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A Study of Advancement: Female Superintendents Breaking the Glass Ceiling

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A Study of Advancement: Female Superintendents

Breaking the Glass Ceiling

by

Tiffany Caywood Brunner

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This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

Full Legal Name: Tiffany Caywood Brunner

Signature _Tiffany Caywood Brunner_ _____ Date _1·10·2019_

Acknowledgments

I want to thank all women who have worked hard to move into positions of leadership in education, business, and politics. Thank you for lighting the path for others with your courage, dedication, and perseverance. To my mother, who has made me who I am and is a constant source of inspiration and awe, thank you. Raylene has been a pioneer in business and her trailblazing community support of other women has led to my own interest regarding women in leadership.

The pursuit of this degree would not have been possible without the support and devotion of my husband, Matthew. I am the luckiest person in the world to have him as my spouse. He is always enthusiastic in celebrating all life has to offer with our children and making every memory count. Thank you for allowing me all the time to complete this dissertation, I certainly feel like this was a collective effort. To our children, Alex, Brady, and Murphy, who are a constant source of pride and joy, thank you for making our lives so rich in laughter and fun.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the career progression of female superintendents located in southwest Missouri. The inequitable balance of women represented at the highest levels of district leadership is a national, state, and local concern (American Association of School Superintendents [AASA], 2015). Women who do ascend to the superintendent's positions, despite the odds, are in the minority (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). A qualitative, narrative research lens was used in this study to capture individual career accounts and interpretations of career advancement of the female superintendent. Data collection centered on personal, one-on-one interviews with female superintendents located throughout the southwestern region of Missouri. The primary and guiding research questions for this study were focused on self-efficacy, mentorship, pivotal conversations, and goal setting using the theoretical framework of social cognitive career theory (Lent, 2005). A series of common themes emerged from the interviews and produced a clear understanding of the path the female superintendents traveled to assume the most important decision-making role in their respective school districts. Key themes which emerged were mentorship, crucial conversations, goal setting and outcome expectancies, and leading with the heart. Participants indicated they had developed a strong sense of self-efficacy, which led to broader goals and career advancements. In future research, it is imperative to analyze opportunities women have which help shape, encourage, and support other women moving into the role of superintendent.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The Center for American Progress estimated, at the current rate of change, it will take until 2085 for women to reach parity with men in key leadership roles in the United States (Parker, Menasce- Horowitz, & Rohal, 2015). Men holding the top leadership position in the nation's public schools is no exception (Morillo, 2017). Women comprise 75% of the educational workforce, but only 24% of females represent a significant leadership role such as the superintendency (Morillo, 2017, p. 4). While women have made great strides in accomplishing educational degrees, even outpacing male counterparts in degree completion, there is a double standard set for women in politics, business, and education (Parker et al., 2015).

The status of female superintendents throughout the country has steadily increased over the years (American Association of School Superintendents, 2015). Women represented less than 10% of superintendents in 1992 (Kowalski, Young, Phillip, McCord, & Ellerson, 2011, p. 16). In 2011, almost one in four women had been bestowed the top position in school districts (AASA, 2015 p. 3). However, even with these noted increases, statistics still reflect a male-dominated job market (Hoff, Menard, & Tuell, 2006).

The disproportionate lack of females in the role of superintendent supports the need for a greater understanding and development of what factors propel women to move into the highest district leadership spot (Shakeshaft, 1989). Because of the increase of female superintendents in K-12 school districts in the past two decades, it can be assumed there is a story to tell (AASA, 2015). Knowledge about what factors motivate women to move into the uppermost levels of leadership is needed to work towards providing an

equitable future for all females who have a desire to lead school districts (Brunner & Grogan, 2007).

For the past 50 years, a meta-data collection of literature has been researched on the topic of leadership effectiveness (Purinton, Azcoitia, & Carlson, 2018; Rhode, 2018; Thompson, 2017). The conclusion has been men and women do not differ in innate leadership effectiveness (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014). The fact that men consistently are placed in the role of academic leadership at significantly increased rates as opposed to women would indicate a greater performance from men than women (Stone-Johnson, 2014). Yet, there is no evidence to suggest women are less impactful than men in leadership roles (Farmer, 2016).

Background of Study

When the Civil War began, men were recruited to join the army (Blount, 2017). Women were left behind to fill voided positions, such as teaching and school administration (Blount, 2017). Demand for teachers and school administrators continued to increase as educated men were not available (Brunner, 2000). The first female superintendent in the United States was Ella Flagg in 1874 (Blount, 2017). After teaching for several years, Flagg was chosen as school superintendent based on her reputation as a good teacher (Blount, 2017). Flagg was unique in not only her title as first female district leader, but also due to her advocacy for equal pay in her role as principal and superintendent (Blount, 2017). One hundred and forty-three years after the appointment of Ella Flagg, women remain underrepresented in the position of school superintendent (AASA, 2015). The struggle for equal pay for female educators is still a constant battle women are embroiled in to date (Sandberg, 2013).

At the beginning of the 20th century, women were working towards expanding teaching opportunities which provided a chance to explore one of the few female accepted occupational roles at the time in American society (Blount, 1998). Outspoken critics of women's rights feared the social, emotional, and economic impact of women moving into positions of authority and autonomy (Blount, 1998). Females had overtaken the majority of employment opportunities in the teaching field, seizing 70% of employment at the turn of the 20th century (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1967, p. 206).

Women hired as teachers were willing to accept lower wages to be financially independent (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Through the early 1900s, females dominated the profession of education and ran the majority of school districts throughout the country (Superville, 2017). Women post-World War II worked altering the perspective of what women could accomplish by taking on roles identified with masculinity (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). The Serviceman's Readjustment Act or Government Issue (GI) Bill impacted women through diminished enrollment in colleges and universities, along with degree attainment and completion (Thomas, 2017). This was evident when World War II ended and men began using the GI Bill to enter education and take back traditionally recognized male roles (Brunner, 2000).

Theoretical Framework

Career development theory is identified as a developmental stream of events that constitute one's professional life (Super, 1957). Educational and occupational choices identify traits and characteristics developed over years of trial and error (Super, 1957). The study of career development and career choice for women has been an evolution of processes and diverse opportunities (Coogan & Chen, 2007). Familial and recreational

options emphasize value and value structures, as noted in choices and selections made through the lifespan of an individual (Oliver, 1977). Society and culture are what identifies career options, including culture as an influence of career choice (Sperandio & Devdas, 2015). An individual's peer group poses control over career choice through a common interest and shared experiences (Oliver, 1977). Church and family influences also inspire career options and choices including family history of education (Oliver, 1977).

Research has been conducted to develop an understanding of why women choose specific careers, and the theories associated with developing career choices have been examined (Allen, French, & Poteet, 2016; Coke & Ballard, 2014; Coogan & Chen, 2007). There have been multiple researchers in the work of career development theory (Coogan & Chen, 2007; Patton & McMahon, 2014; Wasson, 2015). According to Krumboltz (2015), Holland developed vocational personalities and environments, Super studied and initiated the life-space continuum approach to careers, and Krumboltz himself cultivated the theory of career choice and counseling. In Gottfredson's (2005) opinion of gender identity, children develop an understanding of socially acceptable gender boundaries as early as between six and eight years old. Through the acceptance of socially appropriate roles, women's' career exploration and choices are limited (Coogan & Chen, 2007). Once a child determines what is acceptable, career options become challenging to alter (Gottfredson, 2005). According to gender theory, gender identity is considered the primary consideration attached to career choice outside of personal interest and social prestige (Giles & Hill, 2014).

Super's theory supports the importance and underlying acceptable roles females select in occupational choice based on the idea an occupation is an implementation of a person's self-concept (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2014) cited women are hyper-represented in stereotypical female occupations and under-represented in careers stereotyped as male, which spotlights the importance of gender accepted roles at an early age and can lead to formative choices for jobs later in life.

Social cognitive career theory developed and designed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) focused on personal variables as related to career selection including; self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting. The interaction of principles defined in conjunction with gender, ethnicity, and social supports help frame and design career development (Lent et al., 1994). Self-efficacy is essential in the event of career choice and key to understanding how female administrators move into leadership positions (Mehta & Sharma, 2014). The theory and practice of career counseling for females are complex, due to internal and external motivations, driving what can be considered options for women in career development and a self-awareness of what is achievable (Coogan & Chen, 2007).

Defining primary principles of social cognitive career theory include self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Lent, 2005). Critical components of social cognitive career theory directly align with the research questions for inquiry in this study. The application and understanding needed to pursue the top educational role in secondary education leadership for females calls for further investigation into principles defined through social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994). Self-efficacy beliefs

are changeable and related to behaviors required in different occupations, but ultimately a person is inclined to pursue a career that houses activities and interests where they perceive personal and strong self-efficacy (Schwarzer, 2014). There are four components housed within social cognitive career theory in regards to self-efficacy; performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states (Lent et al., 1994).

Consequences and beliefs relate to outcome expectations, the second tenant of social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994). Choices people make regarding effort, ability to persist, and predicting outcomes fall under the umbrella of outcome expectations (Brown & Lent, 2016). An integral piece of predicting outcomes is based on positive feedback, successes, or social acceptance (Lent et al., 1994). In social cognitive career theory, successful encounters within leadership promote further outcome expectations and encourage the pursuit of greater goal setting (Brown & Lent, 2016). Women working in leadership capacities in schools and school leadership are met with successful encounters in administration before acquiring their next future leadership position (Lent, 2005). Success breeds success and captures the essence of the second tenant of social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994).

The third component of social cognitive career theory is personal goals and the intention to attain a specific level of performance (Lent et al., 1994). Within the piece of goal setting, two defined goals are identified—choice goals and performance goals (Lent et al., 1994). Goal setting is based on personal capabilities, and outcomes expected through a course of action (Lent et al., 1994). Success or failure in reaching goals determines a personal belief and a future issue or self-fulfilling prophecy (Lent et al.,

1994). As activities and engagement develop, so does goal setting and the pursuit of

continuing the event with further goals (Lent et al., 1994).

Theories developed concerning career choice and counseling stem from a broader

lens of social learning theory emphasizing career decision-making (Mitchell &

Krumboltz, 1990). Shown in Figure 1, is an evolving framework that highlights

Bandura's (1986) social career theory expanded into the study of Lent et al. (1994) in

developing the structure of social cognitive career theory. The social cognitive career

theory model maps the career choice process (Lent et al., 1994).
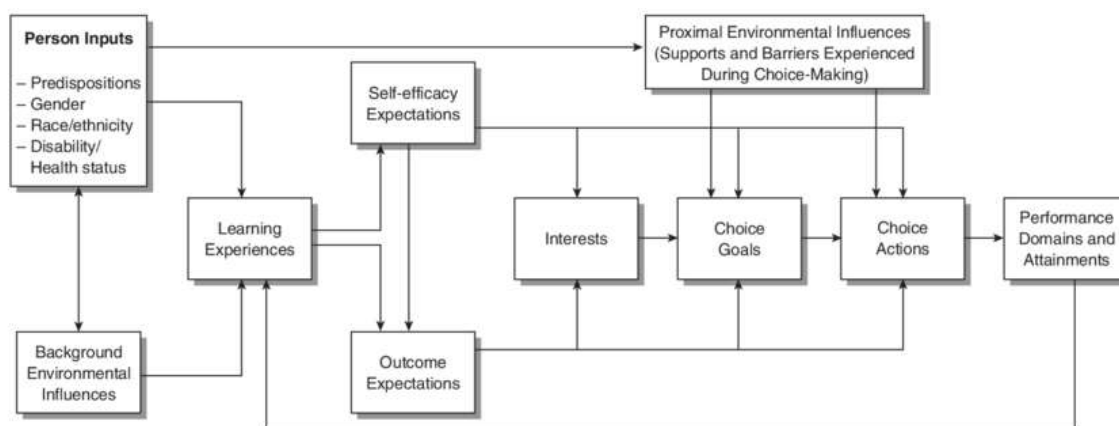
Figure 1. Career-related interest and choice development (Lent et al., 1994).

Self-efficacy, learning experiences, and outcome expectations are driven by

personal attributes and background influences (Lent & Brown, 2017). The initial work of

Bandura's social career theory inspired the work of Lent and Brown to specifically

include interests, choice goals, and attainment (Lent & Brown, 2017). Influences and

parental attitudes are identified as necessary, along with acceptance, concentration, and

avoidance (Lent & Brown, 2017). If family structure is warm, members gravitate toward

jobs working with people (Bandura, 1986). Individuals were either person- or non-

person oriented in their interests and orientation, which influences vocational choice

(Lee, Lawson, & McHale, 2015). Krumboltz (1979) proposed four sets of variables that

affect careers; genetic factors, environmental factors, learning experiences, and task

approach skills. The development of career choice theory is be thoroughly examined and

discussed in Chapter Two.

Statement of the Problem

Women make up only 6% of chief executive officers in Fortune 500 companies

(Johnson, 2018, para.1). Women are also under-represented in the fields of math,

science, technology, and medicine (Meschitti & Lawton-Smith, 2017). According to

Hoyt (2010), "Globally women hold 23% of parliamentary seats: 19% in Asia, 23% in

Africa, 27% in North America" (p. 3). Chief executive officers and political

representatives are two areas where the deficit of women to men is exposed, as well as

top educational positions (Johnson, 2018). Lack of females represented as

superintendents in K-12 schools indicates a misrepresentation of the workforce in

education and the gender of students served (Wallace, 2015).

According to Brunner (2000), female superintendent networking opportunities are

limited and not equal to what men experience. Mentorships are difficult for women

because they do not have access to the same networking and mentorships opportunities as

men (Kram, David, & Congleton, 2016). Gender stereotypes can make it difficult to

move into careers traditionally held by men (Sandberg, 2013). Promoting strong female

leaders to positions at the highest levels of education is not occurring at the same rate or

frequency as men advanced for the same situation, leaving a void in gender equality and leadership roles (Rincon, Gonzalez, & Barrero, 2017).

Women who rise to the pinnacle of their careers and achieve top educational positions are a national minority (Hoff et al., 2006). Finding out who influenced female superintendents and what types of support they received while achieving top academic positions should be evaluated and studied (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Working towards an equitable system that employs as many women as men in top leadership positions should be considered imperative (Seller, 1989).

Theories have developed such as "think manager, think male" coined by Schien (1975). Leadership literature noted concepts linking successful leaders to ideas and characteristics that follow traditional male leadership characteristics as an impetus to accepted roles of leaders (Goings, 2016). Women remain under-represented in corporate and political positions, which has not changed in centuries of development as a country (Sandberg, 2013). Despite the progress and efforts to promote equality, gender does matter in leadership positions (Goethals & Hoyt, 2017).

Schien, Mueller, and Jacobson (1989) conducted a study involving 92 characteristic traits developed by leaders as essential for successful leadership. These traits were ranked on traditional feminine and traditional masculine characteristics (Schien et al., 1989). Sixty of the 90 characteristics were found to be the leading features of men as opposed to women (Schien et al., 1989). The initial study was conducted in the late 1970s, but when the study was repeated in 1989, characteristics were more blurred between what was deemed a male and female characteristic (Schien et al., 1989). What had been considered in the 1970s as predominately-male characteristics such as,

"emotionally stable, aggressive, ambitious, well-informed, and forceful" now were seen as universal and applicable to characterize women as well (Sabharwal, 2015, p. 401).

The social role theory identifies leadership styles of men and women (Koenig & Eagly, 2014). Traditional characteristics developed and accepted to be female, such as kindness, sensitivity, helpfulness, and nurturing, are ineffective in leadership roles (Eagly 2018). When women demonstrate characteristics often attached to leadership roles such as aggression, decisiveness, or ambition, defined societal roles make it difficult for women to move out of traditionally held stereotypes (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016).

With the development of the glass cliff theory, further details are revealed in regards to challenges women face in taking top leadership roles (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). Ryan and Haslam (2007) coined the term *glass cliff theory*, referring to the phenomenon where women are put in leadership roles with a greater possibility of failing, or there is an association of a future negative consequence. Several studies have been conducted on the observation and accuracy of this phenomenon (Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

The glass cliff theory has been discussed and debated, but the understanding of the concept is the core belief that the "field is not level" for men and women in positions of opportunity and authority (Newman, 2016). Once women are in a position of power and able to crack the inevitable glass ceiling, they do not have the same opportunity to lead with authority as men (Sabharwal, 2015). Women report not having the same autonomy in making decisions, facing inequities, and do not feel they have an opportunity to lead with the same power structure (Jones, 2017). Women who can break the glass ceiling can experience problems and issues with male colleagues who do not want to take orders from women (Eagly & Heilman, 2016; Goethels & Hoyt, 2017). For

women in positions as a school superintendent, the difficulties of male versus female characteristics may weigh heavily on the percentage of women who hold the title of superintendent as listed below.

According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE] (2017), there are 560 districts listed as housing a superintendent in the state. Of the 560 public school districts, only 116 superintendents are female (MODESE, 2017). These numbers indicate only about 20% of superintendent positions in Missouri have females acting as the chief educational leader (MODESE, 2017).

The Missouri Department of Higher Education [MDHE], (2015) also depicts an alarming statistic when reviewing the Presidents and Chancellors Compensation Survey. Out of 15 public, four-year universities in Missouri, only one female is serving as a college president (MDHE, 2015). Two-year public colleges have six women serving as college presidents, out of 28 campuses in the state (MDHE, 2015). This leaves 79% of two-year colleges run by male presidents and a lopsided .06% of four-year colleges led by the only female president (MDHE, 2015 p. 14).

To put these numbers in perspective, the United States Census Bureau (2016) cited Missouri as housing 22.8% of the population under the age of 18, with 50.9% of the population being female. If two-year colleges and four-year colleges combined female presidents running a college campus, it would equate to less than 16% (MDHE, 2015). The percentage of young girls going to school in Missouri would see women at the secondary level and post-secondary level potentially running a school at the increment of one female to four male counterparts (MDHE, 2015; MODESE, 2017).

Skeete (2017) compared results of women superintendents throughout the largest states in the country, California, Texas, Michigan, and New York. Over 3,000 school districts were reviewed, and in which Skeete's (2017) hypothesis was echoed the glass cliff theory; women were not represented equally as superintendents. Where women were employed as superintendents was illustrated by the majority of female superintendents working in rural districts with smaller student populations (MODESE, 2018). Findings illustrate a void of representation of women in larger districts with greater political influence and advantage (Marshall, Johnson, & Edwards, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The pursuit of women breaking the perpetual glass ceiling in business, education, politics, and chief operating officers has yet to happen (Parker et al., 2015). Despite growth in leadership opportunities, women reaching the pinnacle office of leadership is disproportionate to the number of men in executive positions (Sexton, Lemak, & Waino, 2014). Education is no exception to this phenomenon (Taylor & Stein, 2014). Women make up the majority of teachers and the most significant percentage of educational preparation program enrollment yet are under-represented in the high school principal role and superintendency (Hoff et al., 2006). Understanding the motivation that propels women to move towards more top administrative positions can create an opportunity for awareness in identifying future female leaders (Brunner & Grogan, 2007).

Women who have strong mentors and mentorship opportunities indicate the support and encouragement these situations have given them have helped them to become successful (Fry, 2015). Developing a greater understanding of the need for goal setting is a crucial component in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). The vital link these key

components provide women who do persevere and reach top leadership stations is needed to provide insight and understanding for women who in the future will procure senior leadership positions (Brunner & Grogan, 2007).

Research questions. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How does self-efficacy impact female superintendents role in job attainment?

2. What do female superintendents perceive as the most significant contributions in reaching the pinnacle of their career field?

3. What role do mentorship and goal setting play into attaining the role of superintendent?

Significance of the Study

The goal of this study was to examine how female superintendents progress into positions of leadership in Missouri. Considering how aspirations, goal setting, and mentorship impact and influence career development, women on a path of leadership in the educational system should be able to showcase these events (Shakeshaft, 1989). Providing female superintendents with an opportunity to share the personal narrative which propelled them into the superintendent role can shed insight into how career development has occurred for this demographic (Brunner, 2000).

Barriers preventing women from reaching top educational positions have been cataloged, researched, and evaluated (Shakeshaft, 1998). Bynum and Young (2015) cited the production of everyday inequities, to the domination of patriarchal positions. Smith (2015) researched sexist patterns of hiring and promotion, and Howe-Walsh and Turnbull (2016) listed existing barriers to women moving into school administrative positions.

Barriers for success for females in the superintendent role are outlined as stereotypes, sexual harassment, family responsibilities, and not having equal opportunities for mentorship and sponsorship, which work against female opportunities for leadership (Mariela, 2017).

Research laying the groundwork for how to encourage, recruit, train, and mentor future female leaders needs to continue so there is a greater understanding of how women who have reached the ranks of achievement do so (Sandberg, 2013). Women have been identified as having different leadership styles that classify primary differences in work and leadership (Hill & Wheat, 2017). There is an emphasis on relationship building, including awareness of others, and concern for persons in the organization (Hill & Wheat, 2017). A lack of females mentoring other females limits opportunities, while men are not experiencing the same issue (Meschitti & Lawton- Smith, 2017). Men are more likely to network informally and have sponsors support their professional advancement (Meschitti & Lawton-Smith, 2017).

Researchers in India conducted a study of young girls influenced by strong female political leaders (Pereira, 2012). A 25% increase in career goals and ambition were evident when comparing those influenced by strong female leaders to girls who had not experienced influential female leaders (Pereira, 2012, para. 3). A Pew study (Parker et al., 2015) conducted in the United States found:

> Many Americans see a full societal value in having more women in leadership positions. Twenty-nine percent say having more women in top leadership positions in business and government would do a lot to improve the quality of life for all women. (p. 7)

If Americans view women as ethical leaders and believe women should have opportunities to lead, a greater understanding needs to be developed regarding why so few are represented at the top levels of education (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Shedding insight to provide a greater understanding of female superintendents and their ability to transport into the role of the top administrator will provide a more equitable view of women leading schools and leadership practices promoting and strengthening opportunities for women (Grogan, 2014).

Definition of Key Terms

For this study, the following terms were defined.

Barrier. A factor or obstacle that hinders career advancement in the next level of administration or management (Shakeshaft, 1989).

Demographic. Characteristics of a given population, sex, race, geographic location (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016).

Glass ceiling. A term for the discriminatory barrier that prevents women and people in the minority from rising to positions of power and responsibility within an organization or corporation (Subbaye & Vithal, 2017).

Glass cliff. Women offered positions of top leadership in companies, but in companies in crisis or peril making the leadership opportunity risky or predictive of failure (Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

Glass escalator. Occupational segregation experienced by gender where men are promoted to leadership positions at a faster rate than females (Smith, 2015).

Leadership labyrinth. A series of complexities, detours, dead ends, and unusual paths to female leadership positions (Eagly & Heilman, 2016).

Mentorship. Interpersonal relationship between a more experienced employee and a less qualified employee to enhance career development (Yip & Kram, 2016).

Superintendent. Chief executive officer (CEO) of a school district, who is hired by the school board to manage administrative affairs of the district (Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, & Sybouts, 1996).

Limitations and Assumptions

The study was limited to female superintendents in southwest Missouri, who were willing to participate in the study during data collection. The interviewer was not personally acquainted with the targeted demographic, and a developed trust did not exist to result in potentially transparent answers without issue or concern (Raheim et al., 2016). Interviewing leaders responsible for running school districts, and the willingness to share personal information with anonymity should provide transparency (Moravcsik, 2014).

Sample demographics. The study included only female superintendents in the southwestern region of Missouri identified in 2018 as holding the position of school superintendent. Making comparisons within a sample group is vital for describing demographic groups participating in research studies (Etikan & Alkassim, 2016). Findings from the sample group are theoretical when applied to the larger population.

Instrument. The interview questions and interview process created for the study were subjective and independently answered through personal narratives and stories related to the female superintendent experience (Clandinin, 2016). Each individual interviewed was personally questioned and addressed based on their own unique set of circumstances of moving into the superintendent's position. For the purpose of the study, the following assumptions were made:

1. The responses of female superintendents were truthful and without bias.

2. The interpretation and analysis of narrative responses were carried out without bias from the researcher.

Summary

Brown and Irby (2005) stated the more that is written and understood about women in the field of education, the greater likelihood they have the opportunity to persist in higher levels of administration. However, without a joint study and understanding of a national database housing gender and race as an identifying factor to study, the lack of female superintendents remains obscure and continues to lead to discrimination in hiring practices (Brunner & Grogan, 2005). Exploring the career path and destination of how female superintendents developed to hold the critical leadership position in a school district can direct future movement of females into the superintendent position (Brunner & Grogan, 2005).

The purpose of this study was to review and understand what motivated women to move into school superintendency positions. Researching motivation is key to understanding how more females can prosper in these top positions (Brunner & Grogan, 2005). The research questions presented shed insight and review a developed understanding of pathways for women who pursued the role of school superintendent. Women who moved towards a more equitable representation of demographics and promotion of women in school leadership positions, and can lend insight into the career path (Brunner & Grogan, 2005). The key terms identified and used throughout the study relate to K-12 language and gender identified vocabulary as connected to women in

leadership. Limitations and assumptions were also presented in regard to the interview and narrative research process

In Chapter Two, a historical perspective of the superintendency is presented, along with an overview of women in education. Barriers facing women in education and challenges and expectations of women weaving duplicitous roles are also discussed. The theoretical overview of social cognitive career theory is presented to piece together historical aspects of research tied to self-efficacy, mentorship, and goal setting, and is weaved into a broader understanding of females in the superintendency.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

According to O'Reilly (2015), "A woman has to work twice as hard to be considered half as good" (p. 50). While women have moved through history gaining ground towards parity with men and work, there is a great deal of evidence indicating women still have a long way to go to reach equality and equivalence with men in roles of school administration (Forrest, 2017). In education, female administrators are still scarce, and access to the superintendency is very difficult (Gamson & Hodge, 2016).

The organizational slogan for the American Association of School Superintendents (AASA, 2017) implied a commitment to equity by stating, "Leadership for social justice, empowering change and leading for equity" (para.1). Yet, in spite of encouragement and support at the national level, a five-year study conducted in 2015 revealed less than 27% of American superintendents were female (Kominak, 2016, p. 3). While the female gender dominates teaching positions in secondary education, only a select few are appointed to top educational positions (Kominak, 2016).

The primary focus of this research study was to provide insight and understanding in the development and cultivation of the female superintendent. The lack of women in the top educational roles has become an obvious marker of inequity and a deficit of society that claims to believe access is equal to all (Santamaria & Jean-Marie, 2014). The relevance of the study is not focused on barriers or obstacles preventing women from reaching top leadership positions, even though to fully understand the situation of women leaders some discussion of such obstacles must take place (Marshall et al., 2017). The purpose of the study instead was to highlight women who have successfully moved into the highest-ranking positions in public education. Understanding the inclinations,

desires, and self-efficacy women possess who have obtained top leadership positions can be instrumental in supporting female leaders whose mission is to move into the role of superintendent (Shakeshaft, 1998).

Studying the impact of mentorship regarding developing the female superintendent is a critical piece to unveil for those achieving the top educational positions (Brue, 2016). Women who participated in female-specific leadership organizations cite an increase in preparedness for leadership positions and view leadership as a mindset as opposed to an occupied position (Brue, 2016). Goal setting is also a critical piece to research, study, and learn about regarding the female superintendent (Bjork, Kowalski, Browne-Ferrigno, 2014). Elements of useful goal setting include specific, challenging feedback regarding results, and a commitment towards acceptance of the advice (Lent et al., 1994). Women who are capable of achieving the office of the superintendent have extraordinary skills in the area of career development, which lead them towards the top educational offices (Forrest, 2017).

For the purpose of this research, studying what makes a female superintendent achieve the position through a greater understanding of self-efficacy, mentorship, and goal-setting potentially provides information for future generations of females who are budding candidates for the position of superintendent. For the leadership of schools to adequately reach an equitable balance of female to male ratios, a greater understanding needs to be developed in the promotion of women in the superintendent's role (Brunner, 2007). Since the inception of the role of the superintendent around the year 1800, white males have held the majority of all positions, with 99% of districts being led by men in the 1800s through the 1900s (Blount, 1998).

Research focusing on the role of the female superintendent began in the 1970s, and writings about women regarding leadership began appearing in the 1980s (Brunner, 2007). The researchers and interest in the topic grew and expanded in the 1990s to include works by Brunner, Blount, Shakeshaft, and Grogan; all advocates who led the charge on initial tasks to highlight the inequities and lopsided statistics associated with females in the superintendent position (Brunner, 2007). The disparity between men and women in the superintendency grew so profound that the AASA hired Brunner and Grogan (2007) to investigate the discrepancy in the 2000s.

In the first section of Chapter Two, the theoretical framework is outlined and explained. Albert Bandura's work initially began as social cognitive theory, relating themes of self-efficacy to the development of social learning theories (Bandura, 1986). With the expansion of Bandura's work on self-efficacy, further explanation connects the importance of problem solving to mentorship and ultimately goal-setting for women to develop careers reaching top positions.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research was based on ideas developed from Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, which was initially titled social learning theory (Bandura, 1976). Social cognitive theory has been applied to many areas including career development (Lent et al., 1994). In this section, an understanding of social cognitive theory is discussed, as well as the application of the theory.

Social learning and cognitive theories. Social learning theory was developed by Bandura (1976) and relied on two primary facets of understanding. Bandura's (1976) initial approach was vital to the expansion and further extension of what would become

social cognitive career theory, as developed by Lent et al. (Guan et al., 2016). In social learning theory, instrumental learning experiences occur when an individual is positively reinforced for behavior and they respond in a way that recreates the experience, or looks for an elaboration of the experience (Bandura, 1976). The second piece of social learning theory is the associative learning experience, which happens when a neutral event occurs, but an emotional attachment is formed or made (Bandura, 1976). An analysis of reinforcement can be observed to impact results and future options in the area of career development (Roche, Daskalova, & Brown, 2017).

As social learning theory developed, it became more comprehensive, and Bandura (1976) refined the theory to include broader definitions. Bandura (1986) described experiences people had as critical in terms of career development, which transformed into social cognitive theory. The critical components of social cognitive theory are self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting (Bandura, 1986).

Self-efficacy. Bandura defined self-efficacy as the capacity to organize and execute the course of action required to produce any given attainment (Bandura, 2014). Lent et al. (1994) stated self-efficacy is an individual's belief about his or her capacity or capability to perform actions. Self-efficacy has been identified as an essential personal resource in predicting motivation and employee engagement (Lent et al., 1994). Bandura (1986) theorized if people believe they can or have developed skill and self-efficacy, the combination of factors can lead a person towards pursuing that goal. Within social cognitive theory, Bandura (2014) noted people with high levels of self-efficacy view problems as challenges and are less inclined to blame uncontrollable events.

There are four areas of self-efficacy which are developed; personal performance accomplishments, observations of others, social persuasions, and physiological and emotional states (Brown & Lent, 2016). Self-efficacy is defined through a person's belief about his or her ability to complete steps required for tasks, which is developed through personal performance, exampled learning, social interactions, and how a person feels in situations (Hackett & Betz, 1981).

Outcome expectations. Outcome expectations are beliefs related to performing a specific behavior (Bandura, 2017). Outcome expectations can be defined through direct, vicarious, and perceived results of the experiences (Bandura, 2017). Environmental factors can shape the belief and development of self-efficacy, bearing in mind a person must believe there is the possibility of a successful outcome, and the belief can become more compelling than actual skill (Bandura, 2017).

The results of behaviors or consequences linked to the actions are considered outcome expectations (Lent et al., 2016). Choices regarding activities, including the amount of effort involved, can influence outcomes based on the success of positive outcomes including self-approval, tangible rewards, and work conditions that are positive (Lent et al., 1994). Levels of engagement in activities, including the effort and ability to persist are determined by a person's self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Brown & Lent, 2016).

Goal setting. Goal setting is defined in social cognitive career theory as one's intentions to engage in a specific activity or to attain specific levels of performance (Lent et al., 1994). Lent et al. (1994) further broke goals down into two distinct types, choice goals and performance goals. Within the context of social cognitive career theory, goals

are tied to self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 1994). People are more likely to set goals that are consistent with personal capability and outcomes based on a course of action that is linked to internal beliefs (Lent et al., 1994).

Social cognitive career development theory. The process of how career choices are developed, mature, and become actions on the road to careers are key for understanding career choice (Krumboltz, 1979). Initially, social cognitive theory with career development theory was used to address variables in self-efficacy and expectations of outcomes as they relate to career choices (Foley & Lytle, 2015). The social learning theory was expanded to include Krumboltz's theory of career decision making (Roche et al., 2017). Krumboltz (1979) team spent time researching and reviewing the "why" of career choice and studied what motivated people to select varying occupations at different life cycle moments.

Social learning theory aims to explain "trait[s] and factor[s]" focusing on how people become employed in a variety of occupations (Patton & McMahon, 2014, p. 59). Of particular interest for the purpose of this study are career paths and career developments that link women leaders to the superintendency. Career theory and social cognitive career theory each create an awareness and understanding, which can lead to observational insights into why and how careers are selected and developed over time (Coogan & Chen, 2007).

Career development theorist attempt to explain human behavior connected to career preparation, career entry, and career adjustment (Sampson, Bullock-Yowell, Dozier, Osborn, & Lenz, 2017). Career counseling theorists strive to understand and improve career choices and developmental cycles, which occur through life influencing

career choices (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Pioneers who were career theorists included Holland, who initiated the theory of vocational types (Sampson et al., 2017). Bandura created and developed social cognitive theory (Sampson et al., 2017). Super, whose theory was developmental self-concept, and Krumboltz, who developed the social learning theory, have dedicated their research to a body of research that includes an understanding in the development of career choice (Guan et al., 2016). There are four identifying factors Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990) found which lead to the process of how career choices are developed; genetic endowment or special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990).

　　　　Genetic endowment and special abilities. The area of genetic inheritance and special abilities indicate people are born with certain inherited qualities or characteristics that would lead them toward success in an endeavor (Krumboltz, 1979). Specific examples of genetic endowment include race, gender, physical appearance, and characteristics (Krumboltz, 1979). An example of genetic inheritance and special abilities could be an individual born with perfect pitch can lead to a successful education in music, and or, a job in music (Krumboltz, 1979).

　　　　Environmental conditions and events. The lack of control in a person's environment are conditions and circumstances which can affect career decision making (Krumboltz, 1979). Environmental conditions listed in Krumboltz's (1979) work connect to social learning theory because of the "number and nature of job opportunities, number, and nature of training opportunities, social policies and procedures for selecting trainees and workers in developing career choices" (p. 238). The connection between social

policies and procedures which develop through successful career endeavors can

encourage or discourage females from pursuing specific careers dominated by males

(Coogan & Chen, 2007). Environmental career choices which involve "monetary and

social rewards of various occupations" and can preclude individuals from pursuing

positions based on early gender orientation (Krumboltz, 1979, p. 238).

Natural disasters and the availability of natural resources are also examples of

environmental conditions influencing career development (Krumboltz, 1979). In

addition, technological developments, social organizations, family training experiences,

as well as social and financial resources present environmental aspects of career

development (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Career development is connected and centered

on psychological and sociological principles through positive construction (Patton &

McMahon, 2014). Career choices are also impacted by educational systems,

neighborhoods, and community influences (Krumboltz, 1979; Schofield, 2017).

Learning experiences. In the learning experiences classification, people have a

history of channeling their learning to potential career paths associated with positive

reinforcement (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990). The learning experience is broken into two

further categories; instrumental and associative (Krumboltz, 1979). In the instrumental

phase, people are reinforced from positive consequences and shy away from areas or

fields not met with positive feedback (Krumboltz, 1979). Behavior and consequence are

linked to the instrumental phase indicating positive or negative effects as reasons to

pursue or abort study of future career choices (Krumboltz, 1979).

In the associative category of learning, experiences occur when an individual pair

a circumstance with either a positive or negative outcome (Krumboltz, 2015). In these

situations, the occurrence can sway career development (Krumboltz, 2015). Within this

phase of development, people look for connections between a stimulus and the

environment (Krumboltz, 2015). How a person attaches to a task can directly or

indirectly advance or refute the intended purpose (Krumboltz, 2015).

    Consequences of influences. Self-observation generalizations are the last part of

the four-piece analysis formed by Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990). People make

generalizations based on their own worth and compare themselves to others (Krumboltz,

1979). The truthfulness of self-observations can be painful based on subjective

interpretation (Duffy et al., 2016). Subjects either understate or over-state their worth,

and the accuracy of comparing themselves to others can be inconsistent (Duffy et al.,

2016).

    Goals are seen as playing a tremendous role in behavior and are defined as the

decision to begin an activity or future plan (Lent et al., 1994). People form lasting

interests in activities where they experience personal competency and positive outcomes

(Yamakawa, Peng, & Deeds, 2015). Bandura's development of social cognitive theory

with a focus on self-efficacy aligns with goal setting and planning which supports the

expansion of social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994; Yamakawa, et al., 2015).

The importance of goal setting as attached to social cognitive career theory was expanded

from Bandura's initial concept of social learning theory (Lent & Brown, 2017).

    Two types of goals are identified in social cognitive career theory; choice goals

and performance goals (Lent et al., 2000). Social cognitive career theory contends people

set goals based on personal viewpoints, personal capabilities, and outcomes attached to

pursuing goals (Lent et al., 2006). Through goal setting, behavior becomes organized,

and actions are guided based on positive feedback and the ability to move through obstructions (Lent et al., 2000). Reaching personal goals is essential in cementing and supporting self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 2000).

Interests in careers are grown out of self-efficacy and outcome expectations as people move through childhood and adolescence (Lent et al., 2000). As exposure to occupations at school, home, and in communities can foster interest, when reinforcement of success occurs, the progress can breed the desire for additional success, laying a foundation for a potential career interest (Lent et al., 2000). Exposure for careers can be stymied by gender in the child and adolescent based on lack of exposure to cultural norms (Ladge & Greenberg, 2015).

Career-related activities and interest in career growth are correlated to performance in specific tasks resulting in positive feedback (Lent et al., 2000). However, the adverse reaction can occur through negative feedback or lack of success in actions related to career interest (Lent et al., 2000). As success develops in career-related activities, self-efficacy builds, goals can be established, and further experiences continue to reinforce actions related to the career (Lent et al., 2006). Interests become stable towards adolescence where success in various content areas can lead towards a career path (Lent et al., 2017).

Social cognitive career theory is supported by an internal belief system which views competence in performing tasks as encouragement for further development, and when the activities produce outcomes which are valued (Lent et al., 2017). Choice goals are related to self-efficacy, beliefs, and outcome expectations more so than personal interest (Lent et al., 2017). Environmental influences include family financial and

emotional support, which can directly affect choice goals and opportunities related to career choice and development (Lent et al., 2017). Social learning theory connects to social cognitive career theory and the study of career theory because both base impacts on choice, rather than on influence (Patton & McMahon, 2014).

The performance goals for social cognitive career theory is centered around two critical pieces of information, the level of success attained in both occupational and educational pursuits, and the ability to persist when obstacles are presented (Lent et al., 2017, p. 7). Ability is viewed as aptitude and success in achievements and is further split and defined in two paths (Lent et al., 2000). A person's given ability affects both performance and persistence, two key components in self-efficacy (Bandura, 2014). Performance, in turn, affects both motivation and goals (Lent, 2005). With greater levels of ability and achievement, goal setting increases and expectations grow (Lent et al., 2017). Increasing the level of difficulty and performance goal with each success (Schwarzer, 2014).

A strong sense of self-efficacy can predict psychosocial well-being regarding professional livelihood (Ventura, Salanova, & Lorens, 2015). Employees who have a supplementary awareness of self-efficacy are receptive to greater challenges at work and stay engaged with less professional burnout (Ventura et al., 2015). Job that are demanding and create a great deal of stress become manageable for people with high self-efficacy (Ventura et al., 2015).

Employees with high self-efficacy view the workplace as controllable regarding challenges and resources (Kelleher, 2016). The belief in past experiences, indirect learning, persuasion, and psychological states can determine motivation in what a person

feels, thinks, and accomplishes (Bandura, 2014). People with a keen awareness of self-efficacy have more optimistic thoughts and are perceived as dedicated, satisfied, engaged, confident (Ventura et al., 2015). Engagement in work is driven through intrinsic motivation and is a result of a high level of self-efficacy (Ventura et al., 2015).

An integral tenant of social cognitive theory is that successful belief experiences raise self-efficacy and understanding, but repeated failures present the opposite effect and lower self-efficacy (Bandura, 1976). The development of a strong sense of self-efficacy grows into predictions of accomplishment and level of achievement a person aspires towards (Bandura, 2014). Workers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to succeed in workplace performance (Bandura, 2014). Aspects of Bandura's work in developing self-efficacy help define and pronounce the emergence of social cognitive career theory (Kelleher, 2016; Lent et al., 1994).

In Bandura's social cognitive theory (2014), mastery experiences are the strongest indicators and influencers of self-efficacy, connecting potential success and the ability to persist in the pursuit of future goals. With the successful completion of tasks, the prediction of success becomes greater when the job is required again (Bandura, 2014). The tasks must have a degree of obstacles and challenges to be met while improving the condition of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2014). Vicarious experiences are key to bolstering self-efficacy when viewed within a person's peer group (Bandura, 2014). The greater the similarity, the higher the level of trust in developing similar success (Bandura, 2014).

Self-efficacy is vital in leadership roles and school administration where the ability to solve problems and work through issues is an integral piece of the career (Patton & McMahon, 2014). School administrators with effective school leadership, who

work at effective schools, have moved through the restructuring process and have history

showing quality teaching and learning have a strong sense of self-efficacy (Kelleher,

2016). Self-efficacy differs from self-esteem and self-confidence based on the belief of

specific capabilities to structure desired outcomes (Kelleher, 2016).

Mentorship

Homer, as cited in Bynum (2015), define a mentor as a wise and experienced man

in the historical book, *The Odyssey*. The benefits of mentoring are extensive, including

advancing leadership opportunities and advancing knowledge along with experiences

(Bynum, 2015). Mentorship in the form of sharing both learning and knowledge to adapt

in changing environments of the 21st century workplace has been instrumental in

successful women moving into roles of leadership (Goethals & Hoyt, 2017). However,

traditionally mentors and sponsors have been linked to support and perpetuate male-

dominated career growth (Bynum, 2015).

Networks, or relationships built in female leadership development are critical in

identifying mentors for other women and offer encouragement and information when

needed (Brue, 2016). Women who participate in female-only leadership training feel

more prepared to become mentors and are equipped to share processes with women

looking for mentorship (Brue, 2016). Mentoring can include opportunities for the

protégé to inform others in the organization regarding the positive learning relationship as

developed through mentor/mentee guidance, promoting positive building culture (Bynum

& Young, 2015).

Mentorship is "a relationship where a more expert person provides advice and

makes significant transitions in knowledge, work, and thinking" (Meschitti & Lawton-

Smith, 2017, p. 167). When applied, mentors provide strategic advice in facilitating the

development of another person (Meschitti & Lawton-Smith, 2017). Women claim being

mentored by females propel career readiness for roles and credit this relationship as an

essential component of success (Fry, 2015). The lack of opportunity for women to have a

mentor who helps with informal support makes acclimating to a challenging job more

difficult (Hoff et al., 2006). The "good ol' boys" network exists in school administration,

which makes mentoring for female administrators challenging, and women tend to

depend on the relationship aspect for advancement (Hoff et al., 2006, p. 52). It is clear,

"more mentoring is needed for female leaders as well as the need to mitigate the negative

impact for women" (Hoff et al., 2006, p. 61).

　　　More women receiving college degrees is not helping the status of leadership

positions in the United States (Superville, 2017). Offers of more significant opportunities

for women to lead is not happening at the rate of men leading organizations including

school districts (Superville, 2017). There has been little to no improvement for women in

leadership based on underrepresentation in congressional seats, chief executive officers,

and top education positions (Parker, 2015). The lack of females mentoring other females

limits opportunities for women, while men are not experiencing the same issue (Meschitti

& Lawton-Smith, 2017).

　　　Businesses that are working on leadership and mentorship programs for women

are finding it challenging to form systemic change in a system geared towards promoting

males (O'Reilly, 2015). Female leaders are essential in mentoring women and motivating

attitudes and ambitions (Pereira, 2012). Members of the Baby Boomers and the Silent

Generation agree female leaders are better at providing mentorship to younger employees

(Parker et al., 2015). However, misinformation still exists (Sandberg, 2013). According

to Sandberg (2013), "Young women are told if they can find the right mentor, they will

be pushed up the ladder and whisked away to the corner office to live happily ever after"

(p. 66). Mentorship is critical for career progress (Sandberg, 2013). Men are more likely

to ask and receive a work mentor and sponsor (Sandberg, 2013).

Lack of mentorship leads to difficulty navigating jobs, experience, and

encountering difficulties (Superville, 2017). There is a difference between mentoring and

sponsorship (Sandberg, 2013). According to Yu et al. (2017) mentoring is formal and

can be an informal relationship, with an advisor acting in a role model capacity.

Sponsorship is talent seeking for promotion (Yu et al., 2017). Yu et al. (2017) further

stated, "Only 32 percent of women believed that reaching the C-suite was an achievable

goal, that number increased to 49 percent if they have a mentor and 61 percent if they

have a sponsor." (p. 59). American Express (2016) conducted a study on female mentors

in Canada and cited women who had a mentor were more likely to believe an opportunity

to move into a chief executive officer position existed (Yu et al., 2017).

Women in Leadership

Women remain underrepresented in corporate and political positions, which has

not changed in centuries of development as a democratic country based on equal rights

and equal opportunity (Hamlin, 2017). In a report conducted by the Pew Research Center

(2015), the 1937 results of a Gallop Poll in the United States indicated over half of the

American population would not support a female leader as president in America (Pew

Research Center, 2015). Within the same report by Pew Research Center (2015), the

information contained stated Americans have reached a point in time where the belief of

a female president is possible and supported by the majority (Pew Research Center, 2015). Reports from the Pew Research Center (2015) has shown the majority of the highest earners and top employment opportunities throughout the United States are not being filled with women. Blau and Kahn (2016) reported the existing wage gap between men and women is primarily due to occupational and industrial separation and segregation by gender.

The reality regarding top earners and employment throughout the United States is women are nowhere near the majority, and in senior educational positions, women are significantly outnumbered at a one to four ratio (Hamlin, 2017). Identifying leadership styles and patterns that differentiate men and women are perpetuating studies and interest in the topic (Goethels & Hoyt, 2017). Women place greater emphasis on relationships, including concern for others, and care for persons in the organization (Goethels & Hoyt, 2017).

Gender parity. An obstacle for women moving into top leadership positions coined initially the "glass ceiling," has developed into studies of women in leadership, which is providing a detailed account through a different lens (Rhode, 2017). Through the magnifying glass of causes that prevent women from moving into top positions, the "glass cliff" reflects the status of women in leadership today (Rhode, 2017). A broader perspective has been deemed to highlight that when women are provided with the opportunity to lead, they are given positions in precarious companies and organizations, setting up greater criticism and opportunities for failed risks (Rhode, 2017).

Gender parity and corporate efforts are gaining momentum as an impetus for change (Lawrence, Lonsdale, & Le Mesurier, 2018). The Paradigm for Parity movement,

which began in 2016, was launched to accelerate the pace of gender equality for women in senior executive roles (Lawrence et al., 2018). The ultimate goal is to reach an equitable distribution of women and male executives in leadership roles by the year 2030 (Lawrence et al., 2018).

Proudman (2018) stated it would take a minimum of 40 years for gender parity to be showcased in the boardroom in the United States. The premise drives initiatives for improvements if women want the statistics to change, the change is going to have to be inspired by women (Lawrence et al., 2018). Europe is working at a constant pace to improve statistics for gender parity (Proudman, 2018). In 2015, women held 24% of board seats (Proudman, 2018, p. 69).

A more substantial challenge with gender parity is improving a diverse workforce (Earl, Taylor, Roberts, Huynh, & Davis, 2017). Two million workers quit their jobs each year based on discrimination for race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation, which costs the United States over $64 billion annually (Proudman, 2018, p. 68). Implementations to improve gender equity and build an increase for women in leadership roles include making work hours more flexible and reviewing maternity leaves as flexible for families (Earl et al., 2017). Finding solutions to improve equity does not involve a quick fix solution (Hackett & Byars, 1996; Johnston, 2018). Finding ways to communicate about bias and gender-specific behaviors are steps needed to improve greater gender equity in leadership positions (Proudman, 2018). Improving gender parity in the boardroom will come as a result of pressure from investors and holding chief executive officers accountable for implementing diversity metrics (Lee, 2018).

Advancing gender parity in the boardroom has become a topic of interest and has been met with limited results (Lee, 2018). There are boards that have reached the measure of displaying a more diverse board including Alliant Energy Corporation, American Water Works, Avon products, and Tegna, an arm of Gannett, and General Motors (Lee, 2018). Boards, where gender is more equal, have some common practices, which include a plan to promote diversity to the board, assessing unconscious bias, reviewing board performance annually, establishing a diversity metric, and hiring recruitment firms to deliver diverse board candidates (Lee, 2018, p.). Given the scrutiny and promise of boards wanting to move the mark towards greater equity, a possible impact on future generations for improved gender distributions may occur (Hoyt, 2010).

State Street Global Advisors, which manages over 2.5 trillion dollars in assets, has lobbied to increase the number of female directors at the 3,500 companies which they invest in (Lee, 2018, p. 7). The "fearless girl" was commissioned by State Street Global Advisors to stand against the "charging bull" on Wall Street to bring attention to gender diversity after evaluating the statistics of women in leadership (Lee, 2018). Bringing attention to the issue is not the only way State Street Global Advisors is working towards gender parity (Lee, 2018). Voting power is being used against companies that are not meeting the matrix of diversity or working on improving diverse populations of leaders (Lee, 2018). Four hundred and seventy-six firms were denied director appointments by State Street Global Advisors in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia for not meeting the mark of gender diversity (Lee, 2018, p. 7). Regulatory pressure has been added in the European Union, expecting proposed legislation to promote a 40% quota of

the underrepresented sex in non-executive board member positions by 2020 (Main & Gregory-Smith, 2018, p. 137).

Ryan and Haslam (2007) have moved the focus of their studies from women who have not had opportunities of leadership, to pinpointing where women do have access to chances for leadership positions. Extending Ryan and Haslam (2007) emphasis of research focusing on the glass cliff, where women are likely to be appointed to boards and leadership positions, but the boards and companies are at high risk of failure (Main & Gregory-Smith, 2018). Correlating data regarding the glass cliff concept was shared by Farmer (2016) who connected the rate of low share prices of stock to companies where women were appointed to leadership positions (Farmer, 2016). Ryan and Haslam (2007) have promoted the research of women in leadership opportunities, with particular focus in the areas where the companies are in precarious financial situations.

Eagly and Carli (2007) produced a study which companies that experienced scandal in recent times were more likely to hire women in the female executive role. Encouraging further research where women were promoted in companies which coined a new term, *think crisis, think female* (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). The links of why and how this is occurring can be traced back to a larger theme of sexism and favoritism where women interested in leadership prospects and promotions are only given opportunities in risky situations (Main & Gregory-Smith, 2018; Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

Another obstacle women encounter is an equitable division of domestic chores and labor, which has been shown to be difficult for women to proceed effectively into top positions (Khazan, 2016). Given that child-rearing expectations are placed with women, and the majority of household responsibilities are also placed on women, creates an

impossible scenario when trying to move into leadership positions (Khazan, 2016). The adage "women take care, and men take charge" still lingers with a bias stemmed from gender-identified roles at home and work (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 205).

Personal characteristics are also areas where women in management are judged (Eagly et al., 2014). Women in leadership positions are placed in stressful situations merely by acting either too feminine or too masculine (Eagly et al., 2014). Eagly et al. (2014) observed what happens when women act out in a way outside a traditional gender stereotype, and the acceptance of leadership becomes severed based on actual gender-defined roles. Stereotypes affect women in positions of leadership in significant and impactful ways (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2018; White, 2017).

The how and why of women in leadership positions, and the sheer lack of numbers of women in leadership positions, can be traced in part to stereotypes of women (Coke & Ballard, 2014). Women have been stereotyped as socially sensitive and less competent in tasks required for jobs outside the home environment (White, 2017). Based on findings from Eagly and Carli's (1999) study involving gender stereotypes and leadership emergence, gender stereotyping has played a critical role in hurting opportunities for women to proceed in leadership roles. Effectively decreasing access to the leadership roles women pursue and increasing obstacles for women to overcome (Eagly, 2018).

Women in Education

Education began when literate men taught biblical scriptures to their families (Blount, 1998). Homeschooling for religious reasons attached laws in states such as Massachusetts and Connecticut where parents were required to educate children in their

homes (Blount, 1998). With requirements in place for compulsory education, communities wanted to expand education but had difficulty finding enough male teachers to instruct students in their communities (Blount, 1998). Therefore, to meet the educational needs of the children, women were considered for teaching positions (Roderick, 2016).

Advocates for women's intellectual and teaching abilities began arising in great political atmospheres (Blount, 1998). Abigail Adams is noted for being one of the first advocates for the ability of women to be instructors, influencing her husband, John Adams when she stated, "If we mean to have heroes, statesmen, and philosophers, we should have learned women" (Blount, 1998, p. 94). Abigail Adams' correspondence with her husband, John Adams cites the need for advocates regarding expanding opportunities for women to be provided with a chance for fundamental educational rights (Blount, 1998).

During the years of 1790 to 1850 women had an opportunity to receive a formal education developed primarily from several women who built institutions where women could study (Blount, 1998). The Hartford Female Seminary was developed by Sarah Pierce and Catherine Beecher (Blount, 1998). The other formal education facility, Mt. Holyoke, was dedicated to only women and established by Mary Lyon in 1837 (Blount, 1998). Beecher had a childhood friend, Horace Mann, then Secretary of Education in Massachusetts, who she called on to support women's opportunities for education and employment. Mann stated:

> The greater intensity of the parental instinct in the female sex, their natural love
> for the society of children, and the gentleness and forbearance of their disposition

lead them to mildness rather than severity, to the use of hope rather than of fear as

a motive of action, and to the various arts of encouragement rather than to

annoyances and compulsion in their management of the young. (as cited in

Woody, 1929, p. 35)

Thomas Woody (1929) completed one of the first books documenting the history of

women's education. Woody (1929) sparked controversy by stating that women teaching

would lead to the suffragist movement and show the world women were capable of

"filling the ranks of teaching and gaining a voice in the control of school affairs" (p. 15).

Woody's work was developed chapter by chapter defining a topically charged idea

relevant to women's rights for voting, emancipation, academies, and teaching (Duevel,

Nahman-Smith, & Stern, 2015). Woody (1929) also noted the changing times and tide

associated with women's "economic abilities and opportunities in higher education,

physical education, vocational education, and coeducation, and political emancipation".

At times it was two steps forward and one step backward for women in education

(Hackett & Betz, 1981). The National Teachers Association, organized in 1857, merged

with another group, the National Education Association, which allowed women to join,

but they had to have approval through the director's board (Blount, 1998). While women

could be approved for membership, they could never speak or have any other rights

outside of membership (Blount, 1998). At a national education convention in 1857,

Susan B. Anthony requested an opportunity to stand up and speak on behalf of women's

rights (Stanton, Anthony, Gage, & Harper, 1902). Anthony argued the rules allowing

only unmarried teachers the opportunity to teach was unfair and married women should

have the same chance (Stanton et al., 1902).

Marriage and the prospect of marriage influenced a female's ability to work publicly from the Civil War through World War II (Blount, 1998). Single women were targeted for positions because they could be paid less and would be employable until they were to be married (Blount, 1998). Teaching was viewed as preparation for motherhood and marriage; however, some women chose to teach as a way to pursue financial independence and avoid marriage (Roderick, 2016). During the Great Depression, with so many men out of work in America, a widespread practice was to ban women from teaching to give men the opportunity to gain employment (Dubofsky & McCartin, 2017).

At the beginning of the 20th, women were working towards expanding opportunities to explore acceptable roles in American society (Blount, 1998). One man, Louis Doublin raised the idea of "race suicide" stating, "educated women who stood outside conventional roles as wives and mothers threatened the population with the idea of race suicide by white, middle-class women refusing to reproduce children supporting their race" (Blount, 1998, p. 91). Outspoken critics of women's rights and opportunities feared the social, emotional, and economic impact of women moving into positions of authority (Blount, 1998). The idea of women in the teaching profession and creating financial independence grew, and 70% of all education employees at the beginning of the 1900s through the 1930s were women (Dubofsky & McCartin, 2017, p. 335).

In 1928, the National Education Association surveyed over 1,500 school board members across cities in the United States and found that just under 30% of the school boards forced women to resign their teaching positions to offer the places to men (Parkerson & Pakerson, 2014, p. 65). The additional practice of dropping women from their teaching contract as soon as they were engaged to be married or forcing them to

resign impacted over 50% of cities populations over 100,000 (Parkerson & Pakerson, 2014 p. 66).

The exact opposite ideology was issued to men (Blount, 1998). School boards and districts were only interested in hiring men in school administration who were married, and men of the "right character" were married (Blount 1998, p. 48). The idea and practice of hiring men for the superintendency who were married did not change throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, according to Parkerson and Pakerson (2014).

Women moved away from teaching and administration, due to married women being ineligible to work (Morantz, 1977). When World War II began, the ban on married women was lifted due to the low numbers of potential workers in all job fields, which were vacated by men leaving for the war (Morantz, 1977). Women who were employed as teachers left the profession for more lucrative positions in war relevant industries (Morantz, 1977). Ensuring a drought of qualified teachers forced schools to drop the marriage ban and hire women that were married (Morantz, 1977). Problems categorizing the struggles and difficulties women have had in gaining educational leadership positions are well classified and documented (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Women today are free to choose careers in the 21st century that women in prior generations did not have or recognize as an option (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

Collecting information categorizing the status of female administrators has been confusing due to the absence of comparable data nationally and within states, regarding gender in leadership because no one is required to collect data based on gender (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). More that is written and understood about women in the field of education, the greater likelihood more women will have the opportunity to persist in

higher levels of administration (Ballenger, Grogan, Irby, Brown & Shakeshaft, 2014). However, without a joint study and understanding of a national database housing gender and race as an identifying factor to study, the lack of female superintendents will remain obscure and lead to discrimination in hiring practices (Grogan, 1996). Studies that are conducted and completed on gender and female leaders have been primarily completed in dissertations, and the researchers are not white males, and do not involve minorities in the research (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

Superintendents. Beginning with the first recordings and documents describing the superintendent position, the occupation was used to consolidate rural districts into larger, urbanized schools (Kowalski et al., 2011). The late 1830s showcased the first usage of the term *superintendent* with *primary school superintendent* and appointments showed up in Buffalo, New York, and Louisville, Kentucky (Kowalski et al., 2011). At the turn of the 20th, school systems in the United States were appointing district administrators based on state initiatives and state guidance (Wilson & Kowalski, 2017). States leaders were expressing a desire to have greater oversight into school finance and laws regarding school attendance, so schools and districts would run efficiently; they were also looking for a pivotal person to orchestrate the growing job duties (Wilson & Kowalski, 2017).

At the inception and creation of the superintendency position, the initial job was viewed as a clerk of larger school boards who ran school districts (Kominak, 2016). City leaders began recognizing the supervision of schools was a more significant job and formed school boards, which started running and supervising the public schools (Wilson & Kowalski, 2017). Initially, school boards were reticent to hand over power to the

"clerk," now termed or viewed as the position of superintendent, who was expected to perform tasks related to running the school administratively (Kominak, 2016).

Research conducted by experts in the field of history regarding the superintendency viewed five succinct roles and time frames of development for characterizations of the leadership position (Callahan, 1962; Kowalski et al., 2011; Shoked, 2016). Functions and characteristics spanned over decades show the evolution of the job and tasks related to the post as priorities changed for schools and leaders (Sampson, 2018). The development and integration of all the characteristics associated with the research conducted by Kowalski and Bjork (2005) served to identify pieces of the superintendency that are relevant and connected to the job title and expectations of today's superintendent (Sampson, 2018).

Callahan (1962) identified the five roles beginning with teacher-scholar during the mid-1800s into the early 20th. The purpose of teacher-scholar began by implementing the state curriculum and overseeing teachers administratively (Callahan, 1962). The earliest superintendents were teachers who were considered leaders of the teaching craft (Callahan, 1962). Today, superintendents are expected to be knowledgeable and have tremendous foresight into moving students, and districts, towards the production of improved test scores and academic gains (Kowalski, 2015).

Callahan's (1962) second identified role was categorized as the organizational manager, which was present from the early 1900s to the mid-1930s. The shift and understanding of duties were debated over two ideals; school management and efficiency, and an instructional leader (Callahan, 1962). During this time, additional responsibilities were included in the superintendent's job posting, adding to the oversight and need of

active managers (Kowalski, 2015). Budgets, operating procedures, administrative development, and facility management were added during this period (Kowalski, 2015).

The superintendent as a democratic leader was another area identified by Callahan (1962) in the time frame from 1930-1950, which included working for financial support, and monetary gains for public schools a top priority for superintendents. The applied social scientist was identified in the mid-1950s to 1970s which began the era of research and building a knowledge base for the profession (Callahan, 1962). During the 1950s, the Kellogg Foundation developed a platform for administrators and teachers to begin learning and enabling school administrators to explore learning concepts and stages for idea exchanges (Whitt, Scheurich, & Skrla, 2015). Scientific process and ideas were solicited to utilize a system of best practices for successful student outcomes and problem-solving (Whitt et al., 2015).

The final role, as written and recognized by Callahan's (1962) work, was the superintendent as communicator, which concluded the five stages for historical overview of the superintendent's position (Kowalski, 2015). Educational reform mandates requiring constant communication, organizational structures, and distributive leadership styles are pieces of the landscape in job performance, and recognized as integral for current superintendents (Kowalski, 2015). School culture cycles from communication and communicative behavior, which is also essential in the superintendent developing and changing school culture (Freed, 2016).

Blount (1998) began researching female administrators after a colleague stated only 3% of women were superintendents in 1990, piquing her interest in the research (p. 5). Blount started researching and cataloging the history of the female superintendent

through the 20th as the center of her doctoral dissertation (Blount, 1998). Blount (1998) pulled research from the decades of 1910, 1930, 1950, 1970, and 1990 for her comprehensive look at numbers of female superintendents. Blount's research is some of the first to navigate and document actual numbers attached and associated with the history of the female superintendent in the United States (Brunner, 2007). Blount (1998) compiled a database looking for trends and historical patterns for female superintendents through the course of the 21st century, entering 50,000 records.

Women remain underrepresented in the school superintendent's role in the United States, and the topic of the female superintendent has a limited amount of historical research (Sampson & Gresham, 2017). The gaps in the data collection can be attributed to the minimized voices of female educators and the lack of data collected by gender through history (Blount, 1998). Three researchers focusing on the topic of female superintendents continuing through the years 2004 to 2012 (Sampson & Gresham, 2017). The three researchers who continued to study female superintendents were Grogan, Kowalski, and Shakeshaft (Sampson & Gresham, 2017). A study was compiled by Sampson and Gresham (2017), which included dissertations with the topic of female superintendents, and the references used in the dissertations (Sampson & Gresham, 2017). Even with the most current research, a gap is the literature still exists (Sampson & Gresham, 2017).

The highest percentage of females holding the position of superintendent in the 21st century was during the 1930s at 11%, and the lowest number of women superintendents was during the 1970s, at approximately 3% (Blount, 1998, p. 5). Blount (1998) cited several observations and outcomes from her data. First, females never held

many superintendent positions; therefore, the progress made towards the latter part of the century moved the data upwards and is connected to the timing of historical women's movements (Blount, 1998). Women were also selected for county positions in the superintendency, which held a lower salary and less prestige in the title (Blount, 1998). The demise of the county superintendency and the upswing in district superintendencies led to fewer women being selected as the district representative (Blount, 1998).

Through Chase's (2007) narrative study of female superintendents, she cited the counter-narrative that occurs with women when their self-image contradicts cultural models for women. However, striking a balance in work-life management is cataloged through research consistent with studies of the female administrator, as illustrated in the quote by Grogan (1996):

> Women think they've got to do it all. They've got to be all. I did feel like that for a long time. I gave a little talk at a women's conference several months ago before I was given notice a divorce was on its way, and at this conference, the point of it was, yes, you can have it all. You know, you freeze dinners weeks in advance, and you plan these meals, and you do all this kind of stuff. And then, I got notice of these divorce papers, and I thought, oh well, maybe not. (p. 125)

While interviewing female superintendents, her studies concluded female superintendents struggled when views of women in powerful positions, such as the superintendency, put women in situations of power and decision making that contradicted traditional beliefs about women in leadership (Chase, 2007). Women superintendents can convey successes and achievements without additional constraints of gender holding

back successes, as opposed to men, who expect success and acceptance (Bjork & Brown-Ferrigno, 2014). Women who accomplish new and different gender identified feats such as judges, politicians, or roles designated with men could be publicized for their accomplishments begging the question of how far women have come when there are so few in white-male dominated positions (Goethels & Hoyt, 2017). Narrative interviews lean towards greater allowance for public expression and honesty based on anonymity and ability for expression (Chase, 2007).

Barriers. Margaret Mead, as cited in Goethals and Hoyt (2017) stated, "Although the jobs men and women do differ from society to society, in all societies men and women do different work and everywhere the work women do is valued less" (p. 220). In a study completed by the United States Department of Labor in 2014, the results of analyzing data from the years 1972 through 2011, showed women's progress in the wage gap has improved. From the initial position of women making 60% of what men were preparing for the same job, the labor market suggested women make 79% of what men make currently in the same positions (United States Department of Labor, 2014, para. 26).

While the work towards women in roles of leadership has improved the position from which the advancement of opportunities for females have evolved, there are many examples where equitable representation still does not exist (Marielea, 2017). In executive leadership roles, in top educational leadership roles, in political leadership roles, and equal pay, women have not reached parity with men (Blau & Kahn, 2016).

The United States ranks 28th out of 145 countries in an annual world ranking of equality for women (Goethels & Hoyt, 2017). In 2014, African-American women were

paid 63% of what white men were paid, while Hispanic women were paid just 54%, according to a survey by the American Association of University Women, a group that advocates for equity and education for women and girls (Williams, 2016). Researching women pursuing educational leadership roles is paramount to change history and seek identified practices of successful women in leadership positions (Seller, 1989).

Recent studies on female superintendents were perpetuated to look at the issues and challenges of female superintendents face (AASA, 2017). The survey conducted by Tallerico and Blount (2004) included unwritten rules apply for female superintendents (Tallerico & Blount, 2004). The unwritten rules involve, "headhunters and school board members, defining quality and hierarchies of job titles, stereotypes by gender, complacency about acting affirmatively, and feelings of comfort and interpersonal chemistry with the successful candidate" (Tallerico & Blount, 2004, p. 37).

Shakeshaft (1989) cited barriers for women moving into the superintendency include societal norms regarding female's abilities to run school districts, beliefs regarding leadership ability, and school board expectations not considering women for the position of superintendent. School boards, which are primarily comprised of men, view the difficulty of the job and doubt women have the overall ability and skill set to run a district (Grogan & Dias, 2015). A consistent theme of school boards, even school boards that use a firm as "headhunting" for the position are not hiring women at the same rate as men (Grogan & Dias, 2015). Using headhunters can impede progress for women and people of color based on the previous experience of women, and people of color (Pruitt, 2015). Women and people of color are less likely to have principalships at the secondary level and are more likely to hold positions of leadership in elementary schools

(Pruitt, 2015). Additionally, school boards are more likely to hire the person for the connection they feel with a candidate, and people want to hire others who are reminiscent or similar to them (Tallerico & Blount, 2004).

In a study conducted by Sperandio and Devdas (2015) 71 of 109 respondents of female superintendents stated their spouse and their current position weighed heavily on their ability to pursue a superintendent's job (p. 337). The Sperandio and Devdas (2015) study also showed the female superintendent was still tasked with the majority of domestic responsibilities. Little help from family or paid help places women in the awkward position of choosing a career path with substantive hours and challenges, along with the added responsibility of running and managing a home (Bernal et al., 2017). Burdens placed on the superintendent and the task of maintaining a home as a wife and mother are putting women in a compromising position to choose between career and family (Sampson & Gresham, 2017). These stressors potentially place women at a permanent disadvantage in terms of balancing the statistics of women and men in the superintendent role (Bernal et al., 2017). Choices in determining career priorities are difficult for based on the significant expectations placed on women for child-rearing and completing domestic responsibilities (Sperandio & Devdas, 2015).

Summary

The development of career choice through the lens of social cognitive career theory as well as focusing on self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting guided this research conducted on female superintendents. The development of career opportunities for females is influenced by the belief and probability of success in the endeavor (Allen et al., 2016). An in-depth examination of career development of women

who have paved the way regarding educational leadership is a necessary component in this research study, as those women can serve as symbols and stories of successful career development (Allen et al., 2016).

While interest in the study of female superintendents has picked up momentum over the past three decades, additional research is still needed to comprehend how women can move into the position (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Further, an understanding of the types of career development is necessary to develop a roadmap directing women in education toward leadership and the superintendency (Shakeshaft, 1989). An exploration of historical patterns regarding women in educational leadership and the role of superintendency is essential for framing the future equitable attainment of female superintendents (Shakeshaft, 1989).

In Chapter Three, a comprehensive view of the methodology used to investigate the research questions is reviewed. A key component is finding the right questions to ask, finding the appropriate demographic to study, and focusing on the narrative story of the successful female superintendent (Brunner, 2000). Unfolding layers of the successful female superintendent can enlighten progress and potentially lead to opportunities for future females in the top tier of education (Brunner & Grogan, 2007).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Understanding the motivation that drives women to pursue the path of the superintendency and move through existing barriers is the perfect arena to engage in conversations about the journey and career of the female superintendent (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Finding cornerstones and building blocks throughout a female superintendent's career can shed insight and clarity into the ability to reach the superintendent position, which can pave the way for greater equity between men and women in school leadership (Gilmour & Kinsella, 2009). Albeit, through others in the form of mentorship, or goal setting, the analysis of promotion is subjective and is an interpretive view of career development (Meschitti & Lawton-Smith, 2017).

Interviewing women who have advanced into the role of the superintendent is essential (Gilmour & Kinsella, 2009). Narrating their experiences can expose learning opportunities for future female leaders (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). As discussed in Chapter Two, identifying purposeful career development is key to understanding the motivation, self-efficacy, and support needed in reaching career aspirations and occupational attainment (Lent et al., 1994).

In Chapter Three, the type of research proposed is discussed in conjunction with the methodology used to define best the context of research questions designed for the study. A closer look at the geographical region of the demographic and population who were interviewed is also addressed. The data collection process is reviewed along with the data analysis used in the study. Finally, ethical considerations for the research study are presented.

Problem and Purpose Overview

Retiring school administrators from the Baby Boomer generation are leaving superintendent positions, and a gap exists in filling positions with prepared administrators (Parker et al., 2015). Ten thousand Baby Boomers are turning 65 years old every day and are eligible for retirement; leaving vacant cultivated positions (Fraenkel, 2017). In 2017, the AASA published a study analyzing the disproportion of men in the role of superintendents. During the 1990s, an increase from 6.6% to 13.2% spiked for women occupying the superintendent's role (AASA, 2017, p. 15). As stated in an AASA (2017) published survey regarding historical data and the superintendency, an alarming trend of male dominance was projected in the career field of superintendents (AASA, 2017). The data collected in the study, however, is over 18 years old, and the survey yielded one of the few historical analyses of female superintendents, with 297 respondents (AASA, 2017, p. 15). As reported on the survey, only 25% of female superintendents had an elementary background, with 75% of female superintendents coming from the role of high school assistant principal (AASA, 2017, p. 27). These data references a direct link from the role of the assistant principal as a ladder to the superintendent position for women (AASA, 2017).

The AASA (2017) cited less district leadership opportunities for women coming from the elementary setting as opposed to the secondary setting. The lack of assistant principals in elementary schools, along with an absence of coaching positions, present a problem for women moving into primary leadership opportunities (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). This information is interesting according to Brunner and Grogan (2007), who stated high school administrative experience was considered the best preparation for the

superintendency, until recently, when high stakes testing and academics place female elementary principals in a prime position for the superintendent's job. With expectations for school administrators including blended learning, online learning, school innovation practices, and social and emotional education of students needed, keeping and retaining qualified administrators is challenging (AASA, Finnan & McCord, 2017).

Data collected from MODESE (2018), suggested only one-fifth of the total population of superintendents were female. Out of the 560 school districts listed, including charter schools and K-8 schools, there are over 116 listed female superintendents (MODESE, 2017). These data place Missouri below the average of female superintendents nationally, which rests at approximately 23% (AASA, 2017, p. 16).

According to Sandberg (2013), women should persist in becoming leaders in their field as opposed to just working in their field. Understanding how female superintendents comprehend self-efficacy is key to acknowledging an internal awareness needed in the superintendency (Grogan, 1996). Contributing factors leading to the development of female superintendents, and writing a map of insight, potentially could help future teachers and administrators prepare for the role of school superintendent (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). The number of women administrators has increased, but a "glass ceiling" has made the challenge of attainment for a female superintendent who is qualified, very difficult, along with minority when procuring leadership roles (Blackmore & Kenway, 2017).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How does self-efficacy impact female superintendents role in job attainment?

2. What do female superintendents perceive as the most significant contributions in reaching the pinnacle of their career field?

3. What role does mentorship and goal setting play into attaining the role of superintendent?

Research Design

Qualitative analysis is solving and interpreting the chaotic and rich world of humans' lived experiences not defined by the need for numeric order (Schaefer, Roller, & Lavrakas, 2015). Grossoehme (2014) defined qualitative research as "the systematic collection, organization, and interpretation of textual material derived from talk or conversations to explore the meaning of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context" (p. 115). Creswell (2014) added, "Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4). Qualitative research should identify prior research and how it relates to analytic strategies when interpreting data (Riessman, Dixon-Woods, Bishop, & Perakyla, 2016).

Historically, qualitative research has stemmed from the study of anthropology, sociology, and the humanities (Creswell, 2014). Arguments for approaching a qualitative study were defended by Creswell (2014) when he stated, "We use qualitative research to develop theories when partial or inadequate theories exist for certain populations, and samples or existing theories do not adequately capture the complexity of the problem we are examining" (p. 48). Understanding and defining qualitative research involves open-

ended questions and data which are analyzed through a thematic lens (Creswell, 2014).

Increasing an understanding of the features which leads to development, practices, and

behaviors of a female superintendent is best evaluated through open-ended questions

(Hairon & Goh, 2015). This provides a breadth of varied interpretations of the female

superintendents' career progression (Gilmour & Kinsella, 2009).

Phenomenology is described as "the common meaning for several individuals of

their lived experience of a concept or phenomenon" and places importance on correlating

stories (Creswell, 2014, p. 76). Describing an event or phenomenon relies on a

participant's perspective to provide and shed insight into motivation (Creswell, 2014).

Phenomenological studies are useful for conducting a large pool of interviews and

cataloging themes that emerge to provide an understanding and validate findings

(Creswell, 2014).

Another type of qualitative research, ethnography, is according to Creswell

(2014), "learned patterns of behavior, beliefs, and languages of a culture-sharing group"

(p. 90). Cultural anthropology was the starting point for ethnography and the

development of qualitative research practices (Roller, 2016). Immersion in the

environment of participants is key to understanding goals developed and culture fostered

around the ethnographical study (Roller, 2016). Motivation and themes emerge with a

greater understanding of participant observation and creating an in-depth approach to

insightful awareness of the subjects and studies (Roller, 2016).

Case study research, another type of qualitative methodology, is defined as "the

study of a case within a real-life or contemporary context or setting" (Creswell, 2014, p.

97). The case study is ideal when researching innovation or exploratory practices

(Scholl, 2017). It should not be used for the primary purposes of generalizing theories from a greater population (Scholl, 2017).

Grounded theory is described as "the intent to move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory or unified theoretical explanation" (Creswell, 2014, p. 83). In grounded theory, codes are developed for lines, words, and paragraphs, which develop into a large number of concepts (Tucker, 2016). The researcher is looking for a comparison of similarities and differences in concepts, which results in recording, merging, and collapsing of concepts (Tucker, 2016). Data collection influences and inspires further information and does not use a convenience sampling method but a theoretical sample (Tucker, 2016). This type of methodology allows for the researcher greater autonomy to move where the data takes the researcher, as opposed to a predetermined sample and coding mechanism (Tucker, 2016).

When considering an appropriate methodology for a research study, all types of methodology should be considered (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative data analyses are not designed to measure perceptions and in-depth, open-ended experiences, which are appropriate for this study (Yates & Leggett, 2016). Quantitative research is used for testing objectives and theories by reviewing variables and relationships (Creswell, 2014). Another reason to use quantitative research is to look for relationships between variables, subject measurement, and associations between variables (Yates & Leggett, 2016). These methods would be challenging to aid in analyzing in-depth conversations, which lead to understanding choice and a variety of decisions (Roller, 2016).

Qualitative researchers seek out narrative data to attempt to provide context for studied events (Yin, 2016). The cause and effect use of quantitative data would not

describe the complexity of human affairs, such as personal efficacy and career choice (Yin, 2016). Individuality and experiences of research participants support open-ended questioning, an analysis that stems from broad-based commonalities and personal justifications (Clandinin, 2016). Both qualitative and quantitative researchers identify struggles to represent findings in fully complete ways (McAlpine, 2016). Qualitative researchers must identify multiple, and frequently conflicting, perspectives to attempt to represent careful decision making about the guidance of research (Schaefer et al., 2015).

In this study using a narrative, qualitative study where questions were semi-structured and open-ended allowed for each individual interviewed to share pieces of the personal story told, as part of a larger story pieced together of the female superintendent's journey. The narrative analysis was used for storying and "restorying" stories to develop themes used with pieces or aspects of a chronological base (Creswell, 2014, p. 104). Narrative analysis is suited for and designed to emphasize individual experiences using primarily interviews as the source of information (Creswell, 2014).

Providing a platform for research when interviewing the female superintendents and looking for significant events and epiphanies is a critical part of the narrative story (Creswell, 2014). Searching for patterns of meaning as retold through the interviews, narrative epistemology focuses on identifying events, which are key in the narrative approach to inquiry analysis (Creswell, 2014). The approach used in this study of narration "revolves around an interest in life experiences as narrated by those who live them high lighting what we can learn involving lived experiences by maintaining a focus on narrated lives" (Yin, 2016, p. 70). The need to understand and research how women in

the study became superintendents and the journey of their career path is at the essence of this research narrative study.

Population and Sample

The population for research purposes in this study was women superintendents located in the southwestern region of Missouri. The MODESE (2017) divided the state into sectional divisions used for regional professional development centers regional job vacancies, administrative associations involving elementary and secondary school administrators and superintendents. The southwestern part of the state, Region 7, includes 18 counties (MODESE, 2017). Combined, these counties host 89 public schools with appointed superintendents (MODESE, 2017).

Out of the 18 counties and 89 school districts, 14 school districts from Region 7 employed a female superintendent (MODESE, 2017). The region's female superintendents served as the sample for this study. Given the maximum participants in the study only equaled 14, ideally, 14 female superintendents would participate (Clandinin, 2016). The sample, "if properly selected" should have the same or similar characteristics as the remaining population (Bluman, 2015, p. 4).

The sampling technique used was a convenience sampling of the population. Individuals who fit criteria of the research study from the geographical area were selected from a non-random basis (Emerson, 2015). Female superintendents listed in the targeted area, and the researcher's geographical location made convenience sampling technique an effective sampling type (Etikan & Alkassim, 2016). A non-random sample where the population targeted was willing to participate, had ease of accessibility, geographical convenience, and available time to participate can be used as a sample (Etikan &

Alkassim, 2016). The shared experience and the limited number of females involved

would indicate convenience sampling as ideal for this narrative study (Etikan &

Alkassim, 2016).

Instrumentation

For the purpose of this study, face-to-face interviews were conducted in order to

understand the perceptions of female superintendents (Roller, 2016). Open-ended

interview questions (see Appendix A) were designed to make available insight,

estimations, and opinions from the targeted sample (Creswell, 2014). The questions were

created to expand the path and knowledge of the superintendent towards the culmination

of the role of superintendent. The structure of qualitative research instrument needed to

include a focus on a lived experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Semi-structured

interviews were conducted to produce the potential for follow up questions (Lewis,

2015). When interviewing face-to-face, the research was able to focus on building and

rapport building and watching visual cues, which provided greater meaning to the

interviewee's responses (Oltmann, 2016). Grossoehme (2014) stated, "Qualitative

investigators are not disinterested outsiders who merely observe without interacting with

participants but affected and are affected by their data with emotion" (p. 121). The

researcher, in the question and answer portion of the qualitative design, cannot predict

where the discussion will go, nor the context of what will occur during the interview

process, which can steer the design of the analysis (Roller, 2016).

Interview techniques can be defined as a social practice, which views the

interview as an account lived by the participant and an analytic understanding of the

"how" and "what" occurs with a personal explanation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Given

the nature of personal insight and reflection regarding the makeup of how a female

superintendent made the top leadership spot in a district, interviewing participants was

the predominant way to retract the needed information (Oltmann, 2016). Concerns of

utilizing the interview structure for research purposes included the validity of reports, the

relevance of the interviewee, and conversation analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Validity. One difficulty in pursuing qualitative research is presenting

information accurately, or accidentally publishing an inaccurate account of research

(Glesne, 2015). Looking for an understanding, which comes from listening and talking to

subjects, presents scrutiny of authenticity when relaying information based on personal

accounts (Teusner, 2016). Validity is key regarding reporting the data correctly, and

without bias (Yates & Leggett, 2016). Johnson and Parry (2016) offered criticism of

validity in qualitative research when he stated, "researchers find what they want to find,

and then write up the results" (p. 283). Qualitative researchers presenting information

need to focus on providing defensible and plausible research validity (Johnson & Parry,

2016). Creswell (2014) stated, "My framework for thinking about validation in

qualitative research is to suggest that researchers employ accepted strategies to document

the accuracy of studies, identified as validation strategies" (p. 76). Strategies to increase

validity in qualitative research include extending fieldwork, utilizing feedback from

participants, and looking for cause and effect (Johnson & Parry, 2016).

In triangulation, methods, investigators, and theories work together to provide

evidence supporting research (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville,

2014). When evidence presents a theme or code, sources of data are triangulated, which

in turns provides validity in findings (Noble & Smith, 2015). Aspects of a valid and

reliable narrative study should include the following, "focus on several individuals, a collection of stories about significant issues in the individual's life, and chronology that connects phases of a story through themes" (Creswell, 2014, p. 259). Through interviewing female superintendents and identifying impactful moments in career development, a narrative story unfolds leaving information for themes to code and analyze (McAlpine, 2016).

     Reliability. Experiences vary from each interviewee, signifying the importance of capturing individual perceptions and unique experiences (Creswell, 2014). In quantitative research, reliability defines the process of exact replicability in the results of research (Leung, 2015). However, in qualitative research, exact replicability is difficult based on epistemology, so reliability relies on consistency (Leung, 2015). The instrument in this study was field tested by two people, as suggested to test-out and identify obstacles to increase social reliability (Hurst et al., 2015). The field test for this study consisted of two retired superintendents who provided feedback for interview questions.

     Dependability is used to describe reliability in qualitative research methods (Duggan, 2015). In a narrative analysis, data are collected through the told story, the chronology of events, and important events and connected epiphanies (Saleh, Menon, & Clandinin, 2014). The step-by-step analysis of narrative, qualitative research identifies necessary aspects of qualitative narrative design (Clandinin, 2016). A large amount of data collected from qualitative research makes following the procedure outlined by the research proposal essential in collection and analysis (Duggan, 2015). Describing data through experiences and identifying stories and contextual materials are needed for

classifying data (Creswell, 2014). Interpretation and visually representing data rest on presenting the larger meaning of the story, processes, theories, and features generalizing the life of the subject (Creswell, 2014).

Data Collection

Gaining approval from Lindenwood University through their institutional review board was necessary to begin conducting the face-to-face interviews (see Appendix B). Following institutional review board approval, data collection for the study began. The MODESE (2018) in Missouri identifies and publishes the name and email addresses of superintendents listed by county, per section of the Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDC), and per school. Based on published information, female superintendents were identified for the southwest region of Missouri (MODESE, 2018).

The regional research area was selected so the researcher could be in physical proximity to conduct interviews personally and with the greatest ease for participants (Clandinin, 2016). Each superintendent was contacted via email to explain and identify the purpose of the research and study (see Appendix C). After each superintendent responded in agreement to participate in the study for a face-to face interview, a time and place were established for the face to face interviews via a personal phone call and or electronic communication (see Appendix D). An informed consent form presented to each participant (see Appendix E) explaining confidentiality. Interviews were audio recorded, and hand-written notes were taken through the process. According to Clark and Veale (2018), qualitative data are presented in terms of notes, journals, and documents, and the necessity of reflecting on the nature of the data is key in preparing for the data analysis component. The nature of qualitative research is field-based and

listening, along with asking good questions (Yin, 2016). Once data were collected, the analysis began.

Data Analysis

A narrative research analysis involves forming stories and interpreting information to tell a story, including how events happen (Clandinin, 2016). Providing multiple avenues to pursue data collection is key for the researcher to tell a complete and unfolding story (Creswell, 2014). The narrative, qualitative design approach intertwines events to form an in-depth story, defined through important interviews and interpreting a larger, broader picture of the study's focus (Clandinin, 2016). Details uncovered can help understand culture and insight into the story being told (Roller, 2016).

Qualitative research is dependent upon the audience, individual factors and time allocation within the research, along with goals of research outcomes (Creswell, 2014). Riessman et al., (2016) stated, "Narrative analysis interrogates intention and language, how and why incidents are storied, not simply the content to which the language refers" (p. 11). Designing a narrative study must include varied layers of interpretation of research, responses shared by participants, transcribing data or information accurately, and the process of coding information once it is collected (Roller, 2016). Through the narrative process, researchers ultimately decide what type of story is being told and how collected data will inform the story (Clandinin, 2016).

Data analysis involving three elements including "personal and social" continuity involving the past, present, future, and physical environment is key in an evolving narrative study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, p. 189). Wang and Geale (2015) supported using a plot setting involving characters, setting, problem, actions, and resolutions to

analyze narrative data. Chronological approaches can also be used as an analysis of data for narrative studies (Creswell, 2014).

Analyzing data by classifying it into codes, themes, and contextual materials is key (Creswell, 2014). Identifying stories and looking for similar moments, forces the researcher to identify the broader meaning and context of the stories (Creswell, 2014). Weaving together features of the life of the story and organizing the meaning into coherent categories are essential components of qualitative analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Understanding data through reading, and re-reading, transcripts is critical to ensure meaning and intent of the communication (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Combined with listening to recordings to confirm meaning and value is key to establishing understanding as the participants respond to the researchers guided questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Ethical Considerations

To protect the confidentiality of the participants, all interview materials were placed in a locked location with a protected electronic filing system (Flick, 2015). In accordance with the policies of the Institutional Review Board, all paper records, data files, consent forms, and digital recordings will be locked up and destroyed upon the conclusion of the third year of the completed study (Institutional Review Board, 2018). To maintain confidentiality, all participants were given codes while transcribing data for themes (Johnson et al., 2010). Given the small population size, particular attention is necessary for the participation of candidates (Ngozwana, 2018). Confidentiality and anonymity are key to meeting and conducting qualitative research ethical practices (Ngozwana, 2018).

When using a qualitative study to develop a deeper understanding of where women are the primary focus group for studies on career advancement, it is essential to establish ethical considerations for the process (Duggan, 2015). Another area of concern exists when the researcher is female and might have social bias and interpretations based on personal perceptions (Duggan, 2015). DeVault (2017) stated:

It is clear that feminist critiques have been influential throughout the wide field of qualitative research; those critiques provide a foundation for analysis with and beyond feminine scholarship that are attentive to diversity, engaged, in other elements of the human experience often repressed in scholarly work and presented strategically to effect change. (p. 176)

Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2018), who research and write feminist literature, implied research is conducted through a feminist lens without credit and acknowledgment to the larger body of work represented in feminist researching practices and qualitative design. Both qualitative and quantitative researchers identify struggles to represent findings in fully complete ways (McAlpine, 2016). Qualitative researchers must identify multiple and frequently conflicting perspectives to try and represent careful decision making to guide research (McAlpine, 2016).

Bluman (2015) concurred with bias as a potential consideration when using a qualitative design based on interviewing subjects and objectivity. Bringing a personal bias into the interview is an ethical consideration when using interviewing as the primary source for direct information (Duggan, 2015). Lack of training in the technique of

interviewing is noted for consideration when asking questions and recording responses (Bluman, 2015).

Summary

In Chapter Three, the problem for females to present equal representation in the role of the superintendent were identified as non-existent nationally and in the proposed geographical region of research (AASA, 2017; MODESE, 2017). The purpose of pursuing research questions in this study was based on understanding how women have moved into positions of the superintendency (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). A qualitative narrative research design is needed to understand lived experiences and stories of female superintendents. To provide this, the demographic and sample of the study were women in the southwestern region of Missouri in the United States actively working as a superintendent during the year 2018.

The methodology used to conduct the study was in the form of a narrative approach to include the lived experiences and stories of the women who have moved into the superintendent's position. Analysis of the data and search for themes and meanings are viewed in Chapter Four, along with the connections between the guiding research questions, and interview questions.

In Chapter Four, an analysis of research conducted along with the findings is discussed and presented. The lived experiences of each of the superintendents and a narration of the career progression of each female are presented. The inclusion of pivotal moments highlighting the career development of female superintendents are revealed in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

This study was focused on providing insight into the pathway of female superintendents specifically viewed through a narrative lens. The gap between gender parity and the role of the superintendent is a national struggle for equitable representation of female superintendents in the role as compared to males (Superville, 2017). Research consisting of the barriers preventing women from reaching the superintendent's role or top-level offices have been well cataloged and discussed (Skeete, 2017). One tenet and purpose of this research was to look at the self-efficacy of women leaders. Additionally, the connection to pivotal moments leading women towards working into positions of administration was instrumental in determining the pathway for the female superintendent (Forrest, 2017). The final guiding research question was linked to mentorship and goal-setting for female superintendents to showcase how goal-driven top educational leaders are and what impact mentorship had on the development of their careers as female superintendents.

An analysis of the data, which were obtained through qualitative, semi-structured interviews are discussed throughout this chapter. Data regarding demographics of the female superintendents, school size, and years in education, along with the population sample were provided. Repetitive responses shared from the interviews were showcased as epiphanies based on the frequency with which the same story or answers were shared (Kruth, 2015). Four larger themes developed from the semi-structured interviews and narrative design as composed and compiled by the researcher, tell the unfolding story of the female superintendent's journey.

Results of Analysis

The participants in the study were interviewed personally, through a process designed to understand the path to the superintendent's position. Self-efficacy and the ability to navigate problems were guiding questions leading the research framework. Interview questions aimed at studying motivation and describing success were also used to search for the successful promotion of female superintendents. In addition, personal sacrifices and future goals were also discussed to provide a forthcoming landscape of what the next steps are in the journey of the female superintendents. The 16 interview questions were aligned with the study's three research questions, with each question highlighted and showcased in this chapter.

Demographics. Criteria for this specific study were women who were listed as a superintendent in the Regional Professional Development Center (RPDC) Region 7 of Missouri. The sample of this study consisted of women who currently served as a superintendent in either a K-8 or K-12 district in the southwestern region of Missouri. The MODESE (2018) publishes a list of all the superintendents responsible for the districts they are tasked with running each year. Each potential participant was contacted via email. Of the 100 districts listed in the RPDC Region 7, 16 were female superintendents. Out of the 16, nine agreed to participate in the study. Every interview was conducted in person at the site of the superintendent's office. An overview of the participant's district is listed in Table 1. The observable order, interviewee 1 through 9 were based approximately on the numerical order of the interviews throughout the course of the month.

Table 1

Current District Size and Free and Reduced Price Meal Rate, by Research Participant

Name	District Size	Free and Reduced Rate
Interviewee 1	7,600	59%
Interviewee 2	123	81%
Interviewee 3	655	54%
Interviewee 4	343	69%
Interviewee 5	371	96%
Interviewee 6	390	100%
Interviewee 7	229	67%
Interviewee 8	444	54%
Interviewee 9	162	72%

Note. Taken from the MODESE website, 2018.

With each interview conducted in the office and district of the superintendents, the variety and vast differences in terms of buildings, locations, rural and urban, were apparent. Conducting interviews in person, and with the addition of observing interviewees in their environment and office, added ease of security for the respondents (Yin, 2016). The ability to see body language and facial cues added needed descriptions for the qualitative, narrative, interview method (Yin, 2016).

All of the women were Caucasian, whereas no racial or ethnic diversity was present. All of the women, with the exception of one were married. One-third of the women did not have children. Most of the women ended up discussing a spouse, children, and even grandchildren throughout the interviews. Only one did not indicate a spouse or children through the interview, and limited personal photos were present in her office.

Specific questions regarding age were not asked; however, several women referred to age in some capacity during the interview. Approximate age was listed

through data provided on the respective superintendent's resume. A representation of the

ages of the female superintendents is listed and reflected in Table 2.

Table 2

Approximate Age Ranges of Research Participants

Age Range	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 or older
Number of Participants	2	2	1	4

Note. Approximate age ranges disclosed in interviews or determined by resumes.

Results by interview question. Throughout this section, a summary of the

interview questions is described. Each question is reported upon and labeled, along with

commonalities that were described by the individual interviews. Focusing on the rich and

narrative stories that were told by female superintendents, many connections and overlaps

became apparent. In terms of the pathway to the superintendency, routes were similar

and the courage and determination it takes to be a female administrator are showcased in

the answers, life-lessons, and examples throughout interviews.

Interview question 1: How would you describe your path to the superintendency

both personally and professionally? Most of the women when they began discussing the

path to the superintendent's position did not believe they would have landed in their

current position. Three of the participants had careers that did not begin in education but

came from careers in banking and finance, dairy farming, and mathematics. All of the

superintendents moved through a variety of educational roles including elementary,

and/or, high school teaching, counselor, or A+ coordinator. District-level work included

curriculum, building-level administration, assistant superintendent and finally,

superintendent. Only one of the females interviewed was not a building-level principal prior to becoming a superintendent.

All the superintendents either taught or were a building principal in a secondary school with the exception of one. Two of the respondents left for a period of time and worked at the state-level for the MODESE as supervisors evaluating school districts for student performance and site reviews. Both stated how valuable the time was working for the MODESE, and the opportunity to see schools all across the state was beneficial as a developing leader. Two of the superintendents discussed coming from families of educators, as their mothers were teachers who initially dissuaded them from going into education. However, both women ended up teaching upon graduating with their bachelor's degree.

Out of the nine women interviewed, five have completed doctoral degrees, two were in the later stages of completing the dissertation process, and two had not attempted degrees past the specialist. Both women who did not pursue a doctoral degree were within three years of retirement. Interviewee 7 did not start attending college until she was 34 years old with two small children. She had been a school bus driver and told her husband she wanted to go to college. He supported her attending college full time, and she went on to complete her bachelor's degree in teaching, her master's degree in administration, and her specialist degree. She stated at one point she thought about pursuing her doctoral degree but did not believe she needed it in the district where she worked because it was considered a small school. Interviewee 6 stated this regarding her path to the superintendent's position;

No one is more shocked about me being a school administrator than myself. I had full intentions of going to law school. My brother and I looked through the college catalog and decided the fastest way to get through was elementary education. I graduated in two and a half years from college; I went back after I began teaching to get my masters. They did not have masters in reading back then, which was what I wanted, so the graduate counselor suggested a degree in administration. I was curious enough to do it, and that is how I got started in administration.

Interviewee 6 also disclosed she was the fifth female superintendent in the state of Missouri. The experience participants had varied with 33 years of experience in education being the most, to a woman who was just appointed to her first job as the district superintendent.

Interview question 2: What words would you use to describe yourself when you first began your career in education? Many of the respondents interviewed smiled when this question was asked, even pausing, reflecting on the first teaching job they had. The answers listed with the most frequency included excited and nervous. Additionally, fear-related words were used such as nervous and scared. Interviewee 1 stated, "Looking back at those kids I taught my first year, I feel sorry for them. I had no clue what I was doing." Every female in the survey was initially a teacher for the first part of their careers. Just over half of the women started in the elementary schools teaching, and the remainder began in secondary education teaching in either the middle school or high school setting.

Interview question 3: *As you have moved through the various stages in your career, what words would you use to describe yourself now in the role of superintendent?* Results of the statements and descriptive words listed were varied; however, two words were repeated throughout the answers; driven and goal-oriented. These two words were used with the most frequency. The word realistic was also used multiple times, in contrast to question two where idealism was present. Realism appeared as a descriptor for the superintendent's position. Interviewee 1 stated she makes decisions as superintendent from three statements; are the students in the district safe, are the students learning, and are we being fiscally responsible? As Interviewee 1 answered this question, she also talked about her gratitude for her team, and the necessity of putting the right people together with the right set of resources.

Interviewee 1 was also charged with leading a school district with over 7,000 students. Her district was significantly larger than the other school districts. She also discussed when responding to question three that she was still learning, and the importance of that type of mindset as a leader. Three of the women described themselves using the term, "servant leader."

Interview question 4: *What is the source of your motivation?* This is one of the few questions where all the answers were unanimous. All of the respondents stated doing what is best for kids, and the connection to their motivation was to provide the best opportunities to the students in their districts, and for the students in the districts. Several of the women discussed going into classrooms and observing kids and talking to students as a way to stay motivated. Staying connected and inspired was easier to do from observing elementary students in the classroom setting.

Interview question 5*: How would you describe personal and professional success?* The majority of the women discussed happiness or being happy in some way as a definition of both personal and professional success. Interviewee 1 stated, "It is really difficult to define them separately at this level, because your work is your life." Professionally, many of the women related personal success to job satisfaction, looking forward to going to school, and working hard for kids. Interviewee 4 discussed the overlap in personal and professional success and how they each influence the other. In conjunction with the difficulty of masking happiness if a person is unhappy at work, it shows up at home. If a person is unhappy at home, it shows up at work. Personal success was more challenging to define because attached to the definition of success, were family sacrifices. More than half responded to some level of sacrifice that is placed on families who have a wife, mother, or daughter in the role of superintendent. Interviewee 8 stated this in response to personal success;

> Personally, keeping the family unit intact, that's really hard. I come and
>
> go on the weekends. I am living three hours away from home. I have
>
> aging parents, and that is a struggle. You know, I am married and have a
>
> family and extended family. And, what I need to do for the personal part
>
> of my life, and those responsibilities, in all honesty, sometimes the
>
> personal part suffers.

Interviewee 9 discussed the impact her position had on her young daughter's sense of awareness about her mother's position as superintendent;

> My daughter, whenever I got the position, she said, "Mom, I think you are
>
> like the first female superintendent at the school." I don't know about

that, but I am sure she is right. I could just see this spark of her that was,

hey, this is something that if I wanted to do it, I could too. It just showed

me how personal success, how big it really is to your kids.

Interviewee 3, who had the most recent appointment to the superintendent's role, was the

only one to mention any sort of measurable attachment of data to equate professional

success. She stated she used data as a classroom teacher to improve instruction, she used

data as a principal to improve building-level success, and as a superintendent, she was

going to look at the school's Annual Performance Reports from the MODESE, student

achievement, and all the attachments of school evaluation that comes from the MO

DESE.

Interview question 6: When you look back over your career, can you describe a

pivotal moment that lead you to pursuing other areas of education? Every female

superintendent with the exception of one cited a leader or colleague who recommended

something further in terms of recognizing their ability to pursue a further leadership role.

Through the course of the conversation, there were also observations made by several of

the women regarding leaders who were not adequately performing in the administrative

role. The discussion was then directed towards watching or witnessing a school they

cared about reduced in performance and morale based on poor performances of leaders

which incentivized momentum for the female superintendents to move toward working in

the direction of an administrative degree or future in leadership. Given the level of

importance of this question in regard to the intent and purpose of this dissertation, each

interview answer for question six is discussed.

Interviewee 1 discussed working as a school counselor, then being approached about running the A+ program. At the time, the A+ program had considerable district and school requirements, which involved a larger role in building leadership, developing competencies, and implementing the standards for the MODESE. Interview 1 stated, "I couldn't look over the fact of what a raise I would get and what that would mean for my family. So, I took the position and loved it and really started moving more into the world of administration."

Interviewee 2 discussed having a wonderful high school building administrator who encouraged her and told her she would be a good administrator. She also discussed the damage that can happen when a person experiences an administrator who was not a good leader. One of the principals whom she considered a mentor would ask her to be in charge of the building in his absence, and she stated:

> He trusted me and was confident in my ability to lead the school in his absence. I think you have good positive motivators, and then you have negative motivators. We had another administrator that would not listen, and I was at the point where I was going to quit. I was watching a great school system go downhill and knowing ways I could stop it, but no one wanted to listen.

Interviewee 4 had a school mentor recognize her leadership ability and push her to pursue administration. She also had personal motivation, and a life-altering event when she was in high school, that compelled her to move into higher levels of education and degree completion. The superintendent of the district she was working for at the time she was an elementary principal stated to her, "You should be the next superintendent

here." She stated the trust and confidence he had in her, really led her directionally to begin thinking about working as a superintendent. An important piece and development in her desire to work towards higher degrees were pinpointed in the story she shared:

>My dad was pivotal. I became pregnant when in high school, and I was a senior at the time. My husband and I have been married for 25 years. The night we told my parents about the pregnancy, my mom asked me, "What about school?" My dad said, "You will be lucky to graduate from high school." That put a burn in me. From that moment on, I wanted to finish college, and I earned three advanced degrees past the bachelors.

Interviewee 5 had two integral females suggest she think about going into administration. Within the small regional pool of female superintendents where the interviews were conducted, the overlap of a mentor and mentee was cited by two females. Interviewee 5 stated she was working as an instructor and the superintendent at the time suggested she consider going into administration. The building principal, when she moved schools, also was an essential advocate for her pursuit into administration, as well as a mentor. She stated this about one of her encouragers:

>When I first started teaching here, she was always so strong, and we talked about what a bumpy ride it would be, particularly being a female, that there is going to be times where it won't necessarily hinder you being a female, but even now people think the job you have, it should be a male, that women can be seen as too emotional. When I was hired here, I was the first female superintendent in this district. I see that, and I hate to say

glass ceiling, because it shouldn't be that way, but it is a stigma, especially

at a small school.

Interviewee 6 stated the person who recommended school administration to her was a college advisor. When she began her pursuit of education, there were very few female administrators, and she was one of the very first in the state. As she was one of the first, a follow-up question was asked to her regarding if she believed she was ever frowned upon for working as a female administrator, and she stated:

Women are perceived as aggressive rather than motivated. If a man did

some of the things as a superintendent, they would say he is motivated to

do the right thing. However, when a woman does it, it is viewed as

aggressive, because I think they feel threatened.

Interviewee 7 believed the greatest support she had regarding career growth came from her husband. She was a non-traditional student who did not begin going to college until age 34. With the challenges of attending college at a later date, her confidence was questioned. She stated, "My whole first semester of college I thought I was crazy being there. But once I kept going, I just got in the groove to keep going."

Interviewee 8 had one of the most exceptional and pronounced views on the importance of a suggested conversation to encourage those with talent and leadership ability to begin pursuing a route of leadership in education. She discussed the need for the pivotal conversation and expressed a hope that she can fulfill the conversation for future women who have leadership potential. Interviewee 8 did not pursue a role in educational leadership until later in her career, stating she had worked in education for 28 years. She had four different administrators while teaching at one school. The level of

frustration, because of a lack of support from the administrators, led her to leave education for a period of time. Upon her return, she stated, "I can surely be a better administrator than those that I worked under."

Interviewee 9 stated her colleagues in teaching suggested she consider going into administration. She was working as an instructional technology specialist helping teachers, and she stated:

My teachers knew I would do whatever it took to help them. Just like with my high school kids, I established a relationship with them and would help them however I could. I had several of them beg me to get into administration.

Everyone interviewed, with the exception of one person, identified key, instrumental conversations or events which promoted the idea of moving into school leadership. The recognition of skills or personal characteristics witnessed by others was influential in the steps towards pursuing a higher degree, and eventually a leadership position of the highest order in school systems. In addition to the event or conversation, a personal relationship with the interviewee fundamentally impacted the belief in looking towards a career in education that was linked to leadership and leadership skills that were recognized in the female instructor.

Interview question 7: When you began in education, did you have a desire to move into administration? Most every participant laughed when this question was asked and gave a firm and cemented "no" as the response. There were a couple of exceptions, however. Interviewee 2 stated when she began her career in teaching, she had the idea she would want to become an administrator possibly. She stayed as a teacher and coach,

for 19 years prior to attempting any sort of career in administration. The other exception was Interviewee 3, who explained she knew she did want to pursue a path towards administration, and her parents had suggested she attend law school as opposed to going into administration. She also stated her family was a family of educators, which may have given her greater insight into administration and opportunities within education outside of teaching.

Interview question 8: Who were your mentors throughout your career? This question, along with question six, was a vital piece of this study and the narrative story of the female superintendent's journey. The mentorship component has been discussed throughout and is a connective research question in this study. The importance and significance of the responses regarding this question from the individual superintendents are detailed and cataloged in the following responses.

Interviewee 1, 6, 7, and 8 discussed multiple mentors throughout their careers. Interviewee 1 discussed her professor as she was going to graduate school for her degree in guidance and counseling. As a school administrator, she mentioned the superintendent who hired her for her first principal's position. She noted she did not have a formal mentor, and she tried to network with people who had the same job she had, and bounce ideas off of them and collaborate. Interviewee 6 stated there were superintendents who she learned a great deal from, one male she mentioned by name. However, she reiterated there was a lack of females in the role of the superintendency, particularly when she began in the field of education. She also discussed the importance and influence one of her school board members had on her at the beginning of her career and what an important role he played in her developed confidence as a school superintendent.

Interviewee 7 discussed the importance of two mentors in her development as a leader. The first mentor was assigned to her through the formal mentoring program in Missouri as a building principal. They had developed a significant bond prior to the mentor/mentee relationship and went through several administrative classes together in graduate school. She recognized her as a good friend and mentor, whom she called and trusted as an advisor throughout her career. The second individual she mentioned was her assigned mentor as a superintendent. There was some crossover in terms of history with the second individual; his parents were her teachers in school. The mentoring superintendent has now retired; however, Interviewee 7 disclosed she still calls on her retired mentoring superintendent when there are situation and issues that need additional insight or to have someone to bounce ideas off of.

Interviewee 8 discussed she also reported the importance several mentors had on her career development, dating back to her own days in high school. She credited her high school English teachers with being great teaching mentors, even stating her instructors in high school were better than her instructors in college. Her building principal, when she was in high school, was still the building principal when she returned to the same school as a teacher. Interviewee 8 stated she still models herself after her high school principal and admired how he dealt with students, teachers, and parents.

Interviewees 3, 4, 5, and 9 cited one specific mentor who helped shape and develop their careers in significant ways. Interviewee 3 stated the first year as a teacher was her mentor's first year as a building principal. She stated they just connected and bonded. As she went through her education and began working on her degree in administration and began her first principal's job, he was formally appointed her mentor.

Her mentor was hired as a superintendent, and he asked her to work in the district as an assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum. The connection of mentorship was profound concerning career advancement and job opportunities for Interviewee 3.

Interviewee 9 described one person as her mentor, her mother, as being the greatest mentor in her life. Her mother was a classroom teacher, and Interviewee 9 talked about the hours and hours of extra time her mother put in for kids and students. Observing her mother working in education was key in recognizing the mentor she was. In terms of career development, she did add her high school principal was an integral part of her development in education. He hired her for her first teaching position and was a great mentor for her as a teacher. He then promoted her as an instructional technology coach, which then moved her into working at the district level. She credits him as a significant contributor to her success.

Interviewee 4 stated specifically one primary mentor was her former superintendent, which she stated was very professional with a lot of boundaries. She stated he also had a great deal of trust in her and would allow her to make mistakes. Her ability to make mistakes, correct them, and learn from them were essential in her own development of allowing her to plot her path forward. Interviewee 5 also discussed the importance of her mentor, who was also involved in this study as a superintendent. She stated this superintendent directly influenced her suggestion to move into administration. When situations and issues arise in her district now, and she wants to bounce ideas off or get some suggestions on handling difficult problems, her mentor is one of the first calls made to problem solve.

Interview question 9: *How did your mentors influence you?* Who the superintendents described as their mentors was essential, and for this study, the gender of the mentor was insightful and became somewhat predictable based on the superintendent's age. However, the influence or applicability of information and relevance to what was learned from the mentor was key in applying more substantial leadership opportunities for females to lead school districts. Finding and following the path to successful appointments in the superintendent's role, along with success in leadership was conveyed through the conversations and interviews with the female leaders. The most significant impact regarding what they received from their mentors was an overwhelming response of confidence from the majority of women. The majority of women talked about the infusion of self-assurance in their ability, problem-solving, and opportunities to make mistakes and learn from the mistakes. Confidence was the answer provided by almost all the women in response, including this quote from Interviewee 1, "The biggest piece I learned and what I needed from my mentors was confidence. Confidence in my abilities, which I could do more, and they [mentors] saw something in me of leadership quality and encouraged me towards that pursuit."

An additional answer from the group was having someone in their lives they could connect with and solicit advice. Having a trusted advisor and someone to help them navigate them through difficult situations, and problems as they unfolded was vital concerning the impact of the mentors. A few of the women cited working through difficult decisions and learning how to respond to stressful situations. Interviewee 5 noted an essential and impactful problem-solving technique she learned from her mentor was to slow down, and she did not need to provide an immediate response in times of

difficult situations that she could give herself time to problem solve and think through issues without spouting off an answer she may later be unhappy with.

Interview question 10: If you were providing credit to others for your career attainment, who would receive the credit? The vast majority of the women gave credit first and foremost to God, citing many of the situations they would not have been in without the guidance and steering of God and belief in the direction this took them. More than one female superintendent cited working for a bad administrator, which was a catalyst to make the female superintendent want to vacate a position working for a bad administrator, and in turn pushed them into another career opportunity and eventually a superintendent's role.

More than half of the women stated their spouses and children who ultimately sacrificed time at home with them or time with them while they were working as deserving a large amount of credit for the success received in terms of the superintendent's position. Several women discussed the difficulties of having a demanding job, while trying to pursue a doctoral degree. Several of the participants cited their board of education as a primary reason for their success. The time away from home was considered a sacrifice by many of the female superintendents, and a loss of time at home with family. Only a couple of the women responded with parents being responsible for their success, and one respondent claimed she was directly responsible for her own success. She was the one who was sacrificing her time on the weekends and at night. She confidently stated, "I am responsible for my success."

Interview question 11: In your opinion, how has female and male mentorships you have encountered been different? The responses to this question varied, primarily

based on the age of the interviewee. The women who answered this question and were in the later stages of their careers, repeatedly stated the opportunity to have female mentors just was not present. Women in leadership roles in education was limited and women were not viewed as primary candidates for significant leadership roles, particularly in terms of leading a school district in the superintendent's role. Women in the interviews who were less experienced did cite having mentors who were women; however, there was only one superintendent whose primary mentor and encourager was a female. Several of the women interviewed stated differences between how men and women interacted as mentors. Men were viewed in terms of mentorships as going directly to the source of the problem or point at hand. Men were also stated as giving advice when asked and not providing dialogue or conversation outside of the question or problem that needed to be addressed.

The women interviewed stated other women in terms of mentoring were more relational and offered feedback on a more consistent basis. The qualities of empathy and good listening skills were associated with the women who had other women as mentors. Interviewee 4 talked about women being more relational in the mentorship, offering personal information, and fostering a greater sense of friendship and camaraderie. She stated this observation of two kinds of women superintendents, "There is the kind that are super ambitious and competitive, they are not as willing to share keys to success. Then [those who are] collaborative in nature, want to share everything, and enjoy seeing the success of others".

Interviewee 4 stated she was the collaborative and helpful type who was interested in the success of others stating, "I want us all to be successful, and there is

room in education for us all to be successful." Interviewee 3 talked about finding someone who was like-minded, but there was a bond that did happen with female administrators who were of the same mindset. She discussed not all women administrators were like-minded but finding one who is of the same mindset and grabbing on to them was key.

      Interview question 12: *Have you met the goals you set for yourself in terms of career attainment?* One commonality, as each superintendent answered, was the constant setting of new goals. Each participant answered individually regarding goal setting and the expectation of meeting goals, then finding additional goals to set. Several of the women discussed finishing their doctoral degree and the goal of accomplishing the milestone was important.

      Multiple women discussed the importance of spending more time with their families and children. In particular, the women who were grandmothers stated the name they were called as grandmothers and were even livelier discussing their grandchildren. Every woman who was a grandmother discussed spending more time with their grandchildren and really trying to enjoy the time with family as a personal goal.

      Professionally speaking, most of the women stated they had met the goals they set for themselves in terms of career attainment, with the exception of one. Interviewee 8 was the only person who stated she would like to have tried, and still may try, to work in a larger district, either as a principal or as an assistant superintendent or superintendent. She was serving as both high school principal and school superintendent.

      Interview question 13: *What goals do you have set for yourself in the future?* Statements that were revisited by a consistent set of answers were to spend more time

with family, and again, in particular, grandmothers identified wanting to spend more time

with grandchildren. Personal time with family was viewed as a goal by the women who

were in the veteran stages of career development and career aspiration. Where the

district and work were concerned, many of the women stated leaving the district in better

shape than they found it as a career goal. Another standard response among the

interviewees invariably was providing the very best education to each student in the

district they are charged with running. There seemed to be a real source of pride when

answering this question.

Many of the women commented on specific ways they were working to improve

their school districts through grants, initiatives, or planned strategic development.

Interviewee 7 stated:

I am not afraid of change. I think that is the biggest single change I've probably

made from being that first year, twenty-seven-year-old teacher to my career now.

I think people resist change. We like our comfort zone. If you don't change, you

are dead, and I think that is the biggest single mantra I have at this time, because

you can't be afraid of change.

Several of the women discussed growing their own leadership team and

developing better leaders within their own school system. Providing opportunities to

help to build principals on their teams and future mentoring leaders in the buildings was

mentioned and discussed from approximately half of the women interviewed. Identifying

personnel who showed potential was mentioned by one superintendent to help support

and mentor a future career goal.

Approximately half of the women discussed teaching in college, teaching future administrators, or working with future teachers as a future career goal to pursue at the collegiate level and developing those working in education. One of the women works with graduate students on completing dissertations, and she discussed the enjoyment she had and how much she learned from her graduate students.

Interview question 14: *In terms of career attainment, would you make any other decisions or choices?* All of the women responded to this question with the same answer, which was a resounding, "No." Several reflected on various pursuits they considered when mulling over the decision to continue to pursue higher levels of responsibilities attached to the important job of running schools. Several of the women commented on feeling content with the path and choices taken in terms of career attainment. Interviewee 3, the newest appointed superintendent, discussed not wanting to get fired or removed from her new position. She expressed some difficulties at night, thinking about all of the pieces which needed to be fixed in her new job, which was creating many restless nights for her.

Interview question 15: *What personal sacrifices have you made in order to be a superintendent?* Every person referenced sacrifices to personal time and lives. The time missed with family was a consistent issue and stated as a sacrifice by everyone interviewed. Many stated when they were home, the ability to leave work at work was just not present. The job followed them home at night and on the weekends. The lack or absence of time spent with children was mentioned as well. However, the superintendents who had children took their children to school with them and were able to offset some of the hours at work, while having their own children stay at school with

them. Several with children mentioned activities their own children participated in coincided with games and activities of the school, and they were able to supervise activities, while watching their own children participate.

Interviewee 3 discussed moving into a new town, a new house, and working all the time, while she did not have any groceries at her home for her husband to eat, but she stated, "We are making it work." Interviewee 1 discussed the sacrifice of personal friendships and the toll the job took on relationships. She talked about making decisions that could be viewed as unpopular and her friends and family listening to comments about her, which were unkind and hurtful. In her previous district, she was tasked with running a tax levy bond, and her mother would be out in the community and have to listen to people discuss her in a very unkind way, which she stated was difficult. She did state, however, "We did pass the bond."

Interviewee 2 stated, "This job is 24/7, I have it on the weekends including emails and phone calls. Luckily my husband is an administrator too, so he understands the demand of the position." Interviewee 5 discussed the difficulties of the job because everything else comes second to the job, which is not an easy thing to do. Interviewee 9 talked about having small children and trying to navigate the difficulty of a demanding job and the importance of being a mother. Interviewee 9 stated:

I think for a female the most challenging aspect is feeling that you are not

sacrificing too much for your kids. Because there is a lot of expectations

for a mom and for someone in this position, and having little kids is

difficult.

For the six mothers in the study the issue of personal time at home, time with kids, and time in both of those roles without carrying workaround was an issue. Personal sacrifices of the time were mentioned consistently through the interviews. Particularly with the mothers in the group as time, work-life balance, and responsibilities of a personal nature were mentioned over and over again as a source of sacrifice.

Interview question 16: *Are you mentoring anyone now. How did this come into practice?* Each interviewee described in the following section what they are currently participating in with the role of mentorship in their lives and how the practice came to be. The responses throughout this answer are key in developing what the impetus is for women currently in the role of superintendent and the value placed on their time in managing the duties of being a superintendent.

Interviewee 8 was passionate and committed to mentoring others and stated explicitly mentoring others was a personal goal of hers. She talked about working on a team and the importance of having others around you who are trustworthy, such as finding people with a skill set and looking for the next person in charge of transportation, or the next school counselor and mentoring them or recommending them to pursue something outside of the current role. Growing a district and finding the right people to take on the next position was key for her in mentoring others and facilitating the right leadership team within a district.

Interviewees 1, 3, and 5 described their role in mentoring currently as an informal practice centered on the leadership teams in the districts they are running. Interviewee 1 specifically talked about assistant superintendents and district directors she mentors and are focused on. She discussed in her former districts formal mentorships were assigned

through the state, and the assignment was based on proximity and regions, to make the ease of meeting less cumbersome for the two involved in the mentor/mentee relationships. She was not assigned anyone based on gender, and the issue was never addressed in terms of working with others in the capacity of mentorship. She did discuss a small group of girls in the high school she met with to encourage and develop their interest in leadership, and she wanted to participate in the high school group to show the younger girls what opportunities were in front of them in life.

Interviewee 3 discussed having a formal mentorship in place in her previous district and mentoring building principals. She stated she was not going to leave them "high and dry" since she left the district. She discussed growing the administrators on her staff and others who were working on degrees to become administrators, and unofficially she was helping mentor them grow into an administrative role. Interviewee 5 was currently mentoring her leadership staff in the schools, specifically the middle school principal and building leadership positions. She mentioned the importance of networking and everyone was helping everyone else out. She wants to work at the collegiate level with mentoring future teachers. Her observation was she could tell a lot about a future teacher when he or she goes through the process of beginning as a teacher, how he or she handles stress and moments of service to kids in the classroom. Each of these three female superintendents focused explicitly on the mentorship going on within their districts and growing their leadership teams as a mentor.

Interviewees 2, 4, and 9 discussed either formal or informal mentoring as inherent to what direction was taken in terms of mentoring others. Interviewee 2 was not formally mentoring anyone through the MODESE program but through the years had mentored

several superintendents. Specifically, she discussed mentoring one female superintendent for about seven years and another female superintendent for approximately two to three years. She stated she shares her work, her school plans, and anything else someone may need in the role of superintendent. Her primary form of communication with her mentees included phone calls and emails and lending advice when needed or support when difficult situations happened. She stated, "There is no reason to reinvent the wheel I had people share things with me, and I am happy to do the same."

Interviewee 4 talked about completing a formal mentorship with a second-year superintendent, and she visited with her regularly and complimented the great job she thought she was doing. She discussed mentoring several males who are currently on their fourth year and one who completed year six. She discussed the superintendent who told her she should be the superintendent in the town she left and how she felt disloyal to him when she moved to the current position. The dynamics of the previous district were not as supportive as the current district, and she recognized the difficulties of staying. She did state she had his blessing to leave and pursue the role she is currently in and has been for eight years. When Interviewee 9 when was asked if she was mentoring anyone, she stated she was not. However, she discussed the mentor she was provided through the formal MODESE superintendent's mentorship program. While the superintendent was within proximity to her, she asked advice and questions to a trusted advisor of her own, who was not part of her formal mentoring program through the MODESE. The congeniality and trust were fostered in relationships outside of the prescribed state practice and informally she was coached and helped through a retired superintendent who she trusted and knew.

Interviewee 6 stated the sage advice she gives new superintendents and some of the challenges presented in the superintendent's role she is very willing to share with others. She stated the job was very "fluid," and she focused on telling new superintendents to, "Make the best decisions you can every day, and things will work out. Whether it's your [Missouri Assessment Program] scores, accreditation, whatever the task may be." She called herself an "old dog" and stated it took her ages to figure some things out. However, Interviewee 6 presented herself in such a confident, capable, and kind manner, and she identified as mentoring, encouraging, and supporting other female superintendents on the journeys they experienced moving into the superintendent's role.

Interviewee 7 discussed mentoring her daughter who has an administrative degree and a teacher in her building whose spouse had taken a new role and calls her for advice and support. Her daughter is a full-time teacher and solicits advice from her occasionally. She also discussed hiring a new high school principal for his first administrative job and helping him through situations, but that was several years ago, and he is in his fifth year and does not need to come to her office like he did when he first had the job.

Themes, key events, and epiphanies. An essential piece of the qualitative narrative process is identifying the story as developed through the themes that register in the analysis. Key events and stories, along with restoring stories, piece together the fabric and foundation for the narrative story (Creswell, 2014). Each of the following themes was identified through categories, events, and moments showcasing the journey and narrative of the female superintendent (Clandinin, 2016). Commonplace themes were clustered into categories to provide an overall sense and experience of the women

who participated in the study (Clandinin, 2016). A description of the themes, supporting

stories, and information inherent to the narration are provided. In conjunction with

supporting statements, evidence from the interviews is shared out in the following

section.

　　　　Career attainment. To understand the path taken by the female superintendents

in the study, career development was needed and necessary to move into the primary

leadership role in the districts they serve. However, the greater story was uncovered

through values, key belief systems, and support. A fundamental way of thinking and

consistent shared philosophy of the female superintendents was to enjoy the work at

hand. Almost all the women discussed finding enjoyment, and joy in the work and

challenges the job of superintendent requires. When all of the interviewees stated they

would not change the path or road that led them to the place in time now, finding

enjoyment in work and not altering the course or direction of career are vital in

identifying a leading connection of females to the superintendent's position.

　　　　The support of the superintendent's family was an overriding and important

impression that was showcased through every interview. Finding ways to spend time

with spouses and children, while having a demanding position, was mentioned and

repeated throughout the interviews. Many of the women discussed the need to spend

time with their families at school events to provide what was needed in both the role of

superintendent and the role of working wife, mother, and grandmother. Throughout the

interviews, the connectivity between the careers of the superintendent being an all-

consuming job, in which there is no release time, was evident. The statement made from

more than one participant was, "The role and the job are ever present." With the role and

job taking up time at night, on the weekends, and impending vacations, the family support was needed to navigate the difficult time commitments of the position.

Responsibilities associated with running school districts are immense, and as stated in the earlier paragraph, ever present. With a large number of responsibilities associated with the position, so was the high profile nature and visibility of the job. Several of the women discussed not wanting to let anyone down or being perceived as not doing their part. Specific statements regarding the level of perception in the district were important. Several of the women interviewed discussed not disappointing others who were working for them and wanting others to perceive them as successful.

When discussing the path, or route to the superintendency, many women in the study cited their belief in God and God's purpose for what had happened in their lives. The belief that God was using them as an instrument or manifested opportunities for career development was viewed through a strong connection to a plan God had mapped out for them. The importance of spirituality was present in several answers to questions, and the credit for career development was often cited as God's plan. So much so, that when explaining situations where a poor leader was present, several superintendents cited that as God's work, and an impetus to change careers, and they would not be where they are currently. When viewed collectively over several interviews, the firm belief that God is to be recognized for successful career development was a key concept that emerged through career development.

Potential for leadership. When asked specifically what the plan was for career development and becoming an administrator initially, most of the women laughed and made some sort of remark about never thinking they would go into administration. Yet,

the women moved through a chain of administrative roles to get into the superintendent's position. Some key pieces of the puzzle developed when looking at what occurred to move the female teacher into the female superintendent.

Encouraging statements were made, suggested, and directly impacted the movement from teacher to superintendent for all the females. Every person interviewed, with the exception of one had someone state to them, "You should consider administration," moving the women into a different path within their view which was recognition of their talents. The suggested conversation or practice of observation from current administrators or colleagues emphasizes a skill set the female administrator initially did not recognize within their purview. The collective conversations that were had by the majority of women indicated this is a powerful epiphany which defines movement and career aspirations for women. Necessity and the power of the conversations and statements made were key in developing and fostering the development of the female superintendent.

The occurrence of women who worked in a secondary role as either a middle school or high school principal was present in the career path as well. Every person, with the exception of one, worked in the capacity of a secondary principal. Given the variety of backgrounds, age ranges, and career developments outside of education, this is a central tenet in mapping out some sort of order and sequence in arriving at the destination of the female superintendent. Interviewee 1 stated in an interview for a middle school position, the superintendent flat out asked her, since she was a female, if she was going to be tough enough and durable enough to run a secondary school. She cited several

successful women in those positions and stated she did not view herself any differently.

She landed the job.

　　Mentorships.　The influence of mentors and the impact derived from larger

guided conversations was key in developing the career of the female superintendents in

the group interviewed.　Mentors played multiple roles in the development of

administrative careers and moving into the path of the superintendent's role.　Both formal

and informal mentoring were discussed as key components in career advancement, but

the majority of women discussed the role of informal mentors, networking, and finding

like-minded people to share the responsibilities and difficulties of leadership roles in

school administration.　Little was discovered in terms of formal mentorships or assigned

mentorships through the state-mandated MODESE system.　The informal mentorships in

both relationships the female superintendents developed to support their own career and

the mentorships they were developing in their own districts were critical for career

development.　Many of the women discussed trying to lead similarly to the mentors they

had and replicate qualities identified in their mentors as important and key in their

development in terms of leadership style.　Administrators who were not effective and not

viewed as encouraging and helpful were also discussed and held up as a token of what

not to do or how not to act in terms of leading others.

　　　Several of the women discussed hardships and difficult decisions that are needed

to respond to or act upon when running school systems.　Finding supportive listeners and

guiding sages to help process and navigate the difficulties in terms of stress was

necessary to fulfill the obligations and roles of the superintendents.　Learning how to

respond in times of crisis and stressful situations were listed as an essential role of the

mentor. Having the ability to call, email, or visit a mentor was mentioned multiple times to check a process or troubleshoot scenarios that develop when running a school district. Making difficult decisions was discussed in terms of having an opportunity to share and visit with a trusted advisor when moving through challenging situations.

Mentors were also highly valued in the role of embedding confidence in the female administrators by viewing capabilities and capacities in each person working as a female administrator and finding ways to strengthen and grow the skill set as a leader. How a positive mentor can see attributes and opportunities was not as easily viewed from the female administrator initially. Many discussed having the opportunity to fail and learn, and the mentor was positive and encouraging when mistakes were made.

A few components were collectively commented upon when noting the differences between men and female mentors. Given the age of the respondent, many of the veteran female administrators could not come up with a female mentor, stating simply there were not any other female superintendents in the room and very few in the state initially. Women mentors who were mentioned were viewed as being more empathetic, congenial, and conversational in the approach to discussions and conversations. Men were seen as driving to the point of the problem at hand, not mincing words, and trying to solve the problem or issue expediently. Men were viewed as being very direct, to the point, and observably more formal in the communication style, approach, and delivery.

Goal-setting. Specific questions were positioned to discuss the relevancy of goal-setting in terms of career development and leading school districts, every respondent indicated in some capacity to be goal driven, setting new goals, and the importance of consistent improvement in some capacity. Almost all the women responded to setting

new goals on a frequent basis and stated they were very goal-driven individuals. All the respondents interviewed wanted the district to be better off than when they took their position. When drilling down to discuss how decisions were processed in terms of making goals, the pervading theme and pronouncement were always to do what is best for children. All respondents discussed children as central to decisions and goals for the district. Professional goals were discussed by several of the women in terms of finishing or completing a terminal degree.

Personal goals discussed from the respondents included spending more time with family. Many of the women discussed the extreme time spent with the job, and having to sacrifice time at home was a speaking point generated by many of the women. Female superintendents who were grandmothers discussed spending more time with their grandchildren. The family sacrifice and responsibilities placed on their shoulders as wife, mother, daughter, grandmother were challenging to keep pace with, and the extensive job responsibilities showcased the hardships of work-life balance in these critical roles both personally and professionally.

Summary

Nine female superintendents were interviewed throughout southwest Missouri regarding their experiences and career development as a female superintendent. The women represented a vast cross-section of ages, experiences, personal reflections, and leadership styles. District superintendents interviewed are charged with leading and educating students that house 130+ students, to the broad range of one district educating 7,000+ students. Each narration that unfolded was enlightening and encouraging to listen

to, and the themes developed from the unveiling of their stories of career development, mentorships, and setting goals.

The responses given throughout the 16 questions were funneled into smaller categories, which purposed the crucial and most substantial components. Broader themes which prevailed were career attainment, the potential for leadership, mentorship, and goal setting. Each of the themes generated narratives explaining the complex and exciting journey the female superintendents navigated to get to the position of superintendent. Within the themes lies a connection to the initial research proposed throughout this study. Discussed in Chapter Five are findings and conclusions. In addition, implications for practice and recommendations for future research are discussed and reviewed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

This study was designed to understand how female superintendents make it to top educational positions against stackable odds. Developing an understanding of what steps female superintendents have taken to make this career accomplishment occur was the backbone of the research and purpose of the study. The narration of stories collected through this study highlight commonalities which are shared throughout this chapter to weave together the journey of the successful female educational leader.

Understanding what can be collected for future practices and studies of women in highly successful educational leadership roles can potentially support and enhance more women moving into the superintendent's position. Research has been completed regarding barriers preventing women from moving into top educational positions and the challenges women face (Sampson & Gresham, 2017). Data supporting women in the superintendent's role show a significant discrepancy in terms of the gender of the superintendent and lack of women serving in top leadership roles.

Women make up the majority of the workforce in public education, and yet so few women are charged with the responsibility of running school districts (Shakeshaft, 1989). In the southwestern region of Missouri, few women are running school districts. However, women who made it to the superintendency and the narrative story which has developed, tells an instructive story regarding what can be learned from women who have traveled the path.

This research was intended to coincide with the philosophy of social cognitive career theory, developed to enhance understanding related to career theory from the principles of self-efficacy, mentorship, goal setting, and outcome expectations (Lent,

2016). One objective of the study was to view opportunities which track and identify the foundations of self-efficacy (Lent & Brown, 2017). Bestowing women with the ability to believe tackling difficult leadership positions is achievable and the ability to navigate career progression occurs with a greater sense of self-efficacy (Lent, Ezeofor, Morrison, Penn, & Ireland, 2016). Pivotal conversations, along with a greater sense of self-efficacy, moves women into believing a greater opportunity is available for career attainment (Stone-Johnson, 2014). The impact of mentorship in leadership and the influence positive mentors have has been paramount to this study and the development of the female superintendent (Sperandio, 2015). Finally, goal setting as it relates to personal and professional success for the female superintendents is an essential aspect of career development (Brue, 2016). Many of the women in the study were connected through common goals and themes, specifically defining themselves as goal-oriented, which supports a unified approach within the importance of goal-setting.

Findings

Given the percentage of female superintendents in the southwestern region of Missouri is only 16%, women who are promoted to the superintendent's position have something unique and substantial to offer as insight into developing further female leaders in top leadership positions (MODESE, 2018). The route each female took to ascend to the superintendent's job is vital to understanding how more women can develop into running a school district and diminishing such gender stratification.

Research question one. Question number one highlights the importance and impact of self-efficacy in terms of career attainment. A greater sense of self-efficacy can lead towards significant leadership roles, as stated in social cognitive career theory (Lent

et al., 2000). Connected to research question number one are interview questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 14. Each question conveyed a narrative answer associated in the attainment of the role of superintendent and the impact of self-efficacy.

Interview questions 2 and 3 emphasized descriptive words the superintendents used to label themselves early on in their career, and then words they would use now, in the current role of superintendent. Words that were used to describe females in terms of where they began in their career with the most frequency were happy, nervous, and scared. Interview question 3 was answered differently with the group of superintendents responding as a current superintendent, with the words confident, goal-oriented, driven, and measured as being the responses which were used the most. Descriptive words used to catalog the initial stages of the superintendent's career compared to how they described themselves in their current role was a remarkable leap, particularly in terms of answering specifically with the word *confidence*. Superintendents remarked about how little they knew in terms of education and to view where they were able to move in terms of career attainment was a significant leap in the development of self-efficacy.

Interview question 4 was designed to discuss the motivation linked to the superintendents and what propelled them in terms of acting as the top educational leader. Unanimously, the answer was to help and do what is best for students. There were a few additions, which were connected to not wanting to let others down or not being perceived as not doing their part. Interview question 5 examined the superintendents to describe personal and professional success. The majority of the women talked about enjoying the work and deriving value from what they were tasked to do. Being happy both personally

and professionally was mentioned multiple times, as the effects of each are integral to the success of the female superintendent.

In interview question 7, the initial desire to move into administration when the superintendents began working in education was discussed. Almost all of the women responded with a resounding "No." They had no interest in pursuing a position in administration. The importance of this question was at the center of this research in trying to define what connects women to move into the superintendent's position (Sperandio & Devdas, 2015).

Interview question 14 was based on the female superintendents' reflection of the course of their careers and making similar career choices, knowing what the superintendent's job entails. Given the amount of dedication and time devoted to the tasks of running a school district can sacrifice personal time and time with family (Sampson, 2018). The choice in terms of moving into the superintendent's role was still cited as the career path of choice and the career path the female superintendent would select. The group interviewed stated they would not make other career decisions and would choose the same career path.

Research question two. In the second question, significant moments and contributions which developed the female superintendent's careers were viewed. The interview questions connected to the second research question were 1, 6, 10, and 15. With interview question 1, the posed question highlighted the path the female superintendent took towards the superintendent's position, beginning as a classroom teacher and describing the movement towards the superintendent's role. The majority of women took the path of a teacher, to a principal, then to a district-level position, which

moved them into the superintendency. Only one superintendent had not been a secondary

principal. Three of the women began in careers outside of education and moved into

education as a second career choice.

Interview question number 6 was about pivotal moments or conversations led by

someone else providing the ominous idea or the possibility of pursuing a career in school

administration. Nearly all the women had this imperative conversation leading them into

the idea of suggested leadership. In interview question 10, superintendents in the study

were asked about giving credit to others for career attainment and why they would

provide the credit for the designated person or persons. Almost all of the women

answered God was directly responsible for what had happened in their lives, with positive

and negative developments as female leaders. Spouses and children were credited with

helping the women develop the time needed for the career of female superintendents.

The main topic of interview question 15 was about personal sacrifice and working

in the role of superintendent. All of the women discussed sacrificing personal time and

time away from families as a direct result of the time-consuming nature of the position.

The difficulties of leaving work, at work, were shared and the inability to *ever* really

leave the job due to the nature of responsibilities attached to the position.

Research question three. The final research question guiding the study was

established to recognize the importance of mentorship and goal-setting. Interview

questions 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 16 were asked of the female superintendents in relation to

the third research question to examine and the link between mentorship and goal-setting

in leadership development. Interview questions 8, 9, 11, and 16 were explicitly related to

mentorship, and interview questions 12 and 13 were related to goals and setting goals.

Interview questions 8 and 9 regarded who the superintendent's mentors were and what they learned from them as a result of their mentorships. About one-third of the women cited college professors as mentors, about one-third cited female educational leaders as their mentor, and the remaining superintendents cited men who they worked for a mentoring.

In terms of what was gained through mentorship, the overwhelming answers were confidence. The women cited having an infusion of confidence from their mentors as one of the most integral and essential pieces in developing as leaders. Also discussed with importance was support from the mentor and having a trusted advisor to offer advice and exchange information with when problems arose.

In interview question 16, superintendents in the study were asked if they were mentoring anyone currently and how the practice developed. Not many of the women were working as a formal mentor through the MODESE system. Several had been appointed as mentors throughout their careers to help support other superintendents in their region. The majority of the women discussed mentoring their leadership teams within their districts and focusing on developing great principal leaders and district leaders.

Goal-setting, or outcome expectancies, was the focus of interview questions 12 and 13. Interview question 12 was about the superintendents about meeting their own career goals as related to career attainment. Almost everyone answered similarly, and the responses related to continually setting new goals in terms of development as a leader. Several of the women listed personal goals of finishing their doctoral work and spending more time with family. For example, the female superintendents who were grandmothers

were committed to spending more time with their grandchildren. Only one of the women

discussed moving to a larger district as a goal. In interview question 13, the female

superintendents' thoughts about future goals were examined. The majority of women

discussed as a personal goal spending more time with family. There was an emphasis on

improving the school districts they served and leaving the districts in better shape than

when they took the position. Repeated by almost every respondent was to provide the

best possible education for the students they served in their districts.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, which resulted from the personal interviews and data

collection, four larger themes were developed after reviewing the data. Identified themes

related and encompassed the research questions guiding this study, and patterns evolved

which showcased the female superintendent's career. Outlined in the following section

are connections to relevant literature associated with the guiding research questions.

The connection of support which occurs within the relationship between the

mentor and mentee developed career possibilities, and breakthroughs begin to occur in

terms of career development and career prospects (Gong, Chen, & Yang, 2014). Goal

setting, related to career development occurs, and confidence develops through the

relationships built and established goals, which increases self-efficacy and the female

administrator's internal belief in career development (Eagly et al., 2014). These beliefs

lead to a broader impact in terms of career attainment and goal setting, which opens up a

wide-ranging perspective of educational careers, including the female superintendent

(Davis & Bowers, 2018).

Themes. Two critical pieces of information were centered on social cognitive career theory when determining goal setting, or outcome expectancies; the level of success attained in both occupational and educational pursuits and the ability to persist when obstacles are presented (Lent et al., 2006). Each theme represented in the following passages directly connects to recognizing both a level of success and the ability to persist through the path to achieve the job as female superintendent. The level of success met in terms of career accomplishment is deliberated for the women who participated in this study and allowed a shared insight into their career development. The ability to persist and navigate in a gender-segregated career is outlined in the following themes and guiding information based on women in the school superintendency.

Mentorships and self-efficacy. There were several connections between findings of the study and the literature review in regard to mentorship and self-efficacy. Each female superintendent identified mentors from multiple perspectives of their career progression. Mentors for the female superintendents included high school teachers, college professors, former high school administrators, professional colleagues, and school administrators who they worked for and learned from. This finding from the study aligns with Sperandio (2015) who stated the importance and necessity of positive mentorship for women is key in the role of educational leadership.

Brue's (2016) work noted female leadership is strongly developed and pieces of leadership expansion, specifically for women, supported identifying mentors for other women and offering encouragement (Brue, 2016). The work by Yu (2017) linking mentorship, and specifically female mentorship, as key in the progression of career appointments, was reliant on the necessity of women mentoring other women. While all

the superintendents discussed the importance of mentorship, females mentoring other

females was not stated by the female superintendents as being key in developing as a

leader. In fact, out of the female superintendents who were interviewed only, a few even

had a female mentor and several of the women did not believe the difference in men and

women mentors was a critical piece of their development.

Robinson (2017) found same-sex mentorships support a superintendent's

development in terms of career attainment, and the vast majority of mentorships occur

between people of the same sex and same race. Sandberg's (2013) estimation of

mentoring detailed the difficulties of equity between male and female opportunities for

mentorships, with men more likely to be provided with greater opportunities for

mentorships and sponsorships. Sandberg (2013) further stated mentorships could be

more challenging for women because they do not have access to the same networking and

mentorships opportunities as men (Sandberg, 2013). Stereotypes for women can make it

difficult to move into careers traditionally held by men (Rincon, Gonzalez, & Barrero,

2017). Finding women specifically as mentors were reiterated by the majority of female

superintendents interviewed. The availability to have female mentors based on so few

women in the role of superintendent was discussed as a primary reason more women did

not have the opportunity for guidance from another female superintendent.

Some of the veteran women superintendents described being the only female in

the room at conferences for many years, without even a possibility of mentorship by

another female. The veteran female superintendents also expressed the lack of female

mentors available to them, based on the low numbers of women who move towards the

path of the superintendency. Through developed relationships and conversations, mentoring that was established was through both informal and formal methods.

Superville (2017) discussed how the lack of opportunities for mentorship makes the leap into leadership difficult and without the encouragement and support of mentorship, navigating jobs proves more difficult. The majority of women had participated in some formal mentoring program as defined by the MODESE, which was part of the job description for new superintendents. The majority of female superintendents interviewed were the mentoring superintendents as appointed by the MODESE, to mentor new superintendents. The women superintendents spent the majority of time talking about how they were mentored, and many of the female superintendents stated informal mentoring was key in development as opposed to a formalized approach required by the MODESE.

According to Hoff et al. (2006), the existence of the "good ol' boys" network is prevalent in school administration, which can make mentoring for female administrators challenging and the reliance on mentorship is key for the aspect for advancement (p. 52). As described by Interviewee 2, the pendulum for mentorships can swing two ways:

> I had a wonderful mentor where I taught high school, and he was a very
> encouraging principal. But when he left, I wasn't even given an
> opportunity to apply. And, the person they replaced him with, in my
> opinion, was what not to do as an administrator. Today, I look at two
> people when I make decisions, the one that encouraged me, and the one
> that didn't.

The development of an encouraging mentor as stated by Interviewee 2, is indicative of what power and positive interactions can have on present-day decision making and the importance and value of mentorship (Bynum & Young, 2015).

Through the mentoring relationship, confidence was the consistent message of learning of which almost every female superintendent answered in one choral voice. Each female interviewed discussed the support and development of their leadership ability, through supporting and encouraging mentoring. Guidance in handling difficult situations and in overcoming obstacles supports the buildup of confidence and ties directly into a strong sense of self-efficacy (Cole & Ballard, 2014).

Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as a person's belief about their ability to complete steps required for tasks, which is developed through personal performance, exampled learning, social interactions, and how a person feels in situations. The pieces described by the female superintendents included aspects identified by Bandura regarding developing a strong sense of self-efficacy. Through the growth which occurred via mentorships of the individual superintendents, each mentee observed learning examples set from the mentorship. Cultivation of learning and support which happened between the mentor and mentee enhanced the mentee's ability to grow and build internal confidence (Callahan, 2018). This growth led to a greater sense of self-efficacy and the ability to pursue higher levels of career attainment (Allred, Maxwell, & Skrla, 2017). What does vary from each story is who the mentor was during the course of the relationship. However, the learning experience is similar; positive deposits, challenges to surpass, and growth as a leader developed through the course of the mentorships (Bynum & Young, 2015).

Making positive deposits allowed each superintendent the ability to grow as a leader and face challenges needed to navigate the position. Positive reinforcement of behaviors and finding ways to replicate the positive interactions directly relates to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1976). Successful experiences by the female superintendents in the study raised self-efficacy and understanding, but repeated failures presented the opposite effect and lowered self-efficacy (Bandura, 1976). The impact of mentorship and developing these fundamental principles was showcased in the response from Interviewee 4 regarding these principles:

> The main thing my mentor did was trust me. He trusted me to get things done. I made mistakes and failed at times, but he trusted me to move forward. He allowed me to take on opportunities outside my job description and encouraged me to learn things. He would share things with me that sparked curiosity in me.

Interviewee 4 described succinctly the progress that happens with a positive mentorship, and the development of skills led by her mentor. Her progress was discussed through the support of making mistakes and having the guidance of a trusted, supportive mentor to walk her through the path of leadership. These findings are supported by Bandura (1976) when he discussed the critical components of self-efficacy awareness, which leads towards predictors of accomplishment and achievement. Social cognitive career theory relies on an internal belief system, which views competence in performing tasks as encouragement for further development (Sheparis & Sheparis, 2017).

The relationships that are developed from mentor to mentee have been critical in the development of the female superintendent, and through support the female superintendent's belief system grows and builds, encouraging further expansion within

career development (Pruitt, 2015). Each superintendent in the study described the importance and impact mentors played in their development as educators. Through the mentorship relationships, the development of self-efficacy grows and matures, offering opportunities to face new challenges and overcome obstacles. Through Badura's (1989) work on social learning theory, the importance of the development of self-efficacy is one critical piece outlining what career choices become available when self-efficacy is actively developed and cultivated. Through the mentorship process, the female superintendents have an opportunity to work through problems and establish a solid foundation for the ability to overcome obstacles and find routes for success in the leadership forum as a female superintendent.

Pivotal conversations. Through the course of this research, one of the driving research questions has been the impact of a recommendation from a leader or mentor to pursue a role in school leadership. The prevailing belief is that women need some type of suggested conversation to consider moving into administration (Chisholm-Burns, Spivey, Hagemann, & Josephson, 2017). Being approached by a trusted mentor, colleague, or professor sparks the ember or idea of a greater possibility in terms or career opportunities (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017).

Of the respondents interviewed, there were very few who initially thought they would like to go into school administration. The rest of the participants moved through various paths, which eventually led them to the superintendent's position. Interviewee 8 detailed the importance of pivotal conversations and the impact on future leaders:

One of my personal goals is to support and encourage others I think would

be good administrators. If someone would have come to me all those

years ago and recognized all I was doing and said, "You should think

about going into administration. " If only someone would have pointed

that out. So, now my goal as an elder stateswoman is to seek those out

that may just need a little confidence boost or suggestion, and I see

potential. That is my goal.

With small exception, all the women had someone make the conversational

suggestion they pursue a higher degree of learning and work towards a leadership role.

With the contribution of confidence through mentorship and a suggested conversation,

pieces of the leadership labyrinth begin to work together like a puzzle, making a more

extensive picture formulating the structure for more female superintendents in education.

The pivotal conversation discussed by the participants in this study can be

connected to Coogan and Chen's (2007) work on self-efficacy. The related conversations

cause women to increase their self-efficacy, which helps them make career decisions

such as moving into school administration (Coogan & Chen, 2007). The work of Lent et

al. (2000) also is supportive of social cognitive career theory as they stated, "The

perception of self-efficacy is not simply a reflection of how she assesses her self-ability

to pursue, perform, and accomplish her career development tasks, but rather a complex

interaction between internal and external influences" (p. 200). Having the ability and

skill set to navigate both internal and external issues is needed for women to pursue

higher levels of school administration, namely the superintendent's position.

The process of building and improving self-efficacy can dismantle career

stereotypes and divisions, which are based on gender socialization (Lent et al., 2000).

Provided women have an advocate and intentional champion. Such as a mentor who can

make suggestions and recommendations for courses of career attainment and development of the protégé is essential (Wallace, 2015). With the suggested pivotal conversation, the deposit made in opportunity and internal belief system can grow, as can the female educator's ability to see greater development in terms of career attainment (Bynum & Young, 2015). A greater understanding of self-concept and awareness can be reinforced and expressed through conversations by a trusted mentor, supporting a greater self-concept and leading towards a stronger sense of self-efficacy.

     Goal setting and outcome expectancies. Bandura (1986) theorized if people believe they can or have a developed skill that is needed for a specific occupation, and self-efficacy is present, the combination of factors can lead a person towards a vocational pursuit. Outcome expectations can be defined through perceived results of the experiences and goals met (Bandura, 1986). All of the women interviewed in the research discussed the importance and impact of goals, and each described a cycle of improvement based on achieved goals. Within the career development cycle, women are influenced via the mentorships, which increases their sense of self-efficacy, confidence, and ultimately goal-setting towards greater and loftier career aspirations (Kolodziej, 2015). The career development of superintendents is a series of linked goals and performance measures met regarding achieving their desired position (Whitt et al., 2015). Not only is goal setting critical for career development but for the series of performance measures needed to operate school districts which are evaluated and examined at the state level for district performance measures (Marzano & Waters, 2016). In both arenas, career development and performance measures, goal setting has been key in the development of the female superintendent.

Each female superintendent alluded to the importance of setting goals and revising goals through the course of their lives. The women collectively were goal-oriented and driven, rarely spending time on goals already achieved. Looking ahead at future obstacles or issues was discussed, and the importance of setting ways to navigate the goals was imperative to all the female superintendents. Interviewee 1 explained the magnitude and impetus that setting goals had on her career development:

When I was hired at [name of school], during my interview, they wrote out informally on sticky notes during closed session what things they wanted me to address. A lot had to do with technology integration, facilities issues, student achievement. I did all those things and started to get a little restless, and then a new position opened up. Now I am here, and there is a lot of room for improvement.

This quote exemplifies the importance of goal setting in both career development and performance measurement, which supports the theory of social cognitive career theory (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2018). According to Lent et al. (2006), people set goals based on personal viewpoints, personal capabilities, and the attached outcomes from pursuing goals. The women interviewed were met with successes throughout the course of their career development; therefore, encouragement took place and shaped the ability to set the next goal or pursue the next hurdle for career advancement.

With successful outcomes and expectancies, the female superintendents grew and developed through the successful accomplishment of meeting goals and outcomes. Through goal setting, organized behavior occurs, and actions are guided based on positive feedback and the ability to move through obstructions (Lent et al., 2006). The

success of reaching personal goals is essential in cementing and supporting both outcome expectancies and heightening a greater sense of self-efficacy (Lent et al., 2006).

    Leading with the heart. All of the superintendents responded in a variety of ways, with the conclusion of doing what is best for students, as a driving motivation behind the position of superintendent. The importance of putting in additional time, energy, and effort to continue to reach within their capacity and capabilities was present in almost every interview conducted. The connection of leading with the heart and positive reinforcement that was established through Krumboltz's social learning theory involving learning experiences as indicating influences in leadership capacity. Influences can be critical and impactful for the cycle of positive encouragement in leadership (Krumboltz, 2015). Through Krumboltz's social learning theory (1976) avenues for career motivation can be linked to leading a meaningful and purposeful career life (Schofield, 2017). Career decisions connected with a purposeful mission and the influence of positive motivation for student learning were linked in research led by Schofield (2017). The exploration studying career decisions, self- efficacy, and confidence were substantial when connecting career choice to a meaningful life (Schofield, 2017). Several of the superintendents who needed some inspiration found it by attending elementary classrooms and visiting the students. Interviewee 5 revealed:

        I know I need to push myself, and I need to do a good job for our students.

        We have a 90% free and reduced rate here with a very high poverty school

        district. We have lots of students that outside of school, they don't have

        the best examples of hard work, and I just always try to do my best for

        them and as an example to them.

Unanimously, the women stated doing what was best for students was key in their motivation regarding leading a school district. Their development as a female leader was also linked to the desire and motivation to make their districts better than when they were initially placed in the position. With the level of consistency in understanding what fundamentally motivates all of these women, the answer was the same; helping students succeed, and an innate driving sense to work hard for the students in their respective districts. Life and career choices which prioritize leading a meaningful life, and leading from the heart, was a key development in conversations with each superintendent and connection in the pursuit of the superintendents position (Schofield, 2017).

Implications

The implications for this study are based on the narrative responses from the female superintendents and research as reviewed in Chapter Two. Interviews were inspiring based on the responses each female superintendent related in their journey to the superintendency. It was encouraging to record the working history of how the women in the study were able to achieve the rank and title of superintendent. Statistics, which related to the number of females in the region who were current superintendents, was below the national average (Robinson, 2017). This indicates an even greater accomplishment and feat for female superintendents in the southwestern region of Missouri who did reach the pinnacle of educational leadership. The lack of training or experience necessary for the superintendent's position was not the primary issue in career advancement (Gamson & Hodge, 2016). However, societal beliefs regarding leadership and leadership traits defined as masculine versus feminine were an issue (Shakeshaft, 1989).

Almost every female superintendent responded when asked about moving into school administration as a goal or career ideal, with a resounding, *"No."* With virtually all the women interviewed stating they never anticipated going into school administration, the transition which occurred warrants an understanding of connections between never wanting to go into school administration and eventually leading an entire district as superintendent. The evolution of career transition has connections, which apply to potentially shift between the work of teaching to the work of district leadership (Kelly, 2017). Several of the connections made within the study relate to encouraging statements made to the female leaders by a trusted leader or colleague. Relationships built between the leader and the trusted advisor are also key in developing as a leader as the female superintendents moved from teacher to building leader and then to district leader (Grogan & Dias, 2015).

Looking for potential for leadership attributes in other women and soliciting support in career development are critical steps to pursue for women to continue to have the confidence in their own potential (Alcaraz-Chavez, 2015). The majority of women interviewed in the study discussed the relationships built between their mentor and person who suggested a pursuit of leadership and was cultivated and supported through a trusted relationship. Ultimately, building confidence in the female superintendents to take career risks of moving into higher levels of leadership was a product of the interviews and dialogue with the superintendents. What is needed are ways and opportunities to define precisely how to cultivate and propel women leaders who are the future generation of female superintendents.

Identifying women who would be good leaders. Finding women currently working as teachers, counselors, and coaches who are excellent with relationships, willing to take on additional school responsibilities, and show strengths of leadership in schools should be cultivated and supported through leadership development (Grogan, 2014). The level of confidence produced in women who had suggested conversations to move into administration indicates a link of accomplishment in this study based on the women interviewed who are now female superintendents running school districts.

The amount of support involved in conversations to lay the foundational backing for leadership is where every female interviewed began in their career and was center in terms of career development and confidence enhancement. Engaging in dialogue based on recognized strengths can be influential in terms of developing a mentor-mentee role which begs the questions posed in this dissertation for answers regarding the series of changes which occurred within the women. The majority of women interviewed stated early in their career they had no desire to move into administration, to female superintendents who did choose to move into the superintendents role is at the heart of this research study. The transitions which occurred to create an altered career path is paramount in understanding how more women can potentially move into the position of superintendent.

In this study, conversations and problem solving indicate a key concept in the idea and eventual career implementation of school leadership. Lack of mentorship can lead to struggles navigating jobs, experiences, and encountering difficulties (Superville, 2017). Greater studies and emphasis needs to be placed on women who are excelling in top leadership positions and narrowing their journey of career development to showcase the

roadmap to other women (Koenig & Eagly, 2014). Extending their emphasis of study focusing not only the glass cliff, but where women are appointed to boards and leadership positions who are successful. Which are not in default, but showcase all appointments including successful companies and corporations at high risk of failure that are led by women (Main & Gregory-Smith, 2018). Supporting research to include the leadership labyrinth, the road which is laid out for women in terms of leadership opportunities, and inherent challenges shown through the research conducted by Carly and Eagly supports the glass cliff theory (2007).

Work life. Difficulties women are presented with in terms of having a high-profile position and maintaining the responsibilities of spouse, mother, daughter, are all challenges presented to women in demanding careers (Weir, 2017). Choices in balancing career priorities are difficult for women based on the expectations placed on domestic responsibilities and child rearing (Sperandio & Devdas, 2015). Factors which can influence relocating or working with a longer commute were deliberated by women and the ability to commit to a position (Sperandio & Devdas, 2015).

In the research conducted through the narrative interviews, almost all of the women discussed a sacrifice of time with their families, time at home, and always having a tether to the job. Through the research conducted by Deery and Jago (2015), work-life balance for many women is key in retaining qualified staff and leaders. For many of the veteran superintendents, the goal of spending more time at home was a keen priority upon retirement. Women are put in the difficult position of choosing careers with long hours and challenges, in conjunction with the responsibility of running and managing a home (Bernal et al., 2017).

Finding additional support strategies for women to live the expectation of multiple roles is key in navigating high impact roles at home and work (Heikken & Lamsa, 2016). The greater the spousal support of women in leadership positions, the more evolved the females career becomes according to the Finnish study conducted by Heikken and Lamsa (2016). Cultural transformation of barriers in addressing the support system and family responsibility is needed for greater equity of work-life balance (Carr et al., 2018).

Acceptance of women in multiple roles. The responsibility of hiring a superintendent rests solely on seven members elected to the school board for each district, and they represent values of the community (Robinson, 2017). The female superintendents who applied for positions of superintendents were interviewed and appointed by school boards with the vast majority of the school boards being male. The selection process used to hire superintendents varies from district to district. However, the gender makeup of the school board was consistent among each school district represented.

School boards who were tasked with hiring the women superintendents in this study were almost all males, and the maximum number of females represented on the school boards in this reported research was two. The lack of women on a school board, or any governing board, can ultimately impact the decisions of who takes the helm of leadership. Gender-stratified school boards can create a lopsided acceptance of qualifications (Maranto, Carroll, Cheng, & Teodoro, 2018). Glass, Bjork, and Brunner, (2005) supported these thoughts. Brunner (2000) purported, "perceptions held by school

board members many times are that women are unqualified for the responsibilities of the position (p. 43)".

The groundbreaking research for how leaders encourage, recruit, train, and mentor future female leaders needs to develop and provide a greater understanding of how women who reach the ranks of achievement do so (Sandberg, 2013). The unwritten rules involved in hiring superintendents include, "headhunters and school board members, defining quality and hierarchies of job titles, stereotypes by gender, complacency about acting affirmatively, and feelings of comfort and interpersonal chemistry with the successful candidate" (Tallerico & Blount, 2004, p. 37). Tallerico and Blount's work is not consistent with Brady's (2011) study which alarmingly found companies who had experienced scandal in recent times were more likely to hire women in the executive role, citing the term think crisis, think female (Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

Though Eagly and Carli's (1999) study involving gender stereotypes and leadership, acceptance of women in dual roles conflicted. Being able to both maintain a high profile career, while keeping the balance of family and home life is still socially challenging in society. The practices of supporting a work environment which include family-friendly support systems should take place for women if they are to continue to bear the majority of the child-rearing responsibilities and have opportunities to run school districts. For many of the women in the study, having the chance to bring their children to work with them and allowing the children to stay after school was key in fulfilling both obligations as superintendent and mother. School supervision was noted as trying to wear both positions of mother and working superintendent as well. The female superintendents were trying to incorporate both positions, as to not neglect the

importance of either duty. Promoting family-friendly practices and helping working

mothers support multiple roles is needed for the promotion of women leaders. Which

requires greater time commitments in lofty leadership roles such as the superintendent's

position, and, additional personal responsibilities (White, 2017).

As discussed by Eagly and Carli (2007), token female representation is not

perpetuating the opportunities for women to move into greater leadership roles. If

anything, it is hurting the ability to foster additional opportunities (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

When women are promoted into the position of superintendents, the token female is not

adequately represented (Brunner, 2000). However, when so few women are in the

position, the scrutiny of job performance is intense and can create performance pressures

(Eagly & Carli, 2007).

The superintendent's position is one which already bears scrutiny and high levels

of accountability; the added pressure of being a female intensifies the demands of the job.

When women are perceived as not being a minority in the position of superintendent, the

individual qualifications become viewed with greater competency in job performance

(Eagly & Carli, 2007). A more considerable challenge with gender parity is to overcome

the problem and create a diverse workforce (Earl et al., 2017).

Recommendations for Future Research

Given the limited geographical region that was utilized in this study, a larger

frame of reference for the female superintendents interviewed would have been ideal

(Triola, 2017). The scope of this research was focused in the southwestern region of

Missouri and ideally, a broader capture of data throughout the state or beyond would

have provided a more extensive look at the number of women serving in the role of

superintendent (Gamson & Hodge, 2016). Researching women working in the superintendent's position throughout the country could provide further insight and a greater understanding of the path to the superintendent's position and how the path may be affected by states, regionally and nationally (Gamson & Hodge, 2016).

Many of the counties visited while conducting the interviews for this research were rural geographical settings. If the study were broadened to include urban areas of schools and districts, the ratio of female superintendents as compared to their male counterparts may have been different. In conjunction with the path that led the females on their journey and quest to lead a school district, both rural and urban areas may offer a different insight.

The focus of the research was dedicated to the path of the female superintendent, and the lack of contrasting interviews with male superintendents is something that should be explored. The majority of the women indicated they had no interest in school administration and having a comparison between male superintendents in the region would be of interest to review and study how gender could potentially support or negate interest in school administration. Most of the female superintendents interviewed discussed the difficulty of work-life balance, and the women who had children discussed balancing the role of mother and superintendent. It would be interesting to hear from male superintendents to gain insight into their view of work-life balance and compare the perspectives of roles at both home and work.

The mentorship male superintendents received as compared to the female superintendents is also a piece of the research that would be interesting to conduct. Particularly the paths the male superintendents foraged to become a superintendent.

Opportunities for males to be mentored have been cataloged and well researched, along

with the challenges some women face in procuring a mentor to help encourage and

support career advancement (Bynum & Young, 2015).

The effects of having an increased amount of confidence through mentorship and

providing young women opportunities to explore leadership roles in school

administration should be the product of further research. Researching schools and

businesses that have a greater balance in women and men in leadership roles should be

coveted, researched, and implemented as a beacon for 21st-century schools (Sampson &

Gresham, 2017). Providing a greater balance in leadership roles between male and

female genders in the superintendents' position adequately represents the population

which is served (Rincon, Gonzalez, & Barrero, 2017).

Conducting further research to explore ways schools can encourage more women

to move into the superintendent position may be achieved through gender equity in

thereby addressing gender parity. Potential research for providing insight into the gender

stratification of school boards should be studied and reviewed. The lopsided nature of

men and women serving on school boards was consistent throughout this study. One of

the most important duties of a school board is hiring the district superintendent, and

research has shown female superintendents who have more women on their school board

report higher levels of job support and satisfaction (Robinson, 2017).

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study, which was approached through a narrative

viewpoint, was to explore the path of females in the southwestern region of Missouri who

have managed to reach the pinnacle of educational leadership, despite the deficit of

female superintendents currently serving in the role. The backbone of the study was

designed to focus, in tandem, on the importance mentorship and pivotal conversations

which improved and developed a greater sense of self-efficacy in driving an internal

belief system of abilities within the female superintendent. The impact of mentorships

and improved self-efficacy lead to goal setting for career development, which promotes

career growth exponentially (St-Jean & Mathieu, 2015).

The narrative focus of the study was most appropriate as a research methodology,

based on personal stories and experiences shared by the women who participated in the

research. Viewing each story and career path independently, yet weaving together a

collective voice in terms of common themes and stories was essential in understanding

and narrating the journey of each superintendent. A series of common themes developed

and produced a broader understanding of how each female superintendent moved into the

most important decision-making role in their respective school districts.

With the exception of one superintendent, all of the women moved through their

career path as a secondary principal, which included K-8 districts. This is key in terms of

predicting or anticipating who may be in line to effectively move into a superintendent's

position. One of the few common factors, which was described in the conducted

interviews, was the developmental role as a secondary principal, as the vast majority

served in the position before their route to the school superintendency.

Given the fact almost all of the women stated they did not have an interest in

going into school administration when they began their careers, but they ended up in the

most influential decision-making role, bears some analysis for how the change in attitude

and concept occurred. An added sense of self-efficacy and ability to navigate through

issues in various positions as teacher, counselor, and district leader greater challenges were met, and success was achieved with a further developed sense of confidence in each leadership role. Each career journey which was successfully met through self-efficacy and the ability to work though issues, further perpetuated career possibilities, adding to the next leadership step in the female superintendents career (Forrest, 2017).

The mentorship of others serving in the varied roles of school leadership, to provide help, information, and support for the superintendents was stated in each narrative as key in leadership development. Surprisingly, the majority of the women discussed the result of a formalized mentorship program as less impactful, as opposed to an informal mentor. Finding a mentor developed through out like-minded professionals and people who were inherently linked in thought processes for leadership was central as a developing leader.

The majority of the women discussed having a person of influence suggest they move into administration. Many of the women stated not having an inclination or desire for career advancement until someone else recommended the idea, based on observations of the individual regarding building relationships, problem-solving, and working well with both students and colleagues. Once the recommendation was made, many of the women viewed this person or mentor as an influencer in terms of career development and advancement.

There did not seem to be much delineation between male or female mentors and successful career navigation with the superintendents who were interviewed. Many of the veteran female superintendents discussed not having the opportunity to be mentored by other females, as they were the only females in the room during superintendents'

conferences. Many of the women still acknowledged being in a small minority as a female superintendent in the southwestern region of Missouri. However, there were no complaints regarding the gender disparity, only the hope that more females would respond in kind to the call of school leadership. The majority of the women felt it was a personal mission to help cultivate and encourage women into school administration.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your path to the superintendency both personally and professionally?

2. What words would you use to describe yourself when you first began your career in education?

3. As you have moved through the various stages in your career, what words would you use to describe yourself now in the role of superintendent?

4. What is the source of your motivation?

5. How would you describe personal and professional success?

6. When you look back over your career, can you describe a pivotal moment that led to you pursuing other areas of education?

7. When you began in education, did you have a desire to move into administration?

8. Who were your mentors throughout your career?

9. How did your mentors influence you?

10. If you were providing credit to others for your career attainment, who would receive the credit? Why?

11. In your opinion, how have female and male mentorships you have encountered been different?

12. Have you met the goals you set for yourself in terms of career attainment?

13. What goals do you have set for yourself in the future?

14. In terms of career attainment, would you make any other decisions or choices?

15. What personal sacrifices have you made in order to be a superintendent?

16. Are you mentoring anyone now? How did this come into practice?

Appendix B

LINDENWOOD

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

DATE: July 31, 2018

TO: Tiffany Bruner
FROM: Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: A Study of Advancement: Female Superintendents Breaking the Glass
                     Ceiling
IRB REFERENCE #:   Interim IRB Paper-Based Review
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Study

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: July 31, 2018

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this research study. Lindenwood University
Institutional Review Board has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to
federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office.

If you have any questions, please send them to IRB@lindenwood.edu. Please include your project title
and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Appendix C

Initial Email for Study

Hello Superintendent _____,

I am conducting a study of female superintendents in southwest Missouri, and you are listed as running the _____district. The study I am conducting is to examine how female superintendents move into the top leadership positions, with a particular emphasis on self-efficacy, mentorship, and goal setting. You have been able to achieve a leadership position few women have, and the insight and knowledge you have are extremely valuable.

The gap that exists for females in the superintendent's role is significant. Yet, you have managed to navigate into the position against the odds and percentages of others in the field. I would love to hear your story and narrate your journey, so others can learn from you and your experience.

I would like to set up a time to speak to you in person, and I will be contacting your assistant listed in the school directory.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Brunner

Appendix D

LINDENWOOD

Recruitment Script for Interviews

(This template is meant only as a guide. The invitation should be conversational.)

Name:
Phone Number:
Time & Date of Call:

Hi, this is _____, and I am calling you to set up an appointment to interview

you for the dissertation I am completing on female superintendents. You are in a select

group in southwest Missouri, and I would like to visit with you regarding your career

developments, mentorships, and goals.

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Whatever works best for

your schedule will work for me. I will be happy to drive to your office, or somewhere

you would have an opportunity to be interviewed.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this study. There are so few

female superintendents, that I believe it is important to understand how your personal

abilities led you to the superintendency.

Date:
Time:
Location:

Thank you. I will send you a letter to confirm.

I look forward to hearing your story!

Appendix E

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

Before reading this consent form, please know:

- Your decision to participate is your choice
- You will have time to think about the study
- You will be able to withdraw from this study at any time
- You are free to ask questions about the study at any time

After reading this consent form, we hope that you will know:

- Why we are conducting this study
- What you will be required to do
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the study
- What alternatives are available if the study involves treatment or therapy
- What to do if you have questions or concerns during the study

Basic information about this study:

- We are interested in learning about female superintendents and the role of mentorship, self-efficacy, goal setting, and the influences of career attainment.
- The participants will be asked to answer a set of open-ended questions regarding the superintendency and the navigation of their career path.
- No anticipated risks involving respondents.

LINDENWOOD

Research Study Consent Form

A Study of Advancement: Female Superintendents Breaking the Glass Ceiling

You are asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Tiffany Brunner under the guidance of Dr Rhonda Bishop at Lindenwood University. Being in a research study is voluntary, and you are free to stop at any time. Before you choose to participate, you are free to discuss this research study with family, friends, or a physician. Do not feel like you must join this study until all of your questions or concerns are answered. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

Why is this research being conducted?
We are doing this study to provide insight into how women superintendents move into the top educational positions in school districts, focusing on mentorship, self-efficacy, and goal-setting. We will be asking about 15 other people to answer these questions.

What am I being asked to do?
All participants will be asked to sign the consent form prior to the beginning of the interview. Participants will be asked to respond to an email agreeing to an interview for the study. A phone call will identify time and place for the interview to take place. The participants will be recorded via a tape recorder to ensure accuracy for transcription. The superintendents will verbally respond to the interview questions taking approximately 45 minutes.

How long will I be in this study?
Approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

Who is supporting this study?
Lindenwood University

What are the risks of this study?
There are no anticipated risks in this study.

Privacy and Confidentiality. We will be collecting data that could identify you, but each response will receive a code so that we will not know who answered each question. The code connecting you and your data will be destroyed as soon as possible. Superintendents will be given a number identifying who they are in the written documentation, interviews, and ancillary information. The order will be established based on the interview order. Data will be stored in a locked file cabinet, in a locked office of the PI.

What are the benefits of this study?
The proposed study is viewing experiences of female superintendents to provide an understanding of their internal motivation, support, and self-efficacy that propels them

into top academic leadership positions. Given the underrepresentation of women at this level of achievement or accomplishment, more research is needed to promote an understanding of this occurrence.

What if I do not choose to participate in this research?
It is always your choice to participate in this study. You may withdraw at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions or perform tasks that make you uncomfortable. If you decide to withdraw, you will not receive any penalty or loss of benefits. If you would like to withdraw from a study, please use the contact information found at the end of this form.

What if I am injured during this research?
If you think you have been injured as a result of taking part in this research study, tell the person in charge of the research study as soon as possible. Please use the contact information at the end of this form.

Decisions to pay you or give you other compensation for the injury will be made by Lindenwood University. You do not give up your legal rights by signing this form.

What if new information becomes available about the study?
During the course of this study, we may find information that could be important to you and your decision to participate in this research. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

How will you keep my information private?
We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We do not intend to include information that could identify you in any publication or presentation. Any information we collect will be stored by the researcher in a secure location. The only people who will be able to see your data are: members of the research team, qualified staff of Lindenwood University, representatives of state or federal agencies.

Your study participation in this study may be observed by a student enrolled in a course taught by the faculty supervisor. Please let us know if you are willing to be observed by checking one of the boxes below:

---- It is okay if others observe my participation
---- It is not okay if others observe my participation

How can I withdraw from this study?
Notify the research team immediately if you would like to withdraw from this research study.

Who can I contact with questions or concerns?
If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in

this study, you may contact the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board Director, Michael Leary, at

636) 949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu. You can contact the researcher, Tiffany Brunner directly at ███████████████████████. You may also contact Dr Rhonda Bishop at ████████████████████

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   **Date**

_____

Participant's Printed Name

_____   _____

Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee   **Date**

_____

Investigator or Designee Printed Name

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Vita

Tiffany Brunner was born and raised in Springfield, Missouri, where she attended Springfield Public Schools. Tiffany attended Missouri Southern State College and Missouri State University. Through both of these collegiate experiences, she obtained a degree in art and certification in art education. Brunner was awarded two prestigious scholarships; the B. L. Parker scholarship for Excellence in Art, where she studied abroad in Mullsjo, Sweden, and the Thomas Kinsey Art Education scholarship. Brunner continued her education by taking courses in guidance and counseling at Missouri State University and earning her master's degree in Secondary Education Administration from William Woods University, where her thesis was devoted to leadership styles in secondary education.

Brunner currently serves as the Director of Ozarks Technical Community College Middle College program. Brunner spends time giving back to the community by being on the board at the Springfield Art Museum, a Springfield Rotarian, United Way Campaign Chair, a member of the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals and Missouri Community College Association, Glendale A+ Advisory Board, Parkview A+ Advisory Board, and Chancellor's Advisory Committee. Tiffany was selected as a recipient of the Ozarks Public Broadcasting American Graduate Champion.

She is married to Matthew, and they spend most of their time raising three wonderful children. Her great interests in life are her family and friends, her love of education, and watching students succeed in finding their path in life.