SCHOOL LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

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To David Lau
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SCHOOL LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) affects one in four women nationwide. As more women join the workforce, IPV enters organizations everyday. Yet, as of this writing, there is no federal policy to address IPV in the workplace and, for the state in which this study is situated, other existing statutes are used as a proxy for specific IPV legislation. In the school district that is the focus of this study, there is no specific IPV workplace policy. This lack of a formal response to a prevalent workplace and societal issue prompts questions regarding how school leaders might address IPV. Responses are likely informed by the perceptions about IPV leaders have. Thus, through the lens of gendered organizational theory, this investigation provides insight into the school leaders' perspectives about IPV and related responses, including policies, to help us better understand the organizational climate and the potential opportunities for change.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

I noticed her phone would ring at the same time the bell would ring. I also noticed if we were in a staff meeting and her phone would ring, she would leap up to get it with a sense of urgency that seemed to border on fear. Sometimes she was late to work, she always “stayed home with the sick child.” She often stayed at home for weeks at a time, a substitute constantly in demand. On occasion she would be visibly injured or hurt in ways she would laugh off as accidents. Once, her lip had stitches and another time, she had a huge knot on the right side of her forehead. She just could not seem to steer clear of doors or stairs.

Daily, she would leave immediately once her contract time was up to pick up her children at daycare and make dinner. I knew about dinner because I often heard her recount her list for the store, once she picked up the children, and what was on the menu. She often seemed overwhelmed, and some days, I noticed she would show films in the classroom and furiously write emails or text messages, leaving the students to teach themselves. This prompted visits from the principal. Once, during parent teacher conferences, she turned the lights out in her room and sat in the dark crying, unable to meet with parents or students. She was poring over documents the sheriff brought to the school.

Thereafter, every Friday, she had to leave at noon. This left other teachers to cover her class during their planning time. The backlash was fierce. Whispers filled the hallways and office, and her evaluation suffered; she just was not an ideal worker and it was not getting better. She could not seem to handle her family life and work life. She
stayed away from the teachers' lounge and was perceived to be rude. She seemed dark, compared to the stereotypical image of a happy, sunshine-filled teacher, let alone the image of a fierce leader able to enhance and restore children's lives in the classroom. She seemed caught in a vicious cycle of despair that constructed and reconstructed her failing, almost daily. Yet, she kept coming to work despite knowing she was a favorite focus of gossip, both personally and professionally. She seemed propelled by a deep need to hang on for reasons I knew, but very few others did. She was caught between the burdens of her private, sometimes nightmarish, life and her work, unable to fulfill either to her potential.

This is a story about a school employee who was a victim of domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence (IPV) and an organization that did not formally respond as a workplace issue. Women who are both employees and IPV victims struggle at work for many reasons. When IPV is not formally addressed through policy women employees and the organization may suffer unnecessarily (Swanberg, Ohja, & Macke, 2012). Organizations can offer hope to IPV victims by addressing it as a workplace issue (Reeves, Bates & O'Leary-Kelly, 2006), yet specific policies at any level are lacking (Swanberg et al., 2012). Because leaders shape organizational structure and policy, their knowledge of IPV may influence policy and practice. To better understand how leaders might (or might not) respond to PIV in their organizations, an exploration of gendered organization theory (Acker, 1990) may provide insight.

Gendered organizational theory (Acker, 1990) explains the gendering processes that sustain a power imbalance that advantages men and the organizational logic that results and sustains inequity. Women face inequity in the workplace for a variety of
reasons, including a lack of protection a formal IPV policy may provide (Reeves et al., 2006; Swanberg et al., 2012). By incorporating the feminist theory of gendered organizations, school leaders’ knowledge and perceptions of IPV can be explored to help better understand organizational climate, responses to IPV, and possible paths for change. This study is the intent of my research.

**Statement of the Problem**

Some states have developed policies to support women employees who are IPV victims in varying forms but there is no federal policy in the United States (Swanberg et al., 2012). Additionally, Reeves, Bates and O'Leary-Kelly (2006) reported only 13% of CEOs acknowledged that IPV as an issue that spills over into the workplace. District Y, the focus of this study, is located in a state that has no specific IPV policy for women in the workplace.

IPV is a societal issue impacting one out of four women in the United States (Swanberg et al., 2012). Historically, IPV has been considered a private issue, to be handled at home (Swanberg et al., 2012). Thus, a lack of workplace response is not surprising. At the same time, silence about IPV may reinforce IPV as un-discussable, "private matter, not a workplace issue" (Swanberg et al., 2012, p. 590). However, "such a perspective is not only irresponsible but outdated because there is ample evidence to suggest that ignoring domestic violence when it enters the workplace has serious financial and social consequences for employers" (Swanberg et al., 2012 p. 590). At the time of this study, there was no state statute addressing IPV nor did District Y have a specific IPV policy. In addition to the personal toll on victims, IPV costs U.S. employers $728 million annually (Swanberg et al., 2012, p. 590). Using an IPV cost calculator
(www.workplaceresponds.org), and the estimated number of IPV victims in District Y based on national statistics, District Y is estimated to lose three quarters of a million dollars a year by having no formal workplace policy or process to address IPV.

The likelihood of IPV victimization of District Y employees is not only borne out by the national statistics regarding the frequency of IPV, it is well documented that a husband of a District Y employee was charged and convicted of domestic assault for breaking her ribs and knocking her teeth out (D. Scroggins, personal communication, July 2011). The assault was reported in the local newspaper, formally and irrefutably acknowledging that employees of District Y are also IPV victims. Thus, IPV is no longer a private matter in District Y.

**Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this research is to better understand the perspectives of school leaders in District Y about IPV in general, and as a workplace issue for women in particular. I focus on leaders because they are in a position to influence and shape organizational structure and culture that affects women as both employees and crime victims (Bolman & Deal, 2008; O’Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009; Sallee, 2012). Although men are also victims of IPV, I purposefully chose to focus this study on women. IPV is about power and control exacted over one by another in a position of power; women are more likely to report IPV and the fear associated with the differential in physical power between them and their perpetrator (Bancroft, 2003). In addition, I am interested in IPV in schools; schools are feminized organizations, due in part to whom is predominantly employed there and the bureaucratic structure and culture (Acker, 1990). Schools employ large numbers of women and therefore, women are strongly influenced by the
gendered practices and policies that tend to advantage men. Further, organizations, while perceived as gender-neutral, create and sustain power differentials in the workplace, often placing a premium on being a man (Acker, 1990). As a result, women often have less power in the workplace (Acker, 1990; Ely & Meyerson, 2000), which further substantiates my focus on women as IPV victims for this study.

**Research Questions**

The central research questions I seek to answer in this case study are:

1. What are District Y school leaders' perceptions of IPV?
2. To what extent do District Y school leaders perceive IPV as an issue for women in the school workplace?

**Theoretical Framework**

In order to better understand school leaders' IPV perspectives and IPV as a workplace issue for women, I will consider gendered organizational theory as a theoretical framework. As previously noted, everyone in an organization plays a role in shaping organizational processes, but leaders often play a central role in reproducing these (Acker, 1990). The theory suggests that leaders are important in shaping the nature of an organization (Acker, 1990; Britton, 2000; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Sallee, 2012). In this case, it follows that school leaders play a critical role in shaping school organizational structure and culture; therefore, their perceptions are key to developing an understanding of processes and issues associated with gender (Acker, 1990), as well as possible implications for policy and work/life supports (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Sallee, 2012). In addition, I will use the five processes by which organizations are gendered (Acker, 1990) to inform this study.
**Gendered Organizational Theory**

Until Acker (1990) introduced the theory of gendered organizations, few organizational theorists challenged the notion that organizations were gender-neutral in both structure and in daily processes. This unchallenged belief camouflaged substructures that functioned in gendered ways. Specifically, women and men inhabit the structures and run the day-to-day processes, suggesting that gender must matter (Acker, 1990). The key component to understanding gendered organizational theory is to recognize gender is alive, well, and active in organizations; and through processes, gender can influence organizations in ways that sustain inequity through symbolism, interactions, and organizational logic. Often, this creates negative power differentials for women and consequently reinforces gender divisions in domestic life to sustain inequity in organizational life (Acker, 1990). For example, women historically bear the larger burden for tasks of daily domestic life (Acker, 1990); and yet, organizations place a premium on workers dedicated wholly to their job (e.g., life outside of the workplace should not influence the job). As a result, women cannot fulfill their jobs ideally and a premium is placed on being a man as social conventions allow for men to focus solely on work (Acker, 1990).

Acker (1990) broke from other feminist theorist when she argued that all ideal-Weberian bureaucracies were inherently gendered (Britton, 2000). Acker points out that most theorists, including Moss Kanter (1977), Feldberg and Glen (1979), and Ferguson (1984) developed feminist theories about organizations as gender-neutral (Acker, 1990). While these theorists recognized the presence of “male power” (Acker, 1990, p. 141) organizationally, Acker argued that theorists needed to look more closely and develop
better questions to understand the role of gender in organizations. This process could lead feminists to answer questions surrounding division of labor along gender lines including why women employees are often concentrated the lowest tier of organizational structures (Acker, 2000). Empirical evidence concludes that “gender segregation is an amazingly persistent pattern” (p. 145) and "gender identity of jobs and occupations is repeatedly reproduced" (p. 145). These patterns continue to emerge due to gendering processes within an organization (Acker, 1990).

Further, Acker (1990) stated that feminist theorizing would be better served by challenging the unquestioned rule that organizations “originate in the male, abstract intellectual domain and take as reality the world as seen from that standpoint” (Acker, 1990, p. 142). Unlike other organizational theories, Acker recognized gender as an integral component, not missing or latent, in the blueprints of organizations thereby making all organizations “ubiquitous human invention” (p. 140) where gender shapes power, structures, and processes.

**Five Gendering Processes**

To begin to examine gendered processes within organizations, Acker (1990), began by explaining gender is not an addition to the organization. Rather, gender functions integrally to both comprise it and build it; it is a component in the structures so deeply embedded that it weaves itself into every aspect of the day to day processes. Therefore, the processes, lived out daily in organizations, create and recreate gendered organizations.

Acker (1990) proposed five processes by which organizations are inherently gendered: (a) division of labor along gendered lines; (b) symbolic communication such as
the imagery of a masculine, forceful skilled manager; (c) interactions between individuals that reveal dominance and submissiveness; (d) formation of identify as a gendered individual under the forces of the organizational structures; and (e) the fundamental, inextricable role gender has to play in developing or providing the subtext for social structure.

The first process of gendering organizations is the division of work in organizations to establish clear lines of power, behavior, types of work, and family demands (Acker, 1990). Often leader decisions in hiring and task management act to divide the organization by gender. Processes sustain the division, which almost always gives men the "highest position of organizational power" (p. 146). These divisions are difficult to interrupt. As an example, Acker (1990) explains the onset of technology did not work to offset gender division; rather, the technological revolution further solidified gender division awarding control of the technological innovation to men as skilled workers while women remained in unskilled roles.

The second process of gendered organizations is construction of symbols that serve to sustain gendered patterns in the form of “language, ideology, popular or high culture, dress, the press or television” (Acker, 1990, p. 146). For example, the archetype of the forceful, skilled top executive is universally masculine. If a top executive is a woman, she is typically identified as a woman CEO.

The third process of gendering organizations is interactions occurring in all combinations among the genders, but specifically focus on “those patterns that enact dominance and submission” (Acker, 1990, p. 147). For example, men tend to be actors in organizational conversations; they tend to play a lead role. However, women tend to play
a support role in organizational conversations. Because conversation is a common vehicle for meetings and delivering communication, an organizational pattern of dominance and submission is maintained.

The fourth process includes individual development of gendered identity induced by the structures and processes of the organization, or the organizational logic. Gendered identity can also be in response to the other gendering processes (Acker, 1990). For example, if a premium is placed on being a man, women may abandon their preferred personality traits and substitute masculine personality characteristics to win favor. This is evidenced when women act like a man in order to be taken seriously in the workplace.

The fifth process is the recognition that gender builds and recreates the organization and its organizational logic. While family structure, process, and identity are clearly aligned with gender, organizations are often assumed to be gender-neutral through the lens of theorists and observant pragmatists. Acker (1990) proposes the gender-neutral organization is actually masculine and organizations give themselves away by a detectable, implicit dynamic in which gender divisions are intentional in order to sustain current and future power distribution. Thus, policies and practices in organizations serve to maintain the masculine status quo. For example, women often have jobs in organizations that have less power but maintain as much responsibility for decision-making (Acker, 1990). Women are more likely to attain this type of job, like a secretary or assistant, as a result of gendered roles in domestic life. If a woman has the larger share of domestic burdens or may use maternity leave policies, they may be considered by the organizational leaders to be lack the focus needed to be given
organizational power. A man, however, who can focus solely on work demands, may be seen by the organization as more fit for power (Acker, 1990).

**Methods**

To best answer my research questions, I chose a qualitative approach for this study. This approach allowed me to analyze nuanced stories gathered through interviews that result in thick, rich descriptions (Hatch, 2002). I chose District Y because of several factors: (a) District Y has known IPV victims within organization (D. Scroggins, personal communication, July 2011); (b) District Y is located in a county that houses a special domestic violence court, suggesting there is a local community need; and (c) District Y is a large employer of women as certified staff. Nine school leaders, including two high school principals, one middle school principals, and six elementary school principals, were chosen as a purposeful sample because, as leaders, they likely shape policy and practice.

Specifically, I used a multiple case study approach (Stake, 2006) to answer my research questions. Each school leader was considered a single case, while the collection of cases (or overall understandings from these leaders collectively) was the quintain (Stake, 2006). I identified cross-case assertions deductively, using the theory of gendered organizations (Acker, 1990).

**Significance of Research for Leadership Practice**

The significance of this study is far-reaching. This study can shed light on the processes that shape public school leaders' perspectives on IPV, both as a personal and personnel matter. In addition, it could help seed the ground for IPV workplace policies that are greatly needed (Swanberg et al., 2012). I hope this study will encourage a more
open discourse about IPV as a workplace issue by dispelling the notion it is a private matter (Swanberg et al., 2012). Additionally, I hope it will help leaders think more critically about gendering processes (Acker, 1990) and how they influence organizations and their employees.

**Definition of Key Terms**

For the purpose of this study, I define the following terms as:

*Feminine* – descriptors related to traits associated with women.

*Gender* – an established component of social relationships based on the perceived differences between the sexes and in turn, the way of signifying relationships of power to explain the persistence and prevalence of the present and historical subordination of women.

*Gendered organization* – a series of processes that interact to structure an entity that is designed to accomplish a goal or goals that is initially divide work and domestic life of those who do the work. However, because work and private life cannot be separated completely, there is a premium placed on those who are more capable of it than others; historically, this is a man. Therefore, women, who are not as able to separate themselves from their domestic lives are disadvantaged. This disadvantage is re-created as a gendered organization in the daily mechanisms driven by the original structures.

*Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)/Domestic Violence (DV)* – intimate partner violence describes physical, sexual or psychological harm by current or former partner or spouse.
**IPV victim** – a person who is controlled and/or abused by an intimate partner through physical, emotional, verbal, financial or mental abuse. (Bancroft, 2003).

**Masculine** – descriptors related to hegemonic traits associated with men.

**School leader** – certified employee in PK12 educational organization who supervise school staff.

**Conclusion**

IPV is a societal issue that affects the workplace everyday. Women who are both IPV victims and workers struggle to fulfill their domestic and work life demands. While leaders and others in organizations may know women employees who are IPV victims, there often is no specific workplace policy to support and protect these women (Swanberg et al., 2012). The lack of organizational response to IPV is often costly to both the organization and the women (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves 2009). Because leaders shape policy and practice at work (Acker, 1990; Ely & Meyerson, 2000), their perspectives about IPV in general and specifically about IPV as a workplace issue are critical to understand and are the focus of this study. The theory of gendered organizations (Acker, 1990) will guide the study to help us better understand the perceptions school leaders have about IPV as a workplace issue for women, and why IPV policies may be absent.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I will discuss the theory of gendered organizations in more detail as the framework for my study. I will review literature related to IPV as a workplace issue and the broad policy context of IPV at work. Particular attention will be paid to how employment is helpful to IPV victims, and yet, how IPV interferes with victims' abilities to do work and work productively. In addition, I will explore existing state, federal, and organizational IPV-related policies and programs.

Gendered Organizations

As I described in Chapter One, the theoretical framework for this study is Acker’s (1990) theory of gendered organizations. This theory is intended to challenge the idea that organizations are gender-neutral. I used this theory to develop a better understanding of the processes of organizational gendering. By understanding organizations as gendered, there may be opportunities to transform organizations to be less gendered. I described the theory’s history and the five gendering processes that create a gendered organization. In this section, I explore how theorists and researchers critiqued, expanded, and applied Acker’s (1990) theory of gendered organizations. First, I focus on organizational structure and practice.

Organizational Structure and Practice

Acker (1990) considers a job as an empty slot somewhere along the organizational hierarchy: the skill, complexity, and responsibility of the job are used to place it within the hierarchy. This logic assumes the empty slot is gender-neutral and dissociated with the person who will inhabit it, thereby making this system appear just
and, therefore, acceptable (Acker, 1990). However, when the “concrete worker” (p. 149) inhabits the structure, substructures as a function of gender are created. This causes a mismatch between organizational logic as abstract and fair and organizational logic as real and unjust. For example, if the responsibility level of the job is used to place it on the hierarchy, it follows that more responsibility would move a job up the hierarchy. Yet, if a secretary has the responsibility of enacting and deploying much of the boss’ responsibilities and women predominantly fill those roles, why is that job still low on the hierarchy? Acker (1990) posited when a worker inhabits the abstract job, gendered substructures (e.g., the masculine boss) trump the abstract structures thus the secretary (woman) is unable to change her position on the hierarchy. Inequality is cleverly maintained by a system appearing to be just, so gendered organizational logic is maintained.

Further, in the abstract construction of organizations, jobs are best suited for concrete or real workers who best fit an abstract definition: “disembodied worker who exists only for work” (Acker, 1990, p. 149). This organizational logic reaches into domestic life because women are historically aligned with a larger portion of work in the home, which means they cannot exist solely for the work outside the home. Therefore, women are limited in access to jobs near the top of the hierarchy where skill, complexity, and responsibility demand that they exist only for work (Acker, 1990). The assumptions used to define the disembodied worker in turn define the hierarchy, thereby making them both gendered when inhabited by real workers who have to split their responsibility or focus between work and domestic life. In reality then, the man is the ideal worker and is
selected for positions that hold more power because for a woman to be ideal, she would have to “become like a man” (Acker, 1990, p. 150).

Becoming like a man, or the ideal worker, according to gender-neutral organizational logic, means having “no sexuality, no emotions, and does not procreate” (Acker, 1990, p. 151). This logic continues the division between the public and private sphere to enact control for “capitalist production” (p. 151). This control maintains a gendered hierarchy by comparing women, their emotions, sexuality, and domestic demands to the abstract ideals of organizational logic. This comparison marginalizes women by arguing for a lower ranking based on perceived “shortcomings” that tend to define women (Acker, 1990).

Men benefit from hegemonic masculine qualities, such as sexuality as a means of control or “symbolic expressions of male dominance,” which “act as significant controls over women in work organizations” (Acker, 1990, p. 153). Acker argues, “Women’s bodies cannot be adapted to hegemonic masculinity; to function at the top of male hierarchies requires that women render irrelevant everything that makes them women” (p. 153). While men gain from gendered hierarchy, their opportunities depend on “barriers that deny those opportunities to women” (p. 153).

Acker (1990) theorizes that the intellectual construction of abstract hierarchy is based on the notion of the disembodied workers; these workers are ideal because their personal lives are not incorporated into their work lives. The ideal worker is historically a man because domestic concerns are often shouldered by woman more often than by a man. As a result, this causes power inequities such that men benefit organizationally in a sustained dynamic functioning largely based on gender. Because of this sustained
dynamic, women are cleverly, surreptitiously marginalized by tacitly controlling their gender, sexuality, bodies, and emotions. In stark comparison to tacit control or clever marginalization, gendered organizational theory can be used to better understand the intersection of gender and organizations.

Acker’s (1990) gendered organizational theory suggests that bureaucracy must be eradicated to stop the inequality in power distribution and marginalization of women. She called for “the end of organizations as they exist today” (p. 154), otherwise gendered patterns will continue. However, Britton (2000) proposed a deeper look at gendered organizational theory that would not demand eradication of bureaucracy, which, she posited, is unlikely. Britton proposed three ways to view organizations and occupations as gendered by underscoring the value of context to better understand power inequity and less gendered organizations.

**Britton’s Critique and Use of Acker’s Theory**

Britton (2000) critiqued Acker’s (1990) theory; she both relied heavily on it and developed ways to extend Acker’s theory to produce less gendered organizations. Her main thrust was to develop Acker’s five gendering processes to soften the idea that gendering was inherently built into bureaucracies; that context and the role of individual workers can reshape gendering and therefore, improve equality by less male domination and less female subordination. Britton reasoned that through this focus, organizations could be shaped meaningfully without completely doing away with traditional hierarchies.

To develop her critique and use of Acker’s (1990) theory, Britton (2000) points to Acker’s (1990) argument that all bureaucracy is inherently gendered to underscore the
need for context. She proposes that eliminating bureaucracy is unreasonable. Britton believed if Aker’s (1990) assumption, if unchallenged, becomes untappable. As a result, the degree to which an organization is gendered cannot be explored for ways to “improve current organizational environments to foster less bureaucratic and thus less oppressive gendered future” (p. 422). Therefore, Britton suggests “throwing the baby out with the bathwater” (e.g., doing away with bureaucracy) was not reasonable. She proposed a focus on organizational context and the individual worker’s actions could facilitate less gendering.

Britton (2000) provided examples of how bureaucracy can change and become less gendered. She noted cases where more bureaucratic policy shifted hiring practices in engineering, which outpaced more informal structures working towards the same outcomes. This type of analysis suggests pockets of gendering for which the driver may not be an overarching system of capitalism, but the concrete workers (Acker, 1990) themselves. For example, women engineers reshaped organizational culture by using power sharing and collaboration as opposed to traditional uses of positional power and competition. The women improved the culture without doing away with the organizational structure. As a result, Britton suggests an “acute awareness of the importance of context” is the key to “using the gendered-organizations approach to produce meaningful social and organizational change” (Britton, 2000, p. 423).

A second way to view organizations and occupations as gendered is what Britton (2000) calls the “nominal approach” (p. 424). This approach counts the sex type that dominates a type of organization, thereby categorizing both the sex and assumed gender as indicators of gendering (Britton, 2000). This approach combines sex type and gender
type and in some instances, the two vary independently. For example, Britton analyzed the historical work of supervising prisoners in a woman’s prison; when the context of the work changed based on a specific gender need, the sex type of the work changed accordingly. Women, as supervisors, were viewed originally by the organization to be best fit to develop relationships with the women prisoners; the organization changed its view requiring a more structured, dominant role of the women supervisors. Therefore, as the organization changed its approach, the women supervisor were asked to behave more like male supervisors: women behaved like men to keep their jobs (Britton, 2000). As a result, Britton (2000) believed conflating sex type and gender could not explain gendering processes and further, could not help answer her question, “how do we know a gendered organization when we see one” (Britton, 2000, p. 419). Simply looking at the sex types that fill positions (e.g., nurses, teachers, secretaries) is not completely understood without a historical view of how that reality developed, Britton (2000) posited and would not be helpful in alleviating gendering.

The third way Britton (2000) viewed organizational occupations as gendered was through deeper analysis of both prevailing theorists’ discourse and the levels at which gendering can occur. She reasoned that by focusing on prevailing gendered theories, the opportunity to identify ways to cause organizations to be less gendered could be missed. By focusing intensely on occupation, as opposed to organization, Britton posited a new understanding of the ways gendering occurs can be discovered. For example, workers can recreate, through their identity, the gendering of a job; a man who is a nurse may bring hegemonic masculine characteristics to a job that has been viewed predominantly as feminine. By extension, a woman may bring hegemonic feminine characteristics to a
job that has been viewed predominantly as masculine. In this case, Britton argues, “this research moves us a step forward in terms of teasing out the effects of gendering at each of the specific levels originally identified by Acker” (p. 431).

Britton (2000) called for a deeper look into the processes Acker (1990) proposed by which organizations and occupations are gendered. She underscored the need for context of the processes to better understand how gendered organizational theory can be used to facilitate and construct “less oppressively gendered organizations" (p. 431). This careful, detailed analysis may well provide ways to discover and illuminate paths to meaningful organizational and social change while relying heavily on Acker’s (1990) gendered organizational theory. In addition, her critique provides justification for the research design of my study: a case study requires consideration of context.

**Work Settings and IPV**

IPV is prevalent, but largely unacknowledged in the workplace. In a study of 2,400 employees in business and financial institutions, over 25% of the "currently-victimized employees reported experiencing some form of IPV on work premises" (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009, p. 3). The most prevalent type of abuse at work was stalking, with 51% of victims reporting it had happened at least once at work. Threats of physical harm were the second most frequent form of abuse occurring in the workplace (O'Leary-Kelly, 2009). The workplace, as substantiated in these findings, is directly affected by IPV. IPV victims may need time off from work to recover from an attack, acquire legal services, mental health services, and medical services or even to relocate (Swanberg, Ohja & Macke, 2012). It is not uncommon for IPV victims to lose their jobs; in fact, "21-60% of IPV victims lose their jobs from reasons stemming from the abuse
whether experience at home or at work” (de Vries, Hathawy, Rothman & Stidsen, 2007, p. 136). Despite this, employment is positively correlated with IPV victims leaving abusive relationships. This is often the case because poverty and social isolation, associated with IPV, can be mitigated through employment (de Vrires et al., 2007; O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009).

**Employment as Help to IPV Victims**

In a study in a large urban hospital, researchers sought to better understand how employment was helpful in coping and escaping from intimate partner violence (Swanberg et al., 2007). Employment was found to be helpful to women is six ways: "(1) improving their finances; (2) promoting physical safety; (3) increasing self-esteem; (4) improving social connectedness; (5) providing mental respite; and (6) providing motivation or a 'purpose in life’” (Swanberg, 2007, p. 138). Financially, IPV victims benefitted from employment because it allowed them to support themselves, support their children, gave them a sense of control over their own lives, and gave them a sense of reassurance. Further, levels of hopefulness were directly tied to victims' economic self-sufficiency (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009). As a result, researchers found the more hopeful the IPV victim, the more likely she was to take steps to improve her life situation. These particular IPV victims worked at a higher level, felt more pleasure at work, and made a positive connection with their employer. Work also helped IPV victims feel more competent (de Vries et al., 2007). In addition, IPV victims reported supports at work that were helpful like: "(1) schedule flexibility; (2) assistance with developing an at-work security plan; (3) screening phone calls from the violent partner; (4) coworker lending a listening ear, and (5) a coworker spending time with the victim" (p. 304).
Coworkers and IPV Victims

Socially, work helped IPV victims overcome their hesitancy to trust others and form networks that, for some, allowed them to discuss their abuse. For others, work provided them a place where they were able to draw "strength and insight from work relationships without revealing that they were experiencing IPV" (de Vries et al., p. 140). Coworkers provided support in many ways, including friendship, emotional support, resources for IPV victims, and for providing a model of normalcy that did not include abusive relationships (de Vries et al., 2007). While it was not easy for the IPV victims to trust others, and close relationships at work risked ongoing abuse from their partners, these relationships were powerful to help victims recognize the abuse they experienced was not okay (de Vries, et al., 2007). Swanberg et al. (2007) concluded women who are able to disclose at work, based on perceived support or forced to by severe violence, may be able to garner more support from coworkers who understand. In turn, this helps IPV victims cope with abuse leading to a more promising future.

O'Leary-Kelly and Reeves (2009) found those who disclosed their abuse to a coworker felt "more hopeful, safer, more supported, and better able to concentrate" (p. 9). Coworkers were found to provide support and 20% reported knowing a current employee who was also an IPV victim. However, while coworkers provided support, the level of assistance was generally low. The majority of coworker assistance included things like sharing the information with others such as a supervisor, a human resource person, or a security professional. The level of assistance given to the IPV victim increased if the coworker and IPV victim shared the same gender and if the source of IPV victimization was directly witnessed by the coworker or told directly by the IPV victim (O'Leary-Kelly
& Reeves, 2009). Coworkers, in sum, were described as "sympathetic but reluctant observers" to IPV victims (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009, p. 8).

Workplace Challenges for IPV Victims

Women IPV victims who are employed are often considered high functioning and resilient among IPV victims (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009). However, this is not to suggest that these women are not struggling due to the violence they experience. For example, maintaining a job, while beneficial, is often difficult because of the increased complication of navigating work, family, and victimization (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009). The complications included suffering an abuser’s job interference tactics such as: (1) harassment on the phone; (2) harassment in person on the job; (3) bothering coworkers; (4) lying to coworkers; (5) threatening to hurt the victim to make them leave work; (6) threatening the victim while at work; (7) threatening coworkers; (8) stalking victim at work; (9) stay while the victim is at work or school; (10) physically forcing victim to leave work or school; (11) use child care interference tactics (e.g., lie about child health or safety to get victim to leave work or not show up to care for children) (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009).

In addition to difficulties integrating work and family, IPV victims reported inabilities to concentrate, absence from work, and decreased work performance. (Swanberg, Macke & Logan, 2006). In Swanberg et al.’s (2012) study, of women who called in sick due to IPV, “28% reported this happened repeatedly with 72% reporting this to have occurred at least twice a year” (p. 565). Also, for many, IPV led to quitting their jobs (Swanberg, et al., 2007).
Another negative consequence of IPV victimization is the stigma associated with being a victim of this type of crime (Swanberg et al., 2007). Women feel shame associated with this which compounds their struggles; not only are they crime victims, due to the nature of the crime, they also may try to hide the abuse by remaining silent (Swanberg et al., 2006). Stigma associated with IPV "emerged as a key factor in silencing nearly one-third of the women" in a study of 757 women who had restraining orders in place against the abusive partner (Swanberg, 2007, p. 562).

Abusers, despite restraining orders, threatened women's jobs and economic security; and yet, these women still hesitated to disclose their abuse (Swanberg et al., 2007). Without disclosing abuse, women were at an increased risk for further abuse. In addition, not only did the lack of disclosure endanger women, it also could endanger their coworkers. O'Leary and Reeves (2009) interviewed IPV victims who described coworkers trying to ward off an "angry spouse" (p. 48), which was frightening and dangerous to the coworkers. When victimization takes place at work, it creates additional "challenges" for the employee who is already was trying to overcome the difficulties of being victimized, and now, may also have to worry about keeping her job. Often coworkers and supervisors do not recognize the signs of IPV and its consequences for the victim, making it difficult to address the issue. Yet, because IPV is so prevalent in society, Swanberg et al. (2007) suggest that organizations take a more active role in recognizing and addressing IPV and its consequences. Consequences that include recognizing the organization itself "is charged with ensuring safety" (p. 49) of IPV victims.
Organizational Support and IPV Victims

O'Leary-Kelly and Reeves (2009) explored "when and why IPV victims disclose their victimization to people at work, and the effects that this disclosure has on their personal and professional well-being" (p. 6). They found that support from the organization itself, not from coworkers, was most influential on IPV victims. The types of organizational support included an overall acknowledgement of IPV as a workplace issue, provisions of community IPV resources, and basic communication skills for leaders who might address IPV with an employee (O’Leary-Kelly and Reeves, 2009).

IPV victims who felt more hopeful were likely to feel so based on their perceived degree of workplace support, yet they are careful about disclosure in that there is no assurance their disclosure will not have negative employment consequences. When employees do disclose, they usually reveal to someone who is close to them daily at work. The implications for this suggest the importance of organizational policies that help supervisors and coworkers understand appropriate actions following IPV disclosure. O'Leary-Kelly and Reeves (2009) found IPV victims are unlikely to seek help from Human Resources or security, thereby underscoring the need for coworker and supervisor training to respond to disclosure. However, in tandem with this needed training, the most hopeful IPV victims were those who worked in organizations that provided formal resources, including employee training. Organizational support, in turn, helped coworkers guide IPV victims who disclosed to them to organizational resources. This has implications for the types of supports organizations provide and send clears messages about what, and who the organization values.
When organizations were found to be supportive, IPV victims expressed "less depression, higher job satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment, less job insecurity, and lower intention to leave the job situation" (O'Leary-Kelly and Reeves, 2009, p. 7). In fact, O'Leary-Kelly and Reeves (2009) found it is "the support of the employer that is most critical to the overall well-being of IPV victims" (p. 7).

A positive correlation was found between maintaining employment and women who receive support at work. Women who both disclosed their IPV victimization and received workplace support were more likely to maintain their employment (O’Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009). The "victims' need for these organizational-based resource is powerful" (O’Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009, p. 9). Additionally, other researchers have found a positive correlation between disclosure at work by IPV victims and maintaining employment (de Vrires et al., 2007; O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009; Swanberg et al., 2007). However, this correlation should be interpreted with caution because researchers may not be aware of "organizational and situational contexts," which are highly important for disclosure decisions. For example, in a small town, the perpetrator may be a friend of the supervisor; an IPV victim should consider circumstances and contexts carefully before disclosing.

Organizations can also help IPV victims by reviewing best practices and developing educational training. This can help employers implement strategies to reduce shame or stigmas IPV victims may feel in order to encourage a more hospitable workplace. Further, organizations can establish policies and practice to reduce the negative consequences of being an IPV victim in the workplace. This may include supervisor training for responding to IPV victims, identifying local resources, and
providing security procedures (de Vries et al., 2007). Security procedures may include organizational knowledge of employee restraining orders and providing employee security to and from an IPV victim’s vehicle.

Creating and implementing workplace violence policies are an important step in supporting IPV victims (de Vries et al., 2007; O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009; Swanberg et al., 2007). For example, social service agencies help IPV victims prepare safety plans, however, this often does not occur in the workplace. If it were to occur, it may be helpful to IPV victims because their employer would collaborate with them to enhance their safety (Swanberg et al., 2007). Additionally, organizations do not have to address IPV in isolation. Social services can act as conduit between the employer and IPV victims to help increase awareness of the issue and offset possible negative, uninformed responses made by less trained leaders or coworkers (Swanberg et al., 2007). For example, if employers are unaware of the stipulations within a restraining order, social services in the community can help provide them with tools to create a workplace environment that feels safe to IPV victims (Swanberg et al., 2007).

Policy and IPV

In their policy study, Swanberg et al. (2012) looked to the U.S. public policy for protecting IPV victims’ employment rights in the workplace. Although there is no federal policy specific to IPV in the workplace, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA, 1994) has raised awareness of IPV and has led to increased resources to many advocates and businesses. Yet, because there are not specific IPV federal policies, "federal statutes, which are nonspecific to domestic violence victims, have provided the basis for cases that seek to obtain benefits for victims or otherwise hold an employer
accountable for employment actions taken in response to violence" (Swanberg, et al., 2011, p. 591). As a result, the Occupational Safety Act and Health Act (OSHA, 1970), the Family and Medical Leave Act (1993), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) and the Title VII of Civil Rights Act (1964) have served as proxies for a specific IPV employment policy. Only one federal statute, the Family Violence Option (FVO, 1996) exists specifically for IPV victims receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The FVO is in place to alleviate work requirements the IPV victim being assisted would have to maintain to continue assistance if not an IPV victim. This means assistance provided by TANF continues despite the IPV victims’ inability to meet the work requirements. However, the FVO is a state option for which not all states choose to apply.

Swanberg et al. (2012) categorized all 50 states policies. They found policies focusing on three primary areas: "(1) policies that offer work leave for victims; (2) policies that aim to reduce employment discrimination of domestic violence victims; (3) policies developed to increase awareness and safety in the workplace" (p. 595). Swanberg et al. (2012) further subcategorized each of these areas in order from the list above. Work leave is comprised of work leave related to IPV, work leave to attend court, and waiver of work requirements under FVO. The second category includes: (a) protection against employment discrimination; (b) to ensure the right to unemployment benefits and wages; and (c) employer intercession services, such as a prosecutor directly contacting an employer to notify them of court related dates requiring IPV victim attendance. Lastly, workplace safety and awareness is comprised of employee education and awareness and workplace restraining orders. In the review of literature preceding
this expansive view of policy, it would appear the third category, workplace safety and awareness, was given the most emphasis by de Vries et al. (2007), O'Leary-Kelly and Reeves (2009), and Swanberg et al. (2007).

Notably, only three states have adopted policies in the third category of workplace awareness and safety (Swanberg et al., 2012). One of those states, New York, has established the Office for Prevention of Domestic Violence. The purpose of this office is to advise the governor and the legislature of the most effective ways for state governments to respond to domestic violence, including domestic violence at work. Another purpose of the office is to provide a model for policies and practices to raise IPV awareness in the workplace. Further, this office seeks to help businesses with a plan to deploy and implement IPV polices and practices promoting workplace awareness and safety. Swanberg et al. (2012) posits that while the public policy response is important and evidenced in the literature, "it is not sufficient" (p. 612), warranting significant attention to this issue in the workplace.

Cost of IPV for Organizations

The previous section demonstrates that IPV is a workplace issue not only for women victims but the organization itself (deVries et al., 2007; O’Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009; Swanberg et al., 2007). Another implication for organizations is that nearly 750 million dollars are lost annually in the U.S. due to the 8 million days of work IPV victims miss (Swanberg et al., 2012). In addition, IPV costs organizations due to increases in medical, insurance costs, and employee turnover (Swanberg et al., 2012). IPV victims are more likely to quit or be fired unless they provide IPV victims with resources like
flexible leave time, secure work, parking areas, and programs to help victims handle crises erupting at work (Swanberg, et al., 2012).

O'Leary-Kelly and Reeves (2009) found strong evidence that employer costs were increased by IPV victimization of employees. IPV victimization costs employers $838 per rape, $816 per physical assault, and $294 per stalking; an annual paid work productivity cost due to absenteeism was $98.09 for each woman victim (Arias & Corso, 2005). In addition, Arias and Corso (2005) found rates of injury and medical usage were higher for women than men; however costs are unique to specific organizations. This cost analysis would appear to prompt organizational policy and practice review from a financial standpoint alone. Yet, Swanberg et al. (2011) describes a continual lag for organizations to do so.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed my theoretical framework that guides my interpretation of IPV as a workplace issue. Next, I discussed the research related to IPV and work settings. Finally, I reviewed relevant literature about public policy related to IPV. To date, I was unable to find any study about IPV in an educational setting; thus, I rely on larger related literature about workplaces in general. In Chapter Three, I will introduce the methodology for this multiple case research study. I will also explain the design for the study, including the data collection processes, and the data analysis procedures. Chapter Three will conclude with a discussion about the role of the researcher also include the role of the researcher and the techniques to establish trustworthiness of the study.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The goal of this multiple case study is to explore school leaders’ perceptions of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and more specifically, IPV as a workplace issue for women. The study will focus on multiple leaders as a collection known as a quintain; it is a collection that represents the whole case (Stake, 1994). In this chapter, I explain the design and methods. Several components are discussed in detail: (a) the participants and selection process; (b) data analysis and findings; and (c) the researcher’s role. Additionally, I discuss the rigor of the design and methods by establishing the trustworthiness through dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. Finally, I present the study’s limitations.

Research Questions

The central research questions I will seek to answer in this case study are:

1. What are District Y school leaders' perceptions of IPV?
2. To what extent do school leaders perceive IPV as an issue for women in the workplace?

Methodological Rationale

In this study, I explored school leaders’ IPV perception by prompting reflection through questioning, analyzing, and describing their perspectives. I considered quantitative approaches, but I chose a qualitative approach in order to capture nuances and stories that quantitative data may not reveal (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative methods allowed me to take an inductive approach (LeCompte, 2000). Using this approach, themes emerged that I could reflexively interpret them in order to better understand
school leaders’ perceptions (Hatch, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additionally, prior to data collection, I conducted an extensive literature review, paying particular attention to feminist theory and the concepts of gendered organizations (Acker, 1990; Britton; 2000; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Sallee, 2012). I did so to better understand school leaders perceptions in a critical and structured way, specifically using Acker’s (1990) gendering processes to frame those perceptions and assumptions from which they arise.

I employed a critical/feminist lens (Hatch, 2002, p. 16) to make sense of school leaders’ perceptions of IPV to help improve organizational climate for women. I focused on historical, organizational structures that shape organizational climate to better understand whether there is evidence of gender inequity. As a result, the understanding of structures and culture (Acker, 1990) will be part of a part of the research process.

Research Design

I chose a multiple case study design (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2003) focusing on perceptions of individual because school leaders to then develop themes about their perceptions as a whole. School leader interviews provided me with stories that were instrumental in revealing this type of description. Using this design, I then examined individual cases to develop cross-case themes about the whole or collection of the cases; Stake (2006) calls this the quintain. In this study, the District Y school leaders’ perspectives about IPV comprise the quintain. I chose this approach because instead of seeking to understand each case, the deeper understanding comes from understanding the quintain, or the gestalt of the information. This allowed me to study what is similar and different about the cases to develop a deeper understanding and allow for me to develop cross-case themes about the quintain itself.
Case and Participant Selection

I chose District Y as a result of several factors: (1) publicly identified IPV victims within the organization (D. Scroggins, personal communication, July 2011); (2) the district is located in a county that houses a special domestic violence court, reflecting a local community need and/or a commitment to address IPV; (3) the district employs a large number (n=796) of women certified staff.

I chose to interview principals because they are in roles that can influence organizational climate in District Y. I purposefully selected administrators from two high schools, one middle schools, and six elementary schools; the sample 9 school leaders. They included one secondary women principals, one secondary man principal, three men elementary principals, and three women elementary school principals. Because the characteristics of District Y prompted my choice, as previously describe, this in turn also prompted my choice of District Y leaders. I initially limited the study to 9 District Y leaders because if all agreed to participate, data saturation was likely (Stake, 2006), meaning there would be no added value with the addition of more interviews. However, if saturation is not achieved, I intend to recruit additional participants. After I selected the school district and the individual leaders, I sent them a recruitment letter (see Appendix A). Then, I made personal phone calls using a pre-written script (see Appendix B) to build relationships with the potential interviewees and invite them to participate in the study.
Data Collection Methods

I conducted interviews with each participant, who collectively represented the multiple case study (Stake, 2006). Prior to each interview, I hand delivered a recruitment letter (see Appendix A) to each participant. I gave participants a choice to meet with me in their office or at a location of their choice. I used a semi-structured protocol (Appendix C) to guide the interviews. The questions were open ended (LeCompte, 2000) to encourage thoughtful, reflective responses. Approximately one hour was scheduled for each interview. I audio-recorded each interview with participant permission and transcribed them verbatim.

Human Subject Protection

I applied and received approval to conduct research in District Y through the Superintendent’s Council. I then received approval from the University of Missouri’s Institutional Review Board to ensure the ethical treatment of human subjects. As part of the protection of human subjects, I reviewed the informed consent (see Appendix D) information prior to each interview. All data in this study will be kept in a locked, password-protected electronic file for 7 years. To preserve the confidentiality of the participants, they selected their own pseudonym. In addition, the name of the district is masked by the pseudonym, District Y.

Data Analysis Procedure

After I transcribed the interviews, I closely read and reread the data. First, I allowed themes, guided by the research questions, to emerge. Next, for each case, I developed an analyst’s synopsis; to do this, I told the story of each case, focusing on key information. Further, when possible, I identified and documented the prominence of the
themes in each case. Additionally, I wrote down the expected utility of each case for developing the quintain and then ranked them as high, medium, and low for each case. After each close reading of the individual cases, findings emerged. Lastly, I made comments about each case in a methodological journal.

I used cross-case analysis to “string the cases together… to provide interpretations across the cases” (Stake, 2006, p. 39). Then, I clustered findings, each marked with the case from which they originated, by grouping similar themes together, even if they were contradictory. As I formed the clusters, I gave them a name. I then used the earlier ranking process to establish the prominence case by case and cross-checked this with the contribution each finding made to the merged findings. I gave weight to findings that converged in contribution in developing “assertions,” (Stake, 2006, p. 61) or findings about the quintain. I used some findings across cases even if they did not merge because their atypical nature prompted use as a negative case (Stake, 2006). Lastly, I used Acker’s (1990) five processes to further analyze and interpret the assertions.

**Role of the Researcher**

The focus, school leaders’ perspectives of IPV and IPV as a workplace issue for women, can be sensitive and uncomfortable (Swanberg et al., 2007; Swanberg et al., 2012). While data could be collected using surveys to alleviate some potential discomfort through anonymity, the thick, rich descriptions (Hatch, 2002) drawn from interviews are critical to answer my research questions. Thus, I will be the primary source of data collection; as such, it is important to that I disclosed I am employed by District Y.
I consider myself a critical/feminist researcher (Hatch, 2002). Specifically, I believe historical structures create and re-create gender inequity and it is necessary to expose them through research to possibly interrupt gendered inequities (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). As a result, my findings could benefit IPV victims by drawing attention to this as a workplace issue, which may lead to organizational support. In addition, my feminist positionality is integral to my sense-making throughout the research process.

My own perceptions of IPV have been shaped by my personal experiences, both domestically and in the workplace as a teacher. I believe these experiences uniquely equip me to explore school leaders perspectives on IPV. I understand the details of my own experience (Stake, 2006; Tracy, 2010) as an IPV victim while employed as a public school teacher. Further, my knowledge of leadership, garnered through my doctoral work and life experiences, help me understand the complexities of policy and organizational issues that those participating in my study may encounter (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Stone, 2012).

Like all researchers, I bring bias to the study. I acknowledge and appreciate that my experiences and worldview shaped my interpretation of the data. I undertook this study with a perspective that IPV is not easy to discuss. In addition, I believe IPV, as a societal issue, is misunderstood. My experiences as an IPV victim sensitized me to my own bias. I recognized, however, that some of the interviewees knew me as school employee and IPV survivor. This fact may have influenced the way they interacted with me. For example, participants may have been reluctant to speak freely because of my status as an IPV survivor; but it is also possible they were more willing to be candid knowing I am an IPV survivor.
I also have assumptions about this study. Because of my experiences and identities, I assume that the more light that is shed on IPV in school workplaces, the better off both IPV victims and the schools themselves will be. I assume "starting the conversation" through this research will be positive and growth-producing for leaders and IPV victims. I also assume this study could provide necessary data to lead to policy development in District Y and perhaps in other schools and districts.

**Strategies to Address Issues of Quality**

To establish trustworthiness, I addressed issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability through the research process. I wanted to accurately analyze data to maintain the participants’ stories to ensure credibility. To do so, after each transcription, I used member checking; I gave each participant a copy of their interview transcript so they could decide if the transcription was accurate. When corrections were suggested, I made them. Further, I used rigorous methods to analyze the data. This also helped strengthen the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Merriam, 2009).

I wanted to conduct this study so that the findings might resonate with others, specifically, school leaders and to IPV research. I enhanced study transferability by providing a interview questions to each participant outlining the problem under study. I also provided use of thick, rich descriptions of the cases (Creswell, 2009). Ultimately, however, District Y leaders and other readers’ reflection about their IPV perceptions and the context of their own settings will influence the extent to which transferability occurs.

I wanted the study to have dependability for future replication with similar participants. I ensured this through the use of well described data analysis procedures.
(Stake, 2006). As a result, this process could be utilized again, in similar circumstances. Lastly, I ensured confirmability by documenting each step of the multiple case analysis to develop an audit trail. (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). This ensured a direct link between my conclusion and data. The documentation was available to my advisor.

**Study Limitations**

As with all studies, there are limitations. First, IPV is an uncomfortable topic. As a result, it was challenging to find willing school leaders to talk about their IPV perspectives. This influenced the composition of the population sample. In addition, if school leaders perceived me to have an agenda regarding the focus of the study, and of District Y in particular, participants may have been guarded in their responses. This may have influenced the findings and diminished the ability to develop a better understanding of quintain.

At current, in District Y, there are no policies related to IPV, therefore, this limited the availability of artifacts. As a result, the data sources for my study were comprised of interviews; this is a limitation. Both Stake (2006) and Yin (2003) emphasize the use of multiple data sources to develop a case. Yet, Yin (2003) does make exceptions for use of interview data only, however, he states it is not ideal. While I understand it is not ideal, I believe a mitigating factor is that my study seeks to analyze school leaders perceptions to make assertions about the quintain which I then sought to better understand guided by Acker's (1990) gendering processes. To better understand and analyze school leaders' perceptions, I believe the best data sources are interviews.

While multiple assurances were in place to mitigate bias, I realize my experiences shaped my understanding of the data and the meaning I constructed from it. I worked
hard to bracket my biases and assumptions in order to facilitate inductive theme
development. In addition, I was comforted in using Acker’s (1990) gendering processes
as an analytic framework that served to distance me to some degree from the data.

Summary

This Chapter introduced the methodology and methods used in this study. I
discussed the design, data collection, and analysis. I also addressed several ways to
ensure trustworthiness. In chapter four, I will present the results from the multiple case
analysis that explored District Y leaders’ IPV perceptions.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, I will present the results from the multiple case analysis study that explored District Y principals’ perceptions of domestic violence and to what extent they consider it a workplace issue. At the time of this study, there was no state statute addressing IPV as a workplace issue. Additionally, I reviewed all personnel District Y electronic board policy, which is modeled after those suggested by the Missouri School Board Association. After this review, I found that District Y did not have a specific IPV policy.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first section gives a synopsis of each case, serving as the sources of data from which the themes emerged (Stake, 2006). The second section, the Scarlet Letter, describes the first assertion about the quintain (Stake, 2006). The third section, Sword and Shield, is the second assertion made about the quintain (Stake, 2006).

Multiple case studies require the researcher to keep research questions as a standard for expected utility of each case, leading to merged findings called assertion (Stake, 2006). While the focus of this study was District Y principals' perceptions of domestic violence, and to what extent it was workplace issue, I discovered the two were inextricably linked. This linkage was the best source for assertion about the quintain.

Caroline

Caroline is nearing retirement as a principal at a mid-sized high school. She has served in this position for almost 2 decades. When discussing teachers, Caroline passionately described knowing when a teacher is a good candidate, mentioning she can
discern the "telltale" excitement in their voice. Despite her passion surrounding students and teachers, Caroline appeared uncomfortable discussing domestic violence as her answers were shorter and more guarded than other participants. She mentioned she had not experienced this situation while a principal. Even though Caroline had not experienced this situation at work, she felt if domestic violence diminished a teacher's performance, it made sense to fire or "let go" (p. 5) of that teacher. Caroline admitted she may have missed signs of domestic violence at work over the years and yet, was genuinely surprised by the topic of my study. As soon as I turned off the recorder at the end of interview, she asked me, "I just want to know how you got on that topic? It's a different topic." (p. 5)

**Louis**

Louis is a second year high school principal of a mid-sized school near the industrial section of the city. He mentioned he has traditional values and admits he struggled with the new superintendent's core principle that family comes first, not your job. He described work culture as “Americanized,” meaning the "job" is first, and then family. Thus, the superintendent's focus is a reversal from Louis's previous experiences. He struggled with teachers' private matters interfering with work but mentioned he tries to be very sensitive to the issues teachers struggle with.

Louis mentioned that he had never handled domestic violence as an employee issue during his tenure. He mentioned that domestic violence was itself a mental health issue. He shared that talking about domestic violence has changed generationally, evidenced by more open dialogue now than in his father's day. Louis described first becoming aware of domestic violence: “I can remember being in college or a little after,
finding out that one of my best friends liked to beat on their girlfriend. I just could not believe it" (p. 3). Louis revealed that as he got older, he discovered domestic violence was more pervasive than he thought as a child.

When describing how domestic violence might influence the workplace, Louis made connections between a domestic violence victim and child struggling with issues in the home. He described children who witness domestic violence and their struggle to focus on standardized testing is much like a domestic violence victim trying to focus on work; both are very difficult. Further, mental health support, much like what some students need, was the primary type of support was needed for domestic violence victims. He felt helping victims through mental health services was a better approach to policy than terminating domestic violence victims, saying terminations was, “absolutely ridiculous.”

**Truman**

Truman recently became a middle school principal. He was a vice-principal of a large high school for several years. He highlighted his passion for creating a work-family friendly environment, describing the workplace as an “extension of family” (p. 2). He carefully considered how the workplace "family" could support an employee who is also a domestic violence victim. Truman indicated his school could help an IPV victim by providing a safe place. He shared that this type of support could help an IPV victim retain her job despite distractions in her life. Yet, despite describing a family-friendly environment, Truman was clear that if a domestic violence victim attracted a threat to the school, it would be necessary for the victim to tell administrators. He indicated that if a teacher did not report such a threat, he might consider termination. Truman shared his
main concern was the safety of the whole building, not one person. He also made connections between domestic violence and child abuse, describing how he would report signs of abuse for a domestic violence victim the same way he would for a child.

Finally, Truman described how this interview had prompted self-reflection regarding how he thought about domestic violence in the workplace. It raised questions in his mind as to how to address this with his staff in upcoming meetings. He described his new thoughts this way:

Gearing up to get my welcome back presentation... this [interview] is giving me something like, "Hey. That's something [domestic violence] that should be discussed or at least paid attention to." Because if you know or if I'm able to discuss with my staff, "Hey, I'm willing to go there, or this is something we need to talk about," they might see I care. They might not. But at least you put it out there to them, and they might see it as a positive of comfortability, of creating a safe community. Because if they feel safe bringing it to you, it's going to lead into the kids. It's also going to lead into kids' success. I got 70 to 75 women on staff. That's something that should really be thought of. (p. 10)

Jay

Jay is an elementary principal at a large school in a more affluent neighborhood. He has been a principal for over half a decade. Jay characterized himself as a leader who is very predictable in behavior and is very clear that he expects the same from teachers. He shared that he makes sure teachers come to work in a happy place, largely because it helps them be happier for students. Jay does this by making sure teachers have coffee, treats, and he brings lattes to the staff himself.

Jay revealed that emotional stability is the number one aspect of a good teacher. When considering domestic violence as an employee issue, he indicated that teachers experiencing domestic violence would not be stable emotionally. Further, teachers who are not emotionally stable are bad with kids. He described it in this way:
If you’re getting beat up, it’s going to be huge. That’s going to be huge because they’re going to come in, and you’re not going to be at your, you can’t do your job. I don’t care what profession you’re in, you’re not going to be able to do your job. We’ll see that. It’s a huge impact. Has to be. If I see the end of it where these other things [divorce, personality, drug use, chemical imbalance] less impacts, imagine what the impact is going to be... you’re not on your game, and kids suffer indirectly. That’s a biggie. (p. 6)

Jay indicated that relationships in the workplace could help a domestic violence victim feel supported, in part because it might mitigate some of the shame he thought they would feel. Another issue Jay raised was that a domestic violence victim comes back to the abusive relationship. This aspect of domestic violence was troubling for Jay. He even tried to use a framework for understanding child abuse as a way to understand domestic abuse, which furthered his uncertainty:

My perception is, I don’t understand the psychology behind coming back to the person who hurt you. With kids, we understand you can beat them to a pulp, they’re going to come back because it’s a Mom or Dad. With a wife, I don’t get it. (p. 4)

Despite the complexities and the uncertainty Jay associated with domestic violence, he again reflected about his view of emotional stability as central to workplace success. While Jay shared domestic violence causes instability, which leads to teacher ineffectiveness, he acknowledged that, at the same time, it was not their fault. Jay appeared conflicted as he struggled to reconcile this and it prompted his final reflection, "If you're getting beat up and bring it in, you can't help that. See that's what I learned from you today, I haven't thought about that. I really haven't thought about it. It’s going to make me a better principal this year," (p. 11).

Kelly

Kelly is a young principal, who has worked for several years in Title schools as an assistant principal. Title schools are schools that qualify for additional Federal monies as
a result of a high number of students who qualify for free lunches. She was open about her own life struggles and shared that as recently as last year, her supervisor encouraged her to seek counseling to address a family situation. Kelly felt she should share this same support with her teachers and was clear she believed family came first, even in the workplace. She was open about relationships, indicating she felt teachers should share struggles to gain workplace support. Her supportive experience in District Y, along with her own staff relationships, seemed central to her perception of how her school could respond to a teacher who is also a domestic violence victim. She characterized it in this way:

*I think it depends on the willingness of the victim to share. I think that a lot of times shame and embarrassment comes along with it, because the problem with domestic violence in a nutshell is, you love the person. You care about the person deeply that is inflicting this onto you, and so you don’t want to necessarily get them in trouble, per se. The more you talk about it, the more opportunity for them to face consequences, jail time or whatever, get arrested. That’s the fear. Now as a district, I think we should be a resource to listen and to be open to that opportunity. That goes back to relationship… Whatever it is, I try to as building administrator build a relationship with them to where we can share our struggles.*

Yet, while acknowledging support for domestic violence victims is critical, Kelly expected some employee ineffectiveness among victims, “Of course you know unfortunately the decrease in performance and frequency of absence and things like that could be a sign that would cause issue for workplace performance.” However, Kelly’s perception of a workplace response included daily flexibility, taking time off, and crisis support. Kelly also focused on the protection of the employee while at work. She even referred to the school as a “buffer machine” against an abuser or stalker who comes to the school building seeking the victim. Another unique focus Kelly shared was keeping IPV
victims safe stating, “Hey, here’s a place where you can go to be safe. Here’s a place where you and your child can go talk to them about what you can do.”

While she focused on victim support, Kelly believed documentation was critical to domestic violence workplace policy in order to avoid unmerited time off. She felt the Family Medical and Leave Act (FMLA) could serve as a sufficient proxy for that aspect of a workplace policy. As she reflected on policy, she shared, “It just has to be something that is part of the compliance training at the beginning of the year, it’s a portion of the slides where you are aware of what the resources are and this is what you do if this should ever happen.” (p. 12)

Kelly shared her passion for teaching and she indicated she could detect others' passions, often as seen in their ability to form relationships. She shared an image of her ideal teacher, “You always knew that she was a smiling face, and willing to help, and willing to go the extra mile to make sure you had fun, but she also had great knowledge and made it exciting.” Kelly described the outcomes of a good teacher, “Kids walk away at the end of the day knowing they are loved and knowing that they have mutual respect for each other.” (p. 6)

**Nellie**

Nellie has been an elementary principal for many years. She appeared uncomfortable when discussing domestic violence and was surprised by the topic. She was often hesitant in her responses and lacked the ease of some of the other participants. Nellie seemed more at ease discussing leadership, good teachers, and criteria for evaluation. Yet, she did not discontinue the interview. She addressed how home and work intersect by summarizing, “People have to be happy and content with things at
home before they can be a successful employee” (p. 2). She shared that an employee's home life was critical to workplace success. Nellie characterized domestic violence as "conflict in the home" and indicated this could cause work performance issues. She explained, that if teacher is "troubled by something that's occurring in the home, they’re probably not going to be as high performing as they could be” (p. 2). As a leader, though, Nellie shared she could communicate genuine care to her staff to help support them with private struggles.

When she reflected on how she understood domestic violence, Nellie revealed that someone very close to her had experienced it. This experience opened her eyes to domestic violence as she explained, “It probably wasn’t until observing this person who is so close to me go through that did I really recognize the harmful impact” (p. 4). Nellie shared her perception of the IPV victim she knew so well stating, "I would say this person, when I think about her history, maybe had the tendency to gravitate more toward a particular type of male, and for whatever reason that is, I don’t know... " (p. 4). After describing domestic violence in this way, Nellie shared it could negatively impact the workplace. She further reflected that domestic violence requires more workplace discussion. She stated, “I think especially in this day and age, that is something probably administrators need to think a little more about” (p. 5).

Despite admitting domestic violence needed to be thought about a little more, Nellie seemed uncertain about workplace support. While reinforcing the perception of employee support, she was unclear about how to provide that support, "I think employers need to make their employees feel like, should the situation arise, the employees need to know that they’re going to be supported. When I think about compliance training or
employee orientation, it’s been so long. I don’t know" (p. 5). Nellie's perception of school policy related to an employee who is a victim of domestic violence also seemed unclear as she explained, "A district policy? I would probably just check. When you think about somebody who is ill with… I don’t know. Let’s just say, I don’t know what to say, can’t. I don’t know" (p. 7). She went on to grapple with the concept, "We cater to people who are medically ill… I have no words. That would be the physical side of it but maybe I am trying to move to the mental side of it. I don’t know. I can’t figure out where I am trying to go with that" (p. 7).

Despite her struggle to describe a workplace policy, she continued, "If I had somebody on staff who had been through that, they need to be given the opportunity to still maintain a job but go seek out necessary services they need. We would do the same thing if somebody needs to go have chemo or whatever. That’s an illness but I am not saying domestic violence is an illness..." (p. 7). She expressed a bit of frustration...“You’ve made me talk about stuff I haven’t talked about extensively; that’s for sure. Which is fine” (p. 8).

Finally, Nellie summarized her struggles in describing domestic violence in the context of the workplace:

I don’t think schools always know that there is domestic violence going on. I would guess. I have to think that some folks who have been through that [domestic violence] probably live in the world of, ‘It’s never going to happen again’ or ‘It’s going to get better.’ I think for victims, it’s probably very difficult to talk about. It’s a confidentiality thing. Does the victim want his or her colleagues at work to know about it? Some may not. Evidently, since there’s not very much policy related to it, it’s maybe more of a closed door type situation. (p. 8)

Kim
Kim is a seasoned elementary principal. She appeared open and at ease during the interview, but only after the interview, revealed someone very close to her had experienced domestic violence. She often whispered in the interview, especially when describing the workplace issues surrounding domestic violence.

Kim shared that domestic violence is like “baggage” a teacher brings to work. She explained this could severely incapacitate a teacher's work focus and described domestic violence victims as timid, intimidated, and childlike.

In addition to the lack of focus, Kim perceived domestic violence as safety concern for the students. Uniquely, Kim described a workplace protocol that should be in place if a domestic violence victim had a restraining order against her abuser. If this happened, she explained that a domestic violence victim needed release time to keep others in the building safe. Yet, Kim revealed that she knew the situation was not the victim's fault, but maintained it was the victims' responsibility to leave the workplace to ensure others' safety. Kim also raised a unique issue concerning parental influence on a domestic violence victim. She explained what could happen when a parent or child discovers a teacher is a domestic violence victim, "A parent can use that to their advantage if they want or they can be sympathetic and… it just depends. It really does. Either way, can be just as negative as it can be positive" (p. 7).

Kim was clear that there was a need for education about domestic violence in the workplace. She shared education was needed primarily to help educators identify of employees who might be unwilling to share. Kim described her view of the needed education:

First of all, I think we need to have a little video. We need to be show what it [domestic violence] is and what the signs are... so maybe the signs that we really
Leslie

Leslie is a veteran elementary principal, having served in a Title building for years. She indicated that she has strong beliefs about relationships in the workplace. She revealed that she sees teacher-student relationships as critical for student success as well as encourage teachers to have strong relationships at home. She shared that she tells her teachers to put family first and even encourages them to bring their children to school to ease work-home life stress. Leslie also referenced strong relationships as a way to help domestic violence victims. She explained, “I think it depends on the relationships you’ve developed with that person [domestic violence victim]. If they know that you are willing to help them, then I think those relationships will carry outside of school as well” (p. 7). Yet, when considering domestic violence as a workplace issue, she explained, “I’m sure it’s hard to keep your focus on your job when you’re doing that, and it’s hard to be able to take care of things that you need to take care of day-to-day” (p. 6). She went on to explain she suspected one particular teacher had struggled with domestic violence. Leslie explained, "that person saw coming to work as her safe haven. She wanted to be there; she wanted to be around others" (p. 6).

Leslie described that she would respond to domestic violence victims primarily through offering counseling services. She reflected, "I also know that it's not something that we typically talk about either, so maybe we need some kind of education" (p. 6). At this point, Leslie "thought out loud" about a workplace response, as she navigated what seemed like uncertainty, "If you are in this situation, here's the resources. Here's who you
can go talk to, so that they're not alone. I also think that a lot of people just don't want to talk about that" (p. 6).

Leslie believed that if colleagues knew a teacher or staff member was also a domestic violence victim, it could be upsetting to the victim. She explained, "they don't want to be judged. Like I said, this is their safe place. Once they know, it may no longer feel safe to them" (p. 6). Additionally, in terms of providing workplace support, Leslie was the only participant that focused on the behavior of the abuser, "It’s probably not necessarily about just the victim getting help. It’s probably more about the victimizer getting help, which is really hard. If the victimizer’s not the one we are seeing at work...that may not even be a person that you want to try to have a relationship to help" (p. 7).

**Weston**

Weston recently joined District Y as a principal of a large elementary school. He revealed he feels that relationships are important to both student and employee success. Weston described ideal employees as those who can be empathetic first and foremost. He explained how important it is to be the kind of leader that "build people up" (p. 3) through a servant leadership model. He shared this type of leadership can create a culture of support. He shared that school culture "should be there as a family would for people if there is a debt or problem, you want to have a system there to help people" (p. 3). Further, he revealed he supports personal reflection and metacognition as a way to improve culture and learning.

While describing a supportive, "family like" work environment, Weston admitted his own family experience had not helped him become informed about domestic
violence, stating, "Coming from my middle class background, I don’t have that much of a reference point, but I would base my stereotype on what I see on TV and that’s where I’ll be coming from...Like I said, I don’t see that so much in my family or my neighborhood, so that’s (TV), I guess my window into that" (p. 3). He described his perception of a domestic violence: "I usually think of young couples that are struggling to make ends meet that are fighting over kids or money or whatever and yelling but fighting like it could be visible too... The male is the aggressor, losing their temper and hitting someone" (p. 3). Further, he vividly described a domestic violence victim, "I think of a young mom who has to move into a shelter and they’ve been physically abuse or whatever... She is poorly educated... low socioeconomic, maybe not graduated from high school" (p. 3).

Weston expressed he had physical discomfort thinking about how to have a conversation with a domestic violence victim. For example he explained "if it's been physical [the abuse] and you see things [in regard to the victim], you're going to have to make a decision at some point, so that gives me a stomachache" (p. 3). Even though he had likened a school environment and culture to family, he seemed hesitant that this should apply to a domestic violence victim. His voice inflection on the word "guess" revealed that he was hesitant or questioned extending this support to domestic violence victims: “I guess you would want to be a support?” (p. 3).

Weston described possible workplace consequences of domestic violence, "I think you’re possibly going to have someone who maybe has poor attendance. When they are here, they’re maybe not really here. They’re not going to be able to focus" (p. 9). He further revealed that domestic violence victims, "are not going to be able to get their
work outside done” (p. 4). As a result, he explained how bad this could be for students, "I just think it would be detrimental to the teacher and what they are trying to do, which in turn would be detrimental to the students..." (p. 9). Weston shared that domestic violence is a significant workplace issue and could cause a teacher to lose her job.

Weston appeared to struggle knowing that job loss was going to “make things worse” for a domestic violence victim. He explained that if domestic violence did not impact a teacher's performance, counseling might help but concluded, "If it’s affecting their performance, they can be dismissed, but I think having the safety net of a counselor or something, almost like insurance, you know?" (p. 6). He described domestic violence as a tough workplace issue and explained why there is no policy, stating, “That’s why there’s nothing on it. Nobody talks about it” (p. 6).

Assertions

Scarlet Letter

In many ways, domestic violence is perceived by District Y Principals as a "scarlet letter,” someone who inherently flawed and then shunned due the nature of her circumstance. The major themes that support this assertion include "happy home", "Ms. Sunshine", and "her secret." Participants shared that a happy home is critical to good teaching. At the same time, they overwhelmingly acknowledged that domestic violence victims do not have happy homes. As a result, if a teacher is also a domestic violence victim, she may be seen as unqualified; her victim status is like a scarlet letter.

Additionally, participants focused on teachers' personality, highlighting relationships, when discussing an ideal teacher, or Ms. Sunshine. Yet, participants acknowledged that domestic violence victims do not have a "Ms. Sunshine" nature. As a result, by not
fulfilling the "Ms. Sunshine" teacher ideal, a domestic violence victim wears a scarlet letter. Further, participants shared that when parents discover a teacher is also a domestic violence victim (e.g., her secret), her career could be damaged by their responses. They acknowledged that her status as a victim, but also teacher, could color how she is perceived, much like wearing a scarlet letter.

**Happy Home**

Participants collectively believe teachers must be happy at home to be effective teachers. For example, Jay shared, “I always tell them, ‘If you’re not stable at home, you’re not going to be stable here and I don’t need you here’ (p. 10). While other factors contribute to teacher success, such as credentials and experience, a teacher's home life was a consistent and central focus. For example, Caroline shared, "You can tell when they’re having trouble and if they’re not happy in their home life...I’ve always said that we need to take care of your home life. You got to have that in order in order to be successful."(p. 1). Reinforcing this sentiment, Nellie stated:

> If an employee is troubled by something that’s occurring at home, they’re probably not going to be as high performing as they could be... Again, if I have an employee coming and working for me who has been through that [domestic violence], their job performance may suffer. (p. 2-5)

The rationale for the impossibly high teacher ideal, to be "happy and content" at home, was derived from what teachers do; they care for children. Participants considered this to be fundamental to the teaching profession, as Jay explained, "Number one is I’ve always took the position kids are first. I have ethical responsibility to make sure they have a stable person in front" (p. 8). In order to exact this form of care, participants believe a teacher must be happy at home, and as Weston stated, put "100% into [their job]." (p. 9).
Of course, there could be teachers who live in a house where couples are fighting; a husband is hurting his wife; or there is someone who is being criticized, and constantly being put down to be made to feel inferior. This sort of home life, participants shared, was an environment where domestic violence is prevalent. Further, this environment would lead to unqualified teaching. As such, victims of IPV cannot achieve ideal teacher status if school leaders assume or know they are domestic violence victims.

*Ms. Sunshine*

District Y principals' perceptions of an ideal teacher also included a heavy emphasis on subjective, unrealistic traits. Participants were interested in teachers' personalities and dispositions. Kelly, brought their ideal to life when describing the model teacher saying, “You always knew that she was a smiling face, and willing to help, and willing to go the extra mile to make sure you had fun, but she also had great knowledge and made it exciting” (p. 3). She also characterized teachers as an "extensions of a parent" and described the ideal outcome of teaching, “Kids walk away at the end of the day knowing they are loved" (p. 3).

Louis described desirable teacher traits as, "someone that is trustworthy, hardworking, has a passion for what they're doing, has good relationships with staff and students and community" (p. 1). When asked what image came to mind when he thought of the traits most embodied in an ideal teacher Truman noted, "an image that comes to mind... would be like Mother Teresa, the Pope, Martin Luther King, my mom...the old mothers of the church" (p. 1). Caroline summed her ideal traits by concluding, "really good people...When you interview someone, you can tell in their voice if they're really excited about their profession" (p. 1).
In contrast to the participants' descriptions of an ideal teacher, domestic violence victims were perceived as young, childlike, undereducated, helpless, poor, unable to lead or logically handle arguments, psychologically unsound, and accepting of abuse. Participants often categorized them as in need of mental health services or even categorizing victimization itself as a mental health issue. Leslie described a domestic violence victim as a woman who has low self-esteem and believes she has no other options likely due to lack of support. Kim explained how domestic violence victims could hold an entire staff back because they are afraid to give honest feedback as a result of fear and abuse. In addition to holding the staff back, Kim likened a domestic abuse victim to a child, stating, "I mean they still have the intimidation of what’s been going on at home and they bring that to school just like a child that is hungry" (p. 4).

The contrast between participants' desired employee traits and their perceptions of domestic violence victims is stark. Domestic violence victims do not meet ideal workplace traits. Without additional information and attitude changes, the scarlet letter of IPV may prohibit a good teacher from being hired or retained, and may silence a victim.

*Her Secret*

Kim raised a unique issue as she reflected on domestic violence in the workplace. More specifically, she shared what can happen when parents become aware that a teacher is also a domestic violence victim. Without a policy, a parent who discovers a teacher is a domestic violence victim could raise concerns about the suitability of a teacher and could lead to the teacher's dismissal. And yet, while this seems wholly unethical and marginalizing, most did not call for the development of specific IPV policy. In addition,
while Kim describes the parents' perceptions as a possible problem, these reactions mirror those of the participants themselves, suggesting a cultural attitude about IPV in the educational workplace. Such attitudes may result in IPV victims hiding the violence because the risks are too high to wear the scarlet letter.

**Sword and Shield**

Two main concepts arose from District Y Principals' perceptions about domestic violence and the workplace: relationships and policy. In each case, relationships and policies, are viewed as a "shield" to help and protect victims of domestic violence yet, at the same time, used as a "sword" to disadvantage them. There were three major themes supporting this assertion: "relationships", "counterintuitive help", and "closed door."

Participants overwhelmingly identified relationships as critical to teaching, yet at the same time, perceived domestic violence victims as lacking relationship abilities. As a result, participants perceived a teacher's relationships with students as a help, or shield, in the classrooms. Yet, participants perceived domestic violence victim as lacking relationship skills; this seems disadvantage them or hurt them, like a sword. Further, participants seemed to be inclined to offer domestic violence victims counterintuitive help, or help their status as victim excluded them from receiving. For example, participants shared that work relationships (e.g., with colleagues and principal) could support domestic violence victims, yet at the same time, they also believed domestic violence victims were not well equipped to forge relationships. Participants consistently acknowledged that domestic violence remains a closed-door issue in the workplace, while simultaneously acknowledging that it has significant workplace consequences. As a result, participants described policy surrounding a private matter as help, like counseling,
at the same time describing a sword-like policy which would allow for domestic victim job loss.

Relationships

Successful teaching relies on the ability to build and sustain relationships, according to all of the participants. They overwhelmingly described relationships as the most important component of student learning. In fact, many described fostering a parent-child bond as the ideal way for teachers to reach students. Further, relationship building was essential for leadership and overall workplace success.

However, most participants believed domestic violence victims may be unable to form meaningful relationships in the home, which may translate into an inability to build relationships at work. Kim pointed out that domestic violence victims are timid or even afraid to "speak their mind" (p. 5), which suggests a diminished ability to be honest or open in developing a relationship. Further, Nellie explained her experience with a domestic violence victim who was attracted to a certain type of man, which suggested that the victim made wrong-headed decisions about relationships. While Nellie expressed she had observed someone close to her go through domestic violence, she conceded that maybe not all victims were like this. However, Nellie was among few participants who shared first-hand experiences with domestic violence victims. As a result, most of their participant views were shaped by assumptions, with little evidence or data to support these notions. This is significant because of the power the participants' perceptions; left uninformed, perceptions may leave domestic violence victims unshielded in the workplace, leading to harmful consequences such as job loss.
Leslie explained that domestic violence victims may not know the difference between healthy and non-healthy relationships, "I think that a lot of it comes from maybe what they saw growing up. I also think these women probably saw that in their past, and so maybe they do not know there’s another way. Maybe they think that is the norm for them" (p. 5). Because participants appear to perceive domestic violence victims as less likely to form healthy relationships, this could translate into how they are perceived as professionals. Specifically, if domestic violence victims are assumed to be unable to have good relationships with others, they may be viewed as inadequate as teachers and colleagues because relationship capacity is seen as fundamental to good teaching.

*Counterintuitive Help*

While participants largely perceived IPV victims as unable to form healthy relationships in general, they emphasized how critical it was for them to rely on relationships in the workplace for support. This is a bit counterintuitive to suggest that those who cannot forge relationships well should be expected to count on them at work. Caroline believed work relationships provide help to victims as she explains, "I think it would be, I mean hopefully, this was a place that they felt comfortable and would have friends and maybe, turn a different direction in their life" (p. 4). Caroline's comment stresses that relational support is so critical, that it could help a domestic violence victim turn away from abuse.

Most participants indicated that being part of a school family could help the victim to feel less alone and supported. Truman stated, "If you have a school community of employees that care about each other, it’s a support system for that individual. If the staff and administration surrounds that individual and provides a safe place, for that
person, I think the ability to be open could create a sense of security," (p. 2). Louis pointed out that it might be tougher for domestic violence victims who are not part of a workplace, "If they feel comfortable there and have ‘family’ there, that's a good support" (p. 6). He even indicated that a school family could help a domestic violence victim maintain her job, "I think the ability to be open could create a sense of security, which, if that person is a good teacher and good for kids could definitely retain that individual because it’s beyond just a job" (p. 2). Overwhelmingly, participants indicated that their one-on-one relationships with domestic violence could help the victim cope better with the violence or remove herself from it. However, simultaneously categorizing domestic violence victims as capable and incapable of relationships (e.g., with students or colleagues) seem to suggest a deeper need to understand participants' perceptions of domestic violence. They appear to offer personal and workplace support that they overwhelmingly indicate domestic violence victims are incapable of receiving; as a result, relationships simultaneously act as a shield and a sword.

Closed Door

Most District Y principals acknowledged that domestic violence is a private matter; yet, it could enter the workplace. When IPV is imagined in schools, participants identified critical implications including children and co-worker safety, student achievement, support for domestic violence, and victim job loss. For example, some participants suggested that victims should take leaves of absence or should actually be fired as a way to handle safety issues associated with a violent abuser.

Despite recognizing numerous costs of domestic violence, there were not policies to address domestic violence in District Y. Participants overwhelmingly acknowledged
domestic violence as a private matter victims may or may not want to discuss in the workplace. When participants focused on policy, they were more concerned about the victim not about the school. It seemed it was more the victim's responsibility to respond to her domestic violence, not the schools' responsibility to respond to domestic violence. If a school responded to domestic violence, one may see an approach to training, safety plans for victims, or education. However, policy may not be necessary at the school level if, as participants report, domestic violence is really a private matter. Nellie explained, "Evidently, since there’s not much policy related to it, it’s more of a closed-door type situation." There was a significant amount of uncertainty about how leaders might approach policy, leading several participants to conclude that education may be needed.

Although participants identified several implications of IPV for the educational workplace, domestic violence as a workplace issue seemed to perplex them. The following comments reflect the challenges they had grappling with the complexities of potential policy, practices, and outcomes:

First of all... if the person is not 100% on their job, then their kids are going to suffer. Their students aren’t going to get everything they need. They’re not going to score as well. If they’re not 100% into it, then that’s also going to affect their performance... their attendance is going to go down, so that could mean that they would be dismissed... it’s so important that everybody be on the top of their game...(Weston, p. 4)

See, that would be... Is it a ‘Don’t ask, don’t tell’? If you’re having... If you were afraid of your spouse, and you’re working with people, and you’re afraid for your life, from your spouse, I would almost feel like you should be obligated as a first reporter to inform your administration, ‘This is what’s going on.’ Because if not, you’re inviting something negative to happen... I think that you’re obligated to tell for safety concerns. Yeah, I think so... I wouldn’t fire her because she told me. I’d consider it if she didn’t and something did happen...(Truman, p. 9)
Often, participants suggested adopting existing procedures or policies for student abuse to respond to domestic violence. The idea that domestic violence and a transparent work response could coexist was difficult for participants to conceive of, despite existing framework for responses to cancer or family demands such as FMLA. As a result, many participants relied on child abuse schemas to respond to domestic violence abuse victims. Truman described schools as a safe place for kids and extrapolating from that, he explained how this same type of message could help to support domestic violence victims:

*I guess the district or school should be able to at least put out there an opportunity of an option to say, "We know it [domestic violence] exists. We know it’s out there. We’re a safe place." like giving... I’ll give you an example. We have signs out on the side of our building that says, "If a kid is in danger, if a kid needs a safe place, we are identified as a safe place." If we’re trying to create a district or a school community that really care about employees, we should inform them that, "Hey. We’re first responders also not only for kids, but also for with the caring of our employees also." I don’t think that that has ever happened that a district or school will assist openly on an individual’s personal life. (p. 7)*

While participants made connections between domestic violence and child abuse, responses like those above demonstrate a lack of understanding of IPV. Further, reinforcing a lack of knowledge of IPV, Jay suggested using a practice called "hotline" to respond to domestic violence in the workplace. Hotlining requires reporting cases of abuse to children to authorities and is a moral and legal duty.

*... ’Ok, can we provide you support? ’Because it’s embarrassing. If it’s noticeable, I’ll hotline. If I think they’re getting beat up and I see physical signs, just like I would a child, I’m going to take the next step. I would file a police report and hotline it as a principal. I think it’d be the same thing I’d do with a kid. Even though I’m not a mandated reporter I don’t think... I don’t know...*(p.7)

Yet, like most people, Weston relied on his existing frameworks to inform his response to IPV in the workplace. Although, his response could be characterized as well-
intentioned, "hotlining" a domestic abuse case would likely place the victim in grave danger (Bancroft, 2003). While Weston considered hotlining a domestic case, he eventually concluded that it was not something you could hotline because the victim was an adult, although, he did consider it carefully. Without a more complete understanding of IPV, educators are likely to rely on existing paradigms that may result in significantly increased consequences for the victim. Adopting ill-fitting approaches for domestic violence in the workplace may be intended to shield or help them; however, at the same time, these approaches may hurt them further, as if, with a sword.

**Summary**

Findings revealed perceptions that may disadvantage domestic violence victims in school settings. Participants' perceptions of the ideal teacher seemed to broadly disqualify domestic violence victims in the workplace, leaving them with the indelible mark of a scarlet letter. Further, their perceptions about the role of relationships in the lives of IPV victims and policy that might be needed were well meaning, but lacked a deep understanding of IPV as a workplace issue, which may serve to further disadvantage those who are victims of IPV. While good intentions can shield domestic violence victims, if left uniformed, they could act as an unrestrained, sharp sword.

In Chapter Five, I will answer the research questions based upon the findings and guided by the lens of gendered organizational theory (Acker, 1990). I will also discuss implications of this research for policy and practice. Finally I will present recommendations for future research in light of the findings and conclusions from this study.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to utilize Acker's (1990) gendering processes to better understand principals' perceptions of domestic violence and to what extent principals' perceive domestic violence as a workplace issue. By using a multiple case analysis approach, I developed assertions from principals' narratives and captured overarching themes. When principals' perceptions of IPV were analyzed using gendering processes, I was able to more clearly develop an understanding of how they were shaped. As a result, I found District Y principals' IPV perceptions are largely the result of gendering processes and as such, District Y is likely a gendered organization.

To begin to answer my research questions, a brief review of Acker's (1990) gendering processes is necessary. As these processes interact within an organization, a gendered organization is uncovered. Process one highlights how gender itself is used to assign work. For example, certain jobs, such as a teacher or nurse are largely seen as women's jobs. Often, positions that tend to assume less organizational power are assigned to women, which serves to maintain unequal power distribution within organizations that advantages men. Process two argues that symbolism within an organization communicates gender in ways that are societally accepted or traditional. Process three is focused on interactions that can be categorized as exhibiting patterns of dominance and submissiveness. As such, these interactions are identified when one person is dominant and the other, submissive.

Process four focuses on the way people are conceived of either by themselves or others as a function of the role their job demands of them. The demands, in this case,
have little do with the work, but have everything to do with gender. If the organization expects a more masculine approach to do a job, the employee should take that identity on to be successful; the same would be true if the role was expected to be feminized. Thus, a teacher would be expected to perform in feminized ways, such as caretaking, even if he was a man. Process five is focused on what is deemed as socially acceptable within the workplace, not based on behavior itself, but more in the ways gender shapes behavior. For example, traditional gender roles require women to bear a large portion of domestic burdens and as such, organizations are likely to expect this same behavior in the workplace. For example, if food or clean up is necessary for organizational functions, women are expected to be and are likely more engaged in those efforts, as those behaviors are more consistent with stereotypical gender roles. As I interpret my findings below, I will identify gendering processes parenthetically to demonstrate how they contribute to my understanding of District Y as a gendered organization.

**Perceptions of IPV**

**General Perceptions**

Principals considered IPV a private matter, one that victims do not want to discuss because of the shame and stigma associated with domestic violence. While it is also a societal concern, they perceived IPV to be largely ignored (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009). They imagined victims of IPV as impoverished, under-educated women who are hurt, criticized, and made to feel inferior. They are timid, unable speak their minds, and cower to men. Principals also described IPV victims as childlike, often comparing domestic violence to child abuse or to the struggles students may bring to school. In rare
circumstances when participants imagined responding to an IPV victim, they referred to existing institutional responses to child abuse to inform their actions.

**IPV as a Workplace Issue**

Principals perceived domestic violence as societally pervasive and yet, they did not associate IPV with schools or teachers. However, if in the rare circumstance when IPV became an issue in schools, like society at large, it would likely be ignored. If the problem became so significant that it could not be ignored, victims might be fired or asked to leave the workplace; this is especially true if their presence at school was assumed to bring danger to children. In addition, IPV victims could not be effective at work because principals expected them to both fulfill traditional gender roles (e.g., to be caretakers of children, to create happy homes, to be good at developing and maintaining relationships (process 5); and to be an ideal worker (i.e., singularly focused on work (processes 4 and 5). At the same time, principals conceded that an IPV victim is incapable of being a good caretaker and an ideal worker.

Beyond the notion of the feminized worker as caretaker and relational in the classroom, principals understood IPV victims needed strong workplace relationships to be supported in the organization. However, this becomes a circular argument that IPV victims cannot win, for support is impossible to garner because principals perceive them as unable to establish and maintain relationships. Additionally, principals' daily responses to organizational issues like child abuse were substituted for more appropriate responses to IPV victims. Lastly, principals overwhelmingly agreed that if IPV were a District Y workplace issue, it would be associated with student safety, workplace safety, and IPV victim job loss. Despite these potentially critical issues, principals were not
moved to implement IPV policies; these issues were strictly hypothetical, as they did not associate IPV with schools.

**Interpreting Perceptions**

When principals imagined an IPV victim, as previously stated, they saw a woman filled with shame and stigmatized within a community. Further, they largely agreed that women are often silent about their abuse to avoid shame (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009). In addition, women's silence may contribute to why IPV is largely absent in schools. Yet, by not addressing IPV as an organizational issue because they perceive it to be a private matter, principals are sending an organizational message (process 5) that shame is connected with being hurt or abused. The resulting social message is that IPV is naturally connected with shame (e.g., stigma) and this message is unchallenged in District Y. As a result, IPV victims may construe that leaders legitimate their feelings of shame and silence. Shame, then, is an appropriate response intended to keep victims silent. This is also a gendering pattern associated with dominance and submissiveness (process 3) because of their principals' power to reinforce submissive behaviors, like silence. In addition, silence has consequences for IPV victims, as they may reluctant to ask for help or express safety concerns in their workplace.

As discussed previously, principals agreed IPV is largely absent from schools, while they also acknowledged its societal pervasiveness. These two perceptions appear at odds with each other. For instance, District Y employs mostly women (process 1), which should suggest that IPV is in schools; yet, principals failed to make that connection. On the surface, this seems illogical; however, the disconnect may be explained by the feminized conception of an teacher (processes 2 and 4) or "Ms.
Sunshine." This is to say that participants in the study considered a teacher as feminized and a caretaker, and one without cares or concerns. This notion of a teacher is in direct contrast with their perception of an IPV victim; therefore, as an IPV victim, she would be incapable of performing her job and would no longer be conceived of as a teacher in a school. This disconnect may be further explained by evidence that that employed IPV victims are resilient and higher functioning (O’Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009). As a result of such resilience, principals may not notice IPV victims in their schools, which means that the principals do not have explicit examples to challenge their assumptions that teachers may be IPV victims. Of course, this is not to suggest that it is the IPV victim's responsibility to educate school leaders. Instead, school leaders have the responsibility to educate themselves, but find it unnecessary because domestic violence is an issue that they perceive does not affect them, or their organizations.

When asked to imagine IPV as a workplace issue, principals did not express a need for a specific IPV policy. They overwhelmingly agreed that IPV is a "closed door" issue, both in the home and organizationally (if it were present). By "closed door," District Y principals indicated that IPV would only be addressed, if were present, in a secretive way. This suggests that if it was addressed, it would likely to be an interaction only between the principal and the victim.

Gendering may have constrained participants from seeking alternatives to a "closed door" approach. For example if a "closed door" approach for IPV remains intact, IPV victims who are unable to keep their abuse a secret will have to discuss it behind closed doors with a principal at work. If this is the case, IPV victims may be subject to whatever the principal decides is appropriate. Thus, without a specific IPV policy in
place or training for principals to respond to IPV, domestic violence are required to be submissive (process 3) to what that particular leader decides for them. Moreover, other organizations recognize IPV as workplace issue; policies exist and there are documented sources for victim support including educational programs (e.g., for leaders and co-workers), response training, and ways to connect to community resources (Swanberg et al., 2012). District Y could learn from these sort of initiatives to interrupt gendering processes and inequities.

Not only do leaders influence an IPV victims' career, but parents who become aware of a teacher's status as an IPV victim (i.e., they learn her "secret") may influence her career negatively. The lack of perceived need for IPV workplace policies revealed a gendering process (process 3) such that in the absence of policy, IPV victims are required to be submissive to others whims (i.e., parents'). The interaction between a parent who believes a victim teacher puts the school at risk may result in the loss of a career opportunity or a job. Principals acknowledged the power of parents in this situation, which strips IPV victims of their agency to determine their own fate. They also failed to consider their own agency to educate parents about IPV or to challenge parents' demands.

As principals thought more about IPV as a workplace issue, as previously mentioned, they overwhelmingly agreed that IPV victims lack important relationship skills associated with the notion of "Ms. Sunshine (process 4). At the same time, shared that workplace relationships (of which IPV victims should be incapable) were vital to support IPV victims so they could maintain their jobs or help them turn away from abuse. Yet, contrary to principals' perceptions that IPV victims lack relational skills, Swanberg et al. (2012) found that victims' relationships with supervisors and co-workers who are
trained in IPV support could offer meaningful help. This type of training was specifically focused on connecting IPV victims with expert community resources. It is important to note that co-worker or direct supervisor relationships may not be singularly beneficial as a support; in fact, these relationships could pose a risk to the victim if the abuser was aware of these relationships (Swanberg, 2007). This is not to say, however, that victims are incapable of developing and maintaining relationships (deVries et al., 2007).

Further supporting their perceptions that victims have poor relational skills, participants suggested that IPV victims may accept abuse because they have not had healthy relationship models. In fact, IPV victims may have a propensity to choose unhealthy relationships. Therefore, if victims cannot establish healthy relationships, following this logic, it is moot to extend support that IPV victims are incapable of receiving.

**Gendering as an Organizational Problem**

At first glance, it may seem that because principals rarely considered IPV as a workplace issue, it does not deserve District Y's attention. Yet, through deeper analysis of the principals' perceptions, coupled with the existing literature, I suggest it does. Principals may rarely address IPV because gendering processes are working to mask its presence. Moreover, leaders critically shape gendered social messages (process 5) within organizations; thus, leaders are implicitly or explicitly suggesting that women victims should accept shame associated with IPV. As such, victims may know they should be silent about their abuse because their shame is taken for granted within the organization and behave accordingly. This results in a cycle that hides IPV in the school workplace, reinforcing that women's issues are unimportant and IPV is not an issue.
Further, women may know that if they do not fulfill both their traditional gender roles and the imagined ideal worker role, they will be marginalized. If an IPV victim is marginalized, or considered ineffective as a teacher simply because she is a crime victim, she could suffer both in the workplace and in the home. And, ostracizing IPV victims in the workplace may result in further victimization. Employed IPV victims often strive to maintain their careers in order to break free from abuse (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009); if that lifeline is severed, they may have no option but to return to the abuse. Breaking free financially also becomes impossible if a known victim is subject to job loss. This is a problem for District Y because being a crime victim is not typically grounds for job loss; yet, participants inferred otherwise. This suggests gendering processes are working to mask the injustice of firing a woman because she is a crime victim. Even more troubling, gendering processes constrained the participants from exploring alternatives to job loss through policy or education.

Based on my findings, gendering processes are a problem for IPV victims and schools like those in District Y. As Acker (1990) posits, they can create inequities and are often hard to detect. This is so because beliefs about gender are so deeply embedded that they are taken for granted as normative. As a result, long held beliefs about gender are unconsciously woven throughout the perceptions of the principals in this study. Therefore, it is incumbent upon school leaders to unearth these assumptions and challenge them in their schools. While this is very difficult, in part due to the gendering processes themselves that collectively serve to reinforce gendered norms, it is nonetheless a systemic issue that organizations can no longer ignore. Principals not only need education, more importantly, they also need to explore ways gender shapes their
perception about IPV. This is critical so they can root out ways in which gendering could require women who are also IPV victims to be submissive, shamed, ignored, fired, and/or re-victimized in their schools. Organizational responses to IPV must be reengineered, and principals, like those in this study, are in positions to facilitate these transformations.

**Implications and Recommendations for Practice, Policy, and Research**

The previous chapter and discussion above describe how District Y principals’ perceive domestic violence in general and as a workplace issue. The findings of this study have implications for practice, policy, and research and are informed by gendering processes (Acker, 1990) and the concept of resistance and change (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Gendering processes need to be interrupted in order to consider IPV as a workplace issue. This can be largely achieved by identifying areas where those interruptions are likely to occur most easily.

One way to begin is to demand critical self-reflection about personally held gender beliefs. Vivid examples of how gender can be damaging can trigger self-reflection. For example, the NFL’s lack of response to IPV just prior to data collection for this study, despite a very graphic incident of gender violence perpetrated by a high profile player, can remind us, including school leaders, that IPV is an issue of public concern. Education that challenges assumptions about IPV must also occur. Doing so requires resistance and change.
Resistance and Change

Resistance demands individuals to be against "status quo" notions of gender (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Thus, resistance weakens taken-for-granted gendered expectations and creates opportunities for change. This is critically important because as Acker (1990) posits, traditional gender notions are integral components of private life that also pervade organizations and organizational structures. The gendering processes observed in this study are not unusual. They stem from how gender is generally conceived of and further, how it shapes perceptions of women and issues that affect them. Thus, if principals and organizations are to disrupt unattainable notions of teacher as an ideal feminized worker, they will have to start with what they consciously and unconsciously believe about gender. For example, if teachers must embody "Ms. Sunshine," teachers will not be empowered or have more substantive roles in their workplace; they will perform as society expects. In addition, IPV will remain in the shadows. This is unacceptable. Thus, stereotypical beliefs about gender and assumptions about IPV must be challenged.

Through my interview with Jay, he began to question his assumption that domestic violence was the victim's fault. By doing so, he realized that it was inappropriate to hold teachers accountable if they did not experience a "happy home" or were not "Ms. Sunshine." Because Jay challenged a previously held notion, he created an opportunity for change. This type of critical self-reflection may begin to disrupt a gendering process. Further exemplifying moments of resistance and change, Jay stated this study helped him be a "better principal." He realized during our conversation that punishing a teacher for being a crime victim was unjust and marginalized women. While areas of resistance and change are necessary for individual leaders, they are even more
vital to dismantle deeply held organizational beliefs about gender. A gendered organization continues to recreate gendering processes (Acker, 1990), which leaves little opportunity to emancipate IPV victims in the schools.

The findings of this study provided an additional example that could be presented to school leaders to challenge the damages that result from gendering processes. Several participants suggested that a teacher could be fired if she is a victim of abuse, especially if her abuser is construed to impose a safety risk to the school. Women are placed in a subjugated position (process 3) because if IPV victims are fired, those in power are punishing them for being abused. And yet, it is well established that in most cases, principals do not expel abused children from school. To spark self-reflection among school leaders, a comparable question may be posed to them if they anticipate punishing a woman for being abused, but not do so if the victim was a child. Of course, this is not a perfect comparison. However, it is possible that it may help school leaders realize the harm gendering processes create for women. Perhaps, using powerful examples and asking provocative questions to uncover discriminatory practices that are otherwise masked by gendering can help identify opportunities for organizational resistance and change.

**Practice**

Beyond self-reflection about gender and IPV, education about IPV must be expanded throughout District Y. Education needs to include information about gendering processes that often shape perceptions about gender and power. Through these approaches to education, District Y can communicate social messages that support women through action. One form of action would be for top-level leaders to explore
alternative responses to IPV in the workplace and reject the notion women should be submissive. For example, top-level leaders could initiate an "open door" policy in response to IPV by establishing programs to connect victims with community resources. Such transparency would challenge and eliminate existing "closed door" approaches like those discussed by participants. In addition, these practices have the potential to empower all women in District Y. By removing gendering processes that demanded their silence about "private" issues that could expose an "unhappy home," women may be more committed to an organization that values women for who they are, not their ability to mask aspects of their identities.

Additionally, I recommend leaders reject IPV as a private issue by connecting their schools with prosecutors' offices, victim advocacy groups, and judicial systems to familiarize themselves with the legal aspects of adjudicating domestic violence cases and the impact it has on victims. Further, as an alternative to dismissal, workplace practices need to be in place to extend leave for those IPV victims who have not engaged formally in the legal system. Further, such practices should extend workplace leave to those who may need to relocate and to those who may require healthcare services for themselves or their children. They should include training for supervisors to respond to IPV and to help victims develop workplace safety plans. Lastly, because some participants considered using child abuse responses for domestic abuse, I would recommend school leaders urgently identify appropriate responses that will mitigate risk for IPV victims.

Policy

While I believe it is critical to address area of resistance and change to interrupt damaging gendering processes, I am both cautious and an advocate for changes in policy.
As Sallee (2012) found, policy can be powerfully explicit, but weakly implicit, if gendering processes are not interrupted. However, because of the urgency surrounding domestic violence, it is necessary to address explicit policy (Acker, 1990). Like my findings, Swanberg et al., (2012) revealed an overall lack of policy response for domestic violence. Yet, we also know IPV victims can benefit from organizational support (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009). Policy creation and implementation can be powerful mechanisms to provide needed organizational support.

I recommend that school leaders address IPV as a workplace issue and provide support for IPV victims (O'Leary-Kelly & Reeves, 2009) by developing policies that interrupt gendering processes such as those found in this study. For instance, specific IPV policies must be developed that offer work leave, reduce employment discrimination, and increase awareness and safety in the workplace. Further, policies must be created that ensure the rights of IPV victims to unemployment benefits and wages as well as employer intercession services, such as a prosecutor directly contacting an employer to notify them of court related dates requiring IPV victim attendance. Yet, leaders do not have to address domestic violence alone. As such, workplace safety and awareness should be established by connecting domestic violence victims with local agencies, as they are more equipped to provide assistance especially given the current lack of information and assumptions about domestic violence discovered in this study. In addition to developing new policies and identifying supportive partners in their work to address IPV, I recommend schools leaders become more familiar with how the Family Medical and Leave Act (FMLA) can be used to support IPV victims and how this statute or others can prevent discrimination. For example, FMLA allows victims to attend court
proceedings or meet with attorneys in documented court cases. While this means that victims have to be involved formally in the judicial system, it does help them attain work leave without workplace retaliation.

**Research**

The timing of this study was unique. It occurred between two events that ultimately sparked a national conversation about domestic violence. Prior to August 2014, before the data were collected, a high profile professional football player dragged his unconscious partner out of an elevator and it was captured on video. This video, depicting the very graphic nature of domestic violence, was broadcast nationally. After the data were collected, an even more graphic video of the player rendering his partner unconscious dominated on television and social media. These two events led to intensive and national conversations about domestic violence.

During the interview process, Jay talked about the first video. He expressed concerns that domestic violence victims often return to their abusers. This was also the subject of the national conversation, that continues at the writing of my study. Thus, I recommend additional research to understand the influence of media and of the national conversation on domestic violence, including whether such circumstances can interrupt gendering processes and sustain changes in the perceptions of women and of domestic violence. These findings could assist educators in better identifying areas of resistance and change within their organizations. For example, if research finds that social media about domestic violence can help to disrupt gendering processes by sparking a national conversation that challenges previously held beliefs about women and IPV (i.e., resistance), this could inform practices used to lessen gendering (i.e., change).
In addition, future research should focus on leaders' perceptions of domestic violence as a workplace issue in different types of organizations, such as healthcare. As acknowledged by the principals in this study, schools employ many more women as compared to men, much like healthcare organizations. While some may assume that feminized organizations experience less gendering, this study's finding demonstrate that such organizations can be gendered. In fact, assumptions that feminized organizations may somehow be different and less gendered could lead to more clever ways to reinforce and perpetuate gendering. Further, research focused on other types of organizations may provide a more in depth understanding of gendering processes in general and the ways leaders' perceptions induce or sustain power inequities based on status quo gender ideals. In addition, such findings could contribute to our understandings of interventions that can work to lessen organizational gendering.

Research is also needed to better understand how gendering processes shape IPV victims' workplace experiences. The victims' "stories" must be heard to extend this study's findings beyond school leaders' perceptions of IPV. In turn, this can better inform policy and practices that lessen organizational gendering and improve workplace support. Further, based on this study's findings, parents have the potential to influence gendering processes and thus, a better understanding of their perceptions of domestic violence as a school issue is needed. Using Acker's (1990) framework, as I have in this study, to explore their perceptions of IPV as a school issue could help organizations develop policies and practices that could lessen gendering and provide support to IPV victims working in schools. Lastly, because public schools are often recipients of federal funding, research is need to better understand the implementation of Title IX of the
Education Amendment of 1972 in K-12 schools as it relates to institutional discriminatory practices and to teachers who are also IPV victims.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore District Y principals’ perceptions of domestic violence and to what extent they consider it a workplace issue. The findings of this study show these principals do not consider IPV as a workplace issue. However, when principals were asked to imagine it as such, Acker's (1990) gendering processes helped me better understand the nature of their perceptions. This analysis suggests that District Y schools are gendered, and as a result, women may suffer inequities and discrimination (Acker, 1990). Further, traditional gender notions play an organizational role in District Y. School leaders must recognize and work to stop these gendering processes if inequities are to be interrupted. To do this, leaders must first acknowledge IPV as a workplace issue. In addition, high-level leaders and principals in District Y must start to challenge their deeply held beliefs about gender, if change is to happen.

Leaders need to take actions and model to others that change is needed. One way to lead these change efforts is for leaders to be self-reflective about how their positions and behaviors support gendering processes. Also, the entire organization must receive education about IPV and gendering. Leaders should develop and implement, specific, credible IPV policies (Swanberg et al., 2012). They should also develop programs that connect IPV victims to expert community resources. As Acker (1990) suggests, the essence of gendering is deeply embedded within organizational structures, and leaders are in unique positions to initiate change to interrupt the processes that reinforce and reproduce gendering and inequity.
However, these actions alone are not enough, gender must also be a focus of change. By focusing on IPV as a workplace issue, principals and school leader should seek to better understand the gendering processes that likely stem from the organizational structure of schools and school districts. As such, principals and school leaders should engage in efforts to identify areas of resistance and change that may help their workforce better understand gender and role it plays in shaping the workplace. This can be accomplished by engaging in organizational conversations about IPV as workplace issue and gendered conceptions they hold of the ideal worker. Principals and school leaders should also engage other organizational leaders in conversation about gender, inequity, and organizational changes that are required to lessen gendering. By these efforts, changes in individuals' beliefs about gender may shift to changes in organizational beliefs about gender. This is important if significant organizational change is expected. By doing so, they can begin to reject the inequities women suffer in the workplace and empower teachers with more substantive roles in schools.

When leaders recognize their own role in gendering and in interrupting it, and recognize IPV as a school issue, they can serve a "lightening rods" for revealing deeply embedded notions about gender. In fact, well-intentioned leaders, like those in this study, would likely reject marginalization and challenge it if they realized the role gendering processes play in their work and their organization. The leaders in this study had not yet done so, but perhaps these findings will prompt them to begin this work.
Now is the time to shine the light on gendering processes and recognize IPV as a workplace issue. Our schools should not be places of inequity, silence, submission, or predetermined failure for teachers. It is time to resist these notions and change our schools to become places where everyone is free to work and live to their full potential.
References


Dear School Leader,

I am writing to you to express my interest in conducting a short interview (approximately 60 minutes) for the completion of my doctoral degree at the University of Missouri. The focus of my study is on District Y school leaders' perspectives of domestic violence, and specifically, as a workplace issue for women. Domestic violence is also known as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

I am very interested in knowing more about your perspective about IPV in general and IPV as workplace issue for women. I hope you are willing to give of your time and perspectives to help me gain a little more insight to a topic that is under-researched. I will follow up in the next two weeks with a phone call to talk with you more about this study. However, feel free to contact me if you have questions prior to my phone call.

Again, thank you for considering helping me on this journey. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity you might be willing to provide for consideration to participate in this study.

My contact information:
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(573)-8829585

Respectfully submitted,

Kendra M. Lau
Doctoral Candidate, University of Missouri, Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
APPENDIX B

Initial Phone Call Protocol

Investigator: Hello, this is Kendra Lau and I am to follow up on the recruitment letter to participate in my doctoral dissertation study about school leaders perceptions of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). First, I wanted to ask if you have any questions about the letter or my proposed study.

Participant: Response

Investigator: Responding to questions and concerns.

Investigator: After discussing your questions, would you feel comfortable participating in this study? If so, I would like to schedule an interview. We can conduct the interview in a location of your choice. I am also happy to offer my office as a potential location.

Investigator: Thank you for your willingness to participate, I will see you at (location) on (date) at (time).
APPENDIX C

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for School Leaders

Project: "School Leaders IPV Perspectives"

Interview Information:

Date: ______________________________
Time: _____________________________
Place: _____________________________
Pseudonym of Participant: ________________________________

Interviewer Introduction
Description of Project
Discussion of Confidentiality
Approval to Record
Approval to Continue

Questions:

1. How would you describe the ideal school district employee?
2. How would you describe strong leadership traits? What image comes to mind?
3. When thinking of evaluations, describe the indicators you feel most strongly evidence a high quality school district employee? For example, credentials, experience, people skills and such.
4. What is your perception of the role the school plays to support employees’ personal/family responsibilities?
5. How does gender influence the workplace?
6. When you hear the term IPV, what comes to mind?
7. When you reflect about your general perception of IPV, how did you develop this view? What sources helped you form this view?
8. Tell me about your perception of IPV victim?
9. How might IPV influence the school setting?
10. How might it influence the workplace? Any examples?
11. How might IPV be different for women employees than men employees?
12. How might schools and districts respond to IPV as a workplace issue?
13. How might the school influence an IPV victim's life outside of work?
14. What sort of implications might there be for the school district of employing an IPV victim?
15. What might a policy related to IPV look like with in the school district or school?
16. Are you aware of any policies at your school or within the school district related to IPV?
APPENDIX D

Informed Consent

This form requests your consent to participate in a research study (IRB Project 1210445) to explore school leaders’ perceptions of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and specifically, IPV as a workplace issue for women. This is a dissertation project being conducted by Kendra Lau (researcher) as overseen by Dr. Jeni Hart (advisor/chair).

**Project description:** This research project involves interviews to better understand school leaders’ perceptions of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and specifically, IPV as a workplace issue for women. The approximately 60 minute interview will focus on school leaders’ perceptions about IPV.

**Potential Benefits and Concerns:** Participation in this study may provide participants with possible insights about IPV. While there are minimal risks in this project as school leaders often consider employees and workplace issues, engaging in conversation about IPV may prompt questions or concerns for individuals. While it may be unlikely that a participant would seek to gain more understanding of issues discussed during the project with a trained professional, community resources will be available using phone numbers for contacts including: the YWCA IPV counselor (Linda Pettit, 816-232-4481), the Buchanan County Prosecutor (Kristina Zeit, 816-271-1480)/Victim Advocate (Morgan Hansen, 816-271-1480), the Domestic Violence Hotline website (www.thehotline.org), the National Resource Center Workplace Responds to Domestic and Sexual Violence (http://www.workplacesrespond.org).

**Confidentiality:** All the information I collect will be confidential according to legal and ethical guidelines. I will secure all data for use in this study by keeping all materials in locked, password-protected file for 7 years before they are permanently deleted per University of Missouri Institutional Review Board policy. To preserve the confidentiality of the participants, you will be asked to select your own pseudonym. In addition, the name of the district will be masked by the pseudonym, District Y.

**Audio recording:** Interviews will be audio recorded. If you prefer, the interview can be conducted without recording. If you initially agree to allow recording, at any time during the interview, you have the right to request the recording cease and/or the interview itself cease.

**Participation is voluntary:** Participation is voluntary and you may decide not to answer any interview questions or withdraw your participation at any time without any penalty. If you decide to withdraw, all data related to you will be destroyed.

**Questions:** Please feel free to contact Kendra Lau (kmrf3f@mail.missouri.edu) at (816) 273-7096 with any questions or concerns. You may also contact Dr. Jeni Hart (hartjl@missouri.edu) at (573) 882-8221.

The University of Missouri Institutional Review Board approved this research study. You may contact their office if you have questions about your rights, concerns, complaints or comments as a participant in this study. You can contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board by telephone (573) 882-9585 or email umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu.
VITA

Kendra Michelle Lau was born in Aurora, Illinois. She grew up in St. Joseph, Missouri and calls St. Joseph home. She attended the University of Missouri – Columbia and finished her undergraduate with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Missouri Western State University in 1995. Kendra later attended Northwest Missouri State University where she earned her Masters of Science in Science Education in 1997. She returned to the University of Missouri – Columbia to earn her Ed.D in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis in 2015.

During her career, Kendra served as a teacher in Advanced Placement Chemistry, dual credit course, and Honors. In addition, she earned her Gifted Education certification and served as District Gifted Education Coordinator for five years. Kendra now serves as the District Assessment Director. In her current position, she leads day-to-day operations of a vibrant Assessment Office focused on continuous improvement and serving students.

Kendra resides in Saint Joseph, Missouri with her husband of six years. She has two children: Kody-22 and Josey-17. Currently, she is looking forward to how God will use her to help address organizational gendering so that women can enjoy substantive and empowered careers in schools.