

THE ESSENCE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF A
FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTING

Carol L. Smith

Dr. Sandra Hutchinson, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of the behaviors of a female servant leader in a public school setting and her impact on the staff and culture of the building. The research questions focused on the leader's description of her leadership practices, the staff perceptions of the leader's behaviors, and her impact on school culture. The findings included a leader who relied on her faith for direction and renewal, built community through staff collaboration, and supported her staff in their professional growth. The staff described the leader as one who used collaborative decision-making, recognized staff strengths and used persuasion to encourage their participation and professional growth, experienced gender bias issues outside her building, and was selfless in her leadership tasks. Finally, the culture of the school supervised by the servant leader was family-oriented, celebrated student and staff successes, and utilized team work for school improvement.