academic career. In order to yield female doctoral students who will make significant contributions to the field, the time and effort that mentoring demands should "count" for tenure, because "one cannot mentor from an emotionally distant position ... given the dimensions of the relationship" and "without such an investment, it may be argued, it is not a mentoring relationship" (Mertz, 2004, pp. 554–555).

Educational leadership departments focus considerably on the preparation of leaders in K-12 and higher educational settings (Hackmann & McCarthy, 2011); however, a different set of strategies, programmatic supports, and even structural changes within university departments and professional organizations will be necessary to prepare women who are interested in pursuing a faculty position in educational leadership. Female doctoral students have different developmental needs for their academic and professional development (Rheineck & Roland, 2008); as such tailored mentoring supports are necessary. This study recommends further establishment of strategic endeavors in the educational leadership field that aid female doctoral students in purposefully identifying mentors who believe in and are willing to provide long-term consistent mentoring because—"mentoring matters" (Tillman, 2012, p. 125).

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