Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

CRYSTAL WASHINGTON

MSEd (Hunter College of The City University of New York, 2011)
BA (Hunter College of The City University of New York, 2006)

“Understanding through Stories: Leadership Experiences of Trinidadian Women of Color”

Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

Friday, May 14, 2021
10:00 am (PDT)
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Tatiana Gounko, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Nadezda Kukikova, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic (Member)
Dr. CindyAnn Rose-Redwood, Department of Geography, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Tanya Manning-Lewis, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Craig Brown, Division of Medical Sciences, UVic

Dr. Stephen V. Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Existing literature about women in positions of power and leadership is extensive and varied, including popular sectors such as finance, politics, and education. However, previous work has only focused on higher education and homogenized female leadership experience. One of the main issues in our knowledge of female leadership is the lack of diverse perspectives and experiences. This failure to recognize differences among women gives an inaccurate whole picture of how women lead within different contexts. Therefore, using the Ethics of Care as the guiding conceptual framework and social constructivism as its worldview, this narrative inquiry critically examined and concurrently discovered the lived experiences of four Trinidadian women of color who previously held a principal leadership position earlier in their lives. More specifically, the participants were retired primary and secondary school principals representing varying locations across the Caribbean island. Assuming the position of storyteller, participants narrated their approach to leading as storied descriptions of their lived experiences to the researcher. The findings of this study support existing literature on gender inequality female leaders often confront in their workplace and the emotional labor they engage in. The findings also indicated that participants tended to practice transformative leadership. Most importantly the findings also highlighted existing class-based bias related to colonialism and patriarchal norms. This study contributes to the overall understanding of leadership experiences of Caribbean women of color and adds to the limited literature on this topic within the Caribbean region. Lastly, the findings of this study can support further extensive research on this group of leaders and perhaps inform policies and practices of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Keywords: woman, women, female, females, Trinidad, Caribbean, West Indies, administrator, leadership, leader, education, principals