Spring 5-2018

Missouri Superintendents' Perceptions of the Variables Impacting the Gender Leadership Gap in Public Education

Gwendolyn M. Fleming
Lindenwood University

Recommended Citation

Missouri Superintendents' Perceptions of the

Variables Impacting the Gender Leadership

Gap in Public Education

by:

Gwendolyn M. Fleming, M.S.

May 2018

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education
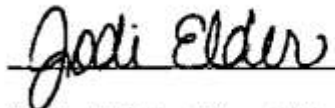
School of Education

Missouri Superintendents' Perceptions of the

Variables Impacting the Gender Leadership

Gap in Public Education

by:

Gwendolyn M. Fleming, M.S.
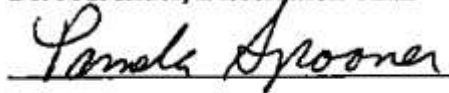
This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

Jodi Elder   *4/19/2018*

Dr. Jodi Elder, Dissertation Chair   Date
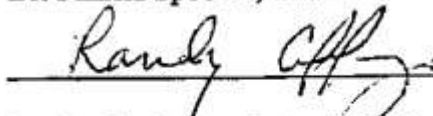
Pamela Spooner   *4/19/2018*

Dr. Pamela Spooner, Committee Member   Date

Randy Caffey   *4/19/2018*

Dr. Randy Caffey, Committee Member   Date

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 here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it

for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Gwendolyn Mae Fleming

Signature: _Gwendolyn Mae Fleming_ Date: 4-19-18

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Jodi Elder, Dr. Randy Caffey, and Dr. Pam Spooner. Each of you provided me with valuable insight pertaining to my research topic and the dissertation process. I am truly grateful for your assistance, expertise, and support. To Dr. Jodi Elder, my dissertation chair, thank you for making yourself available whenever I needed it. I will always be thankful for your guidance! Furthermore, I would like to thank my friends, colleagues, and administrators who have supported me throughout my educational adventure. The admiration and respect I have for my fellow educators and administrators is unwavering. Additionally, I would like to give a special thanks to my students for supporting my educational journey. I appreciate your questions, interest, and sincere encouragement!

I would also like to thank my parents, Lonnie and Gwen Howell, for their unconditional love and support. I would not be where I am today without you. Your dreams for me have always been out of this world. You have always been my biggest fans. I am so very lucky to have you both in my corner. Thank you, mom, for being the strong woman you are. You showed me a woman could be a working mom in a leadership position and still be an amazing, present mother. You are an outstanding role model for any girl! I love you very much. Daddy, I admire and love the man you are. You went from a little boy born of poverty in Alton, Missouri, to a prestigious, self-made businessman. Through all of life's struggles and successes, you have provided and been there for me. I will be forever grateful. You are my hero!

To my grandmother, Gwendolyn Maxine Brown, this dissertation is just as much for you as it is for me. You would have been 101 years old this year. You were born

before women had the right to vote. You lived through the Great Depression, World War II, and the feminist movement. You were a trailblazer, and I loved you like no other. You loved to read. How I wish you could read this. I know you would be extremely proud. I love you and miss you. There is not a single day that goes by that I do not think of you.

To my most precious children, Gwendolyn 'Carys' and Sean Michael, I hope you know how much I love you both. Everything I do, I do for you. I am blessed to be your mommy. I strive to be an inspiration to you both, but I have found that you are inspirations to me. I will love you always!

Last, but not least, I want to give my biggest thanks to the love of my life, my husband, Sean J. Fleming. I could not have achieved this goal if not for your steadfast love and support. As always, you went above and beyond for our family. You sacrificed much to help me achieve my dream. I am the luckiest woman on Earth to have you by my side. Again, thank you for your encouragement and love.

Abstract

The nation's gender leadership gap, or the disproportionate number of men in top leadership positions versus women, has prevailed throughout the history of public education (Superville, 2016; Rosenberg, 2017). Despite the fact that 76% of America's educators were women, only 27% of the nation's school superintendents were female (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Rosenberg, 2017). Thus, men have continued to dominate the top-level leadership positions within the educational arena (Superville, 2016). The purpose of this study was to investigate the gender leadership gap in the position of school district superintendent. Specifically, the researcher developed two research questions aimed to explore the following: a) to determine what demographic variables show the greatest impact on gender leadership and b) to research Missouri school superintendents perceptions of the variables (gender roles, stereotypes, and implicit biases) influencing the gender leadership gap in public education. The researcher utilized a mixed-method approach in the instrumentation with a Likert-scale survey and open-ended written-response items to collect current superintendents' input on the topic. The researcher sent the six-part, 45-item online survey to all 561 Missouri school superintendents in 2018. Exactly 137 (24%) superintendents completed and submitted the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded some Missouri superintendents perceived issues related to gender roles, stereotypes, and biases as being obstacles to the female superintendency. The findings also showed more female superintendents believed gender roles, stereotypes, and biases adversely affected the gender leadership imbalance within the school superintendency. Though the majority of the Missouri superintendents

surveyed believed in the existence of the gender leadership imbalance, most believed it

was closing.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

Since the birth of the United States of America, women's leadership roles in the United States have evolved dramatically (Bergeron, 2015; Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1997; Hill, Miller, Benson, & Handley, 2016). In previous generations of American history, the majority of women were domestic leaders within the family structure, but with the ratification of the 19th Amendment, women began to obtain more power outside of the household realm (Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1997). With the start of World War II, most men moved to the battlefield, while many women moved into the workforce (A&E Networks, 2010). However, it was the emergence of the feminist movement during the 1960s and 1970s when women began to challenge the status quo in the workplace (Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1997). For the first time in the United States' history, women gained employment in occupations not previously open to females (Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1997). Though the feminist movement opened the door for new employment opportunities, the one occupation employing women for many years was education (Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1997; Levin & Pinto, 2004).

Feminism in education began to flourish in the mid-1800s (Levin & Pinto, 2004). Levin and Pinto (2004) found becoming teachers gave women a sense of autonomy. Although female teachers received meager wages, working in the classroom provided women with the opportunities to work outside of the home (Levin & Pinto, 2004). Since that time, the percentage of women employed as teachers within the public school system has significantly progressed (Levin & Pinto, 2004). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), approximately 76% of teachers were female. Although female teachers have greatly outnumbered male teachers in the classroom over the decades,

women have continued to lag behind their male counterparts in the top educational leadership positions within public school settings (Superville, 2016).

Chapter One contains the background information of the study. The researcher will state the problem and the purpose of the study. The researcher will also state the two research questions that guided this study. Furthermore, this chapter will include the significance of the study. Finally, the researcher will discuss the limitations and assumptions of the study.

Background of Study

The 1990s showed increasing promise to women aspiring to become leaders in many areas of enterprise and civic duties (Gupton, 2009). Johns (2013) explained the implementation of the Glass Ceiling Commission and the enactment of the Glass Ceiling Act in 1991 demonstrated the federal government's concern regarding the under-representation of women in top leadership positions. Johns (2013) maintained the Glass Ceiling Commission's study and creation of an annual award for organizations excelling in developing a diversified workforce in positions of leadership further demonstrated its dedication to addressing the gender leadership disparity. Hence, the Glass Ceiling Act provided hope to women wanting to pursue leadership positions in their careers (Johns, 2013). According to Gupton (2009), "The 90s were predicted to be the decade in which women in the U.S. would move in large numbers to positions at the top of organizations" (p. 1). In the field of public education during the 1990s, society witnessed an increase within some of the female leadership positions (Gupton, 2009). The percentage of women principals rose approximately 10% from the 1980s to the 1990s (Gupton, 2009). In the mid-late 1980s, 25% of school principals were women (Gupton, 2009). By 1993,

the number of women principals rose to 35% (Gupton, 2009). Less than 20 years later, Rosenberg (2017) found a rise in the percentage of women in various educational leadership positions; women constituted 52% of school principals, 78% of central office administrators, and 27% of superintendents (Superville, 2016). However, despite the increased number of women as educational leaders, women have continued to be under-represented in the upper echelon of school districts (Superville, 2016). Thus, education, a previously female establishment, primarily has been governed by men (Superville, 2016).

The gender leadership gap, the vast difference of the number of women versus men in leadership positions, has greatly affected the American workforce (Hill et al., 2016). Since the 1990s, researchers have confronted the gender leadership gap disparity and the various ways women have been impeded in reaching their full leadership promise (Warner, 2014). Hill et al. (2016) cited numerous studies that suggested multiple factors were responsible for the gender leadership gap. Mobility issues, insufficient support systems, networking difficulties, caregiving decisions, family commitments, gender stereotypes and bias, and other organizational, structural, and cultural barriers were some of the factors mentioned affecting the gap (Flora, 2017; Grover, 2015; Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016). These factors have influenced women's abilities to attain top leader statuses (Hill et al., 2016). However, women are not the only gender that loses (Hill et al., 2016). Hill et al. (2016) stated, "When women lose out on the financial benefits that come with leadership, the repercussions are felt not only by women and their families but also in philanthropy, politics, venture capitalism, and a host of other unexpected places" (p. 4). Thus, the gender leadership imbalance has had a profound effect on both of the sexes (Hill et al., 2016).

Today, Warner and Corley (2017) reported, women make up 50.8% of the American population. Women have obtained almost 60% of undergraduate and 60% of master's degrees in the United States (Warner & Corley, 2017). Yet, women significantly have fallen "behind men when it comes to their representation in leadership positions" (Warner & Corley, 2017, para. 5). In the academic arena, women continue to come up short (Superville, 2016). Glass (2000) cited the School Superintendents' Association (AASA) published findings from its survey of 2,262 superintendents, which identified four issues to explain the gender disproportion among superintendents: a) poor positions, b) lack of credentials, c) personal preferences, and d) glass ceiling barriers (Glass, 2000). The AASA has continued its focus on the gender leadership gap (Rosenberg, 2017). In 2016, the AASA developed the Women's Leadership Consortium (Rosenberg, 2017). This initiative "addresses the barriers to women reaching the superintendency and provides a network of support for aspirants" (Rosenberg, 2017, p. 32). The AASA has recognized there are several challenges women face when pursuing leadership roles (Rosenberg, 2017). Hence, in terms of reducing the gender leadership gap, it has become imperative male and female educational leaders do the following: a) learn about the gender leadership gap, b) identify the factors that influence the imbalance, c) understand how their perceptions influence the reality of the position, and d) provide or implement solutions to level the playing field (Hill et al., 2016; Rosenberg, 2017).

Conceptual Framework

A nationwide gender leadership gap has been shown to exist among superintendents of public school districts across the country (Superville, 2016). Studies have identified various barriers and biases as the reasons this imbalance exists (Hill et al.,

2016). These gender barriers and biases have deep roots in a sociocultural theoretical

framework (Eaton & Rose, 2013). Organizational barriers, political barriers, structural

barriers, and gender stereotypes and biases have all been influenced by the society and

the makeup of cultures across the country (Ciccarelli & White, 2015; Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb,

2013; Meyers & Twenge, 2013; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Therefore, a sociocultural

framework was utilized for this study.

Miles and Huberman (as cited in Maxwell, 2013) described the conceptual

framework as one that "explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things

to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships

among them" (p. 39). The sociocultural perspective, supported by key concepts such as

cultural gender roles, stereotyping, and biases, will be used as the conceptual lens for this

study (Ciccarelli & White, 2015; Meyers & Twenge, 2013). Ciccarelli and White (2015)

found the sociocultural framework, a contemporary psychological perspective, integrated

social psychology and cultural psychology to address current issues and explain societal

and organizational behavior through a cultural lens. There are various definitions of

culture (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Meyers & Twenge, 2013). For the purpose of this study,

the researcher defined culture as the persisting behaviors, ideas, values, norms, attitudes,

and traditions shared by a group or society and transferred from one generation to the

next generation (Meyers & Twenge, 2013).

One of the variables that research has shown to have an effect on the gender

leadership gap has been Westernized gender roles (Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015). The

sociocultural framework has been used to address the effect culture had in shaping a

society's gender roles (Meyers & Twenge, 2013; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Gender

roles, a culture's expectations for feminine and masculine behaviors, have been prevalent in all aspects of society, particularly in societal institutions, such as the workplace (Ciccarelli & White, 2015). Ibarra et al. (2013) discovered the American workforce has used gender roles to create gendered career paths. A plethora of work practices and organizational structures have been designed to fit the situations and lives of men (Ibarra et al., 2013). These paths have created a disadvantage for women who have striven to obtain leadership positions (Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013).

Another important concept of the sociocultural framework has been cultural stereotypes and biases (Eaton & Rose, 2013). Cultural stereotypes and biases have been greatly influenced by a society's gender roles and, thus, have become significant obstacles for women striving to become school superintendents (Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Superville, 2016). Hershcovis and Weinhardt (2015) found stereotypical leadership behavior deemed appropriate by society have been considered male behaviors. Typically, society has thought of leaders, such as school superintendents, as being confident, ambitious, and assertive (Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015). The characteristics associated with leaders have been culturally perceived as male behaviors, not female behaviors (Flora, 2017; Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015). Hershcovis and Weinhardt (2015) stated, "The challenge for female leaders is how they are expected to behave is inconsistent with how leaders ought to behave" (para. 4). Thus, traditional leader stereotypes sometimes have become negative traits for women who displayed them, because these traits opposed the culture's traditional gender roles. In other words, women displaying masculine leadership stereotypes elicited a "gender-role violation" that could have given people reason to view them as less effective (Khazan, 2014, para. 1).

Cultural bias, particularly second-generational gender bias, has been another factor which has significantly impacted women's movement up the career ladder (Grover, 2015; Ibarra et al., 2013). Grover (2015) explained second-generational gender bias, an unconscious bias against women, has stemmed from cultural expectations, institutional structures, and organizational practices. Second-generational gender bias has built formidable barriers for women by promoting networking and various forms of interaction, which has placed men at advantages over women (Ibarra et al., 2013). These biases, unbeknownst to most men and women, have reinforced "existing structures of male benefiting traditions, customs, values, and beliefs" (Grover, 2015, p. 1). Flora (2017) found such ingrained implicit "biases are hard to reconcile in the mind, creating a fundamental incongruence that affects how female leaders are perceived" (p. 66). Consequently, cultural gender roles, stereotypes, and biases have prevented women from obtaining top leadership positions, such as the school superintendency, thus, strengthening the gender leadership gap (Flora, 2017; Grover 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Khazan, 2014).

Statement of Problem

Freedom and equality have been words often associated with the country of the United States (Lockwood, 2013). The American dream, or the ideology that any person, regardless of race, religion, gender, and/or ethnicity should enjoy freedom, equality, and good wages if they work hard enough, has been a dream of many citizens and immigrants (Lockwood, 2013). However, according to the World Economic Forum's 2014 and 2016 *Global Gender Gap Reports*, the United States has been far from reaching gender equality (Hausmann, Tyson, Bekhouche, & Zahidi, 2014; Leopold, Ratchera, & Zahidi,

2016). According to the *Global Gender Gap Report 2014*, the United States ranked 20 out of 142 nations assessed in all factors related to gender equality (Hausmann et al., 2014). Unfortunately, time has not reduced the gender gap (Leopold et al., 2016). Two years later, according to the *Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, the United States ranked 45 out of 144 countries evaluated (Leopold et al., 2016). The United States' ranking has demonstrated there has been a systematic gender gap problem, particularly with the nation's gender leadership imbalance (Leopold et al., 2016).

More specifically, researchers have pointed to a shrinking gender gap for female school superintendents (Holland, 2011; Ireland, 2014). Since the 1990s, the percentage of female superintendents has quadrupled (Ireland, 2014). According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "In Missouri and Illinois, the percentage of female superintendents has risen roughly tenfold in the last two decades" (as cited in Holland, 2011, para 8). However, despite an increase in percentages of female superintendents, a statistically strong gender leadership gap has continued to persist (Ireland, 2014; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016). Webb (2016) explained that even in states with a higher percentage of female school principals than the national average, such as Texas, the proportion of female superintendents to male superintendents indicated a significant disparity existed. The disproportion of male superintendents to female superintendents has been so great that researchers have continued to study this disparity (Connell, Cobia, & Hodge, 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Glass, 2000; Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016).

Purpose of Study

The researcher investigated the superintendent gender leadership gap. The purpose of this study was threefold. First, the research aimed to determine what demographic variables indicated the greatest impact on gender leadership. Second, the study was conducted to research Missouri superintendents' perceptions of the factors influencing the gender leadership gap in public education, if any. Third, the research focused on the perceptions of Missouri superintendents to determine if there were possible solutions to the gender leadership problem.

The gender leadership gap should be studied for a variety of reasons. One reason to educate individuals about the existence of the gender leadership imbalance was that the study provided more opportunities for people and organizations alike to combat implicit biases and stereotypes. Another reason to study the gender leadership gap was because leaders of institutions, such as school district administration, would be more likely to strive for gender parity in top leadership positions. Furthermore, by educating teachers, administrators, and school board members about the gender leadership gap, the educational community possibly could learn the issue has adversely affected both genders. Finally, by analyzing the gender leadership disparity, potential solutions or ideas could have been introduced to utilize and to help level the playing field for women who aspired to become educational leaders, especially those who desired to become school district superintendents (Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016).

Research Questions

The researcher selected two research questions to guide this study:

1. What demographic variables showed the greatest impact on gender leadership?

2. What were the Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the variables

impacting the gender leadership gap in public education?

> a. Gender roles
>
> b. Stereotypes
>
> c. Biases

Significance of Study

This study was expected to be significant to educators, school administrators, and

school board members for several reasons. First, this study contributed to the limited

existing data on superintendents' perceptions of the gender leadership gap in Missouri.

On a national scale, there has been a vast amount of data investigating the gender

leadership gap in school administrative roles (Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Holland,

2011; Ireland, 2014; Superville, 2016). National data on this gender gap phenomenon

has illustrated a significant imbalance (Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Superville, 2016).

However, when compared to the amount of national data, data on the gender leadership

disparity among superintendents within the state of Missouri has been limited. Thus, the

study's results were beneficial to researchers interested in the more local existence of the

gender leadership gap. Also, this study was important, because its findings will provide

insight into Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the factors influencing the

gender leadership gap. The Missouri superintendents' perceptions could be compared to

national data to determine if there were significant similarities or differences between the

local and national data, which provided opportunities for further research.

When analyzing the gender leadership gap, most of the attention has focused on

the effects of discrimination against women (Glass, 2000; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017;

Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016; Warner, 2014). However, some men also may have

indirectly paid the price for this imbalance as well (Hill et al., 2016). This study was also

significant because it illustrated ways the gender leadership gap affected both men and

women by utilizing a mixed-methods approach in ascertaining the perceptions of male

and female Missouri school superintendents. The researcher accomplished this by

administering a survey to assess current Missouri school district superintendents'

perceptions and experiences regarding gender, leadership, and the variables affecting

both. Finally, this study was significant because it provided school districts with

solutions in closing the gender leadership gap. By providing input from current

superintendents, other school administrators may have more perspectives on how to close

the gender leadership gap found in school districts across the state. Identifying possible

solutions to the gender leadership disparity also may have assisted in the proliferation of

women leading classrooms to women leading school districts (Trinidad & Normore,

2005).

Limitations

This study had some limitations. One of the limitations involved the sample size

of those participating in the study. The sample size was limited to only superintendents

serving school districts throughout the state of Missouri. The data collected and analyzed

did not include other educational leadership positions, such as assistant principals,

principals, or other central office administrators. Although the study focused on the roles

the gender leadership gap has played in the superintendent leadership position, omitting

the other types of school leaders' opinions may have excluded crucial data needed to

examine the gender leadership gap dilemma fully. The number of respondents was

another limitation of this study. Upon receiving Lindenwood University's IRB approval (see Appendix A), surveys were sent to all active Missouri school superintendents (see Appendix D). Not all superintendents responded to the survey. Since the survey was optional, some of the Missouri school superintendents' chose not to participate in the study. Thus, not all of the 561 Missouri school superintendents' perceptions were included in the study.

The final limitation of this study involved research bias and the biases of participants. Maxwell (2013) defined researcher bias as a process in which the researchers' backgrounds, experiences, and goals directly or indirectly influenced the outcome of the study. The researcher's gender and gender experience may have unintentionally affected the research process and data analysis, which could have made this a limitation of the study. The biases of participants may have also affected the study. Participants, based on their personal and cultural experiences, may have unintentionally responded to the survey with biases. For example, respondents of different sexes may have developed varying forms of gender bias. These beliefs could have been shaped by both genders' personal experiences with situations related or affected by their genders. These biases, in turn, may have profoundly affected their opinions regarding the gender leadership gap in school administrative positions. Therefore, implicit and explicit biases may have impacted the participants' responses to the survey. Despite the limitation of bias on the part of the researcher and participants, the researcher strived to eliminate any bias throughout the research process.

Assumptions

Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2015) defined an assumption as "anything that is taken for granted rather than tested or checked" (p. 17). The researcher made four assumptions about this study. First, one assumption was that all of the study's population (Missouri superintendents) received the e-mailed survey. After IRB approval, the researcher sent out an electronic survey (see Appendix D) to all 561 current Missouri school superintendents. The researcher assumed the e-mailed survey did not end up in participants' spam e-mails. A second assumption was participants responded without being coerced. Third, all subjects understood the intended meaning of the survey's questions. Fourth, all subjects were being honest in their survey responses. Research has pointed to some participants answering questions to surveys in ways that did not truly represent their opinions, beliefs, or attitudes (Ciccarelli & White, 2015). Ciccarelli and White (2015) pointed out some participants purposefully provide answers which they believe to be more socially appropriate, rather than giving their honest opinion. This bias has been called courtesy bias (Ciccarelli & White, 2015).

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined:

100x2025 Initiative. The 100x2025 Initiative was created by the Rockefeller Foundation (Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). The Rockefeller Foundation (2017) wrote the 100x2025 Initiative was established to increase the number of women Chief Executive Officers (CEO) by the year 2025.

Bias. Project Implicit defined bias as a semi-permanent idea based on continuous contact with stereotypes about a person or a group (as cited in Hill et al., 2016).

Examples of bias included: a) gender bias, b) implicit bias, c) first-generational gender

bias, and d) second-generational gender bias (Flora, 2017; Grover; 2015; Hill et al., 2016;

Ibarra et al., 2013).

Culture. Meyers and Twenge (2013) defined culture as the behaviors, ideas,

values, norms, attitudes, expectations, and traditions shared by a group/society and

transferred from one generation to the next. Bolman and Deal (2013) wrote culture

cements an organization, assists institutions in accomplishing their goals, and unifies

people.

Cycle of illegitimacy. The cycle of illegitimacy, a theory developed by Vial,

Napier, and Brescoll (2016), stated female leaders have experienced more difficulties

achieving subordinates' respect and reverence than their male counterparts. Flora (2017)

added this might make the female leader less legitimate in the eyes of her subordinates.

Consequently, female leaders were more likely to respond more aggressively, thus,

creating a negative cycle by reinforcing her subordinates' opinions of their illegitimacy

(Flora, 2017; Vial et al., 2016).

First-generational gender bias. The first-generational gender bias has been

described as an overt, intentional gender bias against women in the workplace (Grover,

2015). Grover (2015) found the first-generational gender bias has displayed itself in

visible discriminatory practices and beliefs.

Gender leadership gap. The gender leadership gap referred to the disparity of

the number of men in top-level leadership positions versus the number of women (Hill et

al., 2016; Warner & Corley, 2017).

Gender roles. Gender roles has been defined as the cultural norms and
expectations about feminine and masculine behaviors within a society (Ciccarelli &
White, 2015).

Glass ceiling. The term glass ceiling, has been used to describe the invisible
barriers/challenges women faced when trying to obtain top leadership positions (Ireland,
2014). This term was invented by the *Wall Street Journal* in 1986 (Ireland, 2014).
Gupton (2009) explained the glass ceiling concept was given legitimacy with the creation
of the Glass Ceiling Commission in 1991.

Glass cliff. The term glass cliff was used to describe the phenomenon in which
organizations in turmoil were more likely to hire females for the top leadership
position(s) as opposed to men (Oelbaum, 2016). When an organization has been in good
standing, the opposite tends to be true. (Flora, 2017; Ireland, 2014).

Lack of fit theory. Vial et al. (2016) wrote the lack of fit theory referred to the
mismatch between the behaviors and traits associated with effective leaders and the
behaviors and traits associated with women. This mismatch has prompted the
expectation men are more competent leaders than women who have the same
qualifications and experience (Vial et al., 2016).

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MoDESE).
The MoDESE is Missouri's state agency for education (Missouri Department of
Education, 2017c). The MoDESE (2017c) explained it was responsible for the following:
a) ensuring federal programs are being implemented by public agencies, b) ensuring local
school districts are utilizing federal funds properly, c) providing and allocating state
resources, d) providing data and other pertinent information to school districts and its

citizens, e) providing assistance to school districts and citizens regarding educational issues, and f) establish performance goals and indicators.

School Superintendents' Association (AASA). The AASA was defined as a professional organization of school districts' senior-level administrators within the United States (Cook, 2015).

Second-generational gender bias. The second-generational gender bias referred to a covert or concealed gender bias against women in the workplace (Grover, 2015; Ibarra et al., 2013). Male-oriented organizational practices, beliefs, and structures have built hidden walls that have kept women from obtaining leadership positions despite their abilities and educational backgrounds while providing men with more advantages and promotions (Grover, 2015).

School district. A school district, also known as a local educational agency (LEA), was defined as an educational agency which operates a school(s) at a local level (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017a). Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2017a) found school districts may levy taxes for school purposes.

Sociocultural perspective. The sociocultural perspective, utilized by various social sciences, such as psychology, studies the effects social roles, groups, cultural expectations, norms, and values have on members of a society (Ciccarelli & White, 2015).

Sociocultural theory. The sociocultural theory, established by Lev Vygotsky, suggested learning shapes children's development (Woolfolk, 2016). Sociocultural theory emphasized the importance social interactions had on others' learning (Ciccarelli

& White, 2015). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory evolved into the contemporary sociocultural psychological perspective (Ciccarelli & White, 2015).

Stereotype. A stereotype has been described as an assigned characteristic people believe is shared by all members of a particular group (Ciccarelli & White, 2015). Gender, race, religion, and age were examples of the types of characteristics used to make stereotypes (Ciccarelli & White, 2015).

Superintendent. The superintendent, the leader of the local educational agency, is responsible for the daily operations of the district (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013). Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2013) described the superintendent as the representative between school board members and the public. The school superintendent must ensure the school district's daily operations and follow the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and board policy (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013).

Summary

The gender leadership gap has been prevalent in today's public educational system (Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016). Rosenberg (2017) and Superville (2016) found in the predominately female establishment of education, men have dominated the leadership role of superintendent in many school districts. Currently, 27% of the nation's superintendents are reported to be of the male gender (Rosenberg, 2017). Cultural factors, such as gender roles, stereotypes, and bias, have greatly contributed to this disparity (Eaton & Rose, 2013; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). These cultural factors have put women aspiring to become superintendents at a disadvantage (Grover, 2015;

Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Hill et al. (2016) maintained understanding the variables that contribute to the gender leadership gap will be the first step in achieving parity. In Chapter One, the researcher introduced the phenomenon of the gender leadership gap, described the conceptual framework utilized for this study, and listed the two research questions used to guide this study. Furthermore, the researcher explained the study's purpose, examined the significance of this study, identified and defined the key terms mentioned throughout the study, and established the limitations and assumptions of this study.

This research provided valuable insight regarding Missouri superintendents' perceptions about the gender leadership gap. Their perceptions regarding the gender leadership imbalance provided solutions for closing the gap. Chapter Two includes the literature review of the gender leadership gap. This review of the literature closely examines the gender leadership imbalance and its effect on women seeking to become superintendents. Therefore, Chapter Two will provide an in-depth analysis of the gender leadership gap and its effect on American society.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The gender leadership gap, identified as the disproportion of women in top leadership positions, has continued to be an issue in the United States (Hill et al., 2016). Sandberg (2013) found the number of women in top executive positions has remained stagnant since the early 2000s. This gender leadership disparity also has become increasingly evident within the upper echelons of the educational arena (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014). According to Rosenberg (2017), only 27% of the nation's school superintendents were reported to be women. Though this number has increased approximately 14% since 2000, the under-representation of women as school superintendents has continued to be an issue in school districts across the country (Rosenberg, 2017).

Chapter Two will address the related literature regarding the gender leadership gap and the sociocultural factors which have impacted the gender imbalance. Next, this chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of westernized gender roles and their influence on American society. Furthermore, Chapter Two will furnish a detailed account of the various gender stereotypes and biases which have shaped the gender leadership mold. In the literature review, the researcher will identify other cultural barriers which have inhibited women in their treks to school superintendencies. Finally, within this chapter, the researcher will identify the various sociocultural factors and explain how each of the factors connects and have overtly and covertly affected the gender leadership gap among superintendents.

Conceptual Framework

A sociocultural theoretical framework was utilized for this study. To fully understand the modern day sociocultural perspective, the origins of the sociocultural perspective and its evolution to a contemporary psychological perspective must be explained. The researcher chose the modern-day sociocultural perspective as the conceptual lens for this study, because of the prevalent cultural barriers and biases heavily engrained within the gender leadership gap dilemma (Eaton & Rose, 2013; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013, Kelsey, Allen, Coke, & Ballard, 2014).

Birth of the sociocultural perspective. The modern-day sociocultural perspective originated from the sociocultural theory of learning established by Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky (Woolfolk, 2016). Chauhan (2013) explained Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist interested in educational and developmental psychology in the early 1900s, investigated the role of cultural and social factors in the construction of human consciousness. In his sociocultural theory, Vygotsky suggested learning shaped a child's development (Woolfolk, 2016). He emphasized the importance social interactions had on individual learning (Ciccarelli & White, 2015). McLeod (2014) found Vygotsky believed learning was affected by the cultural ideas passed down from parents to children, such as language. Vygotsky theorized learning and development varied from culture to culture (Woolfolk, 2016). However, the cognitive processes developed over time have been similar in the way they have been "handed down from generation to generation" ("Sociocultural Approach", 2018, para. 4).

Vygotsky's theory of sociocultural learning and development encompassed multiple elements (McLeod, 2014). McLeod (2014) stated Vygotsky stressed the

importance of the following three elements: a) role of culture, b) role of society, and c) the role of language in cognitive development. Another essential element of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning was his idea of a Zone of Proximal Development (McLeod, 2014). According to Ciccarelli and White (2015), the Zone of Proximal Development focused on the difference of what a child could do with the help of a teacher versus what a child could do alone. This element demonstrated the influence adults have on children's cognitive development (McLeod, 2014). All in all, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning asserted individual learning could not be "understood without reference to the social and cultural context within which it is embedded" (McLeod, 2014, para. 5). Hence, society and culture have played significant roles in the cognitive development of the human species (Woolfolk, 2016).

   Sociocultural theory as a contemporary psychological perspective. The contemporary sociocultural perspective has evolved from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning (Ciccarelli & White, 2015). Whereas, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory primarily focused on how culture has affected children's cognitive development, the modern day sociocultural perspective has been devoted to studying all aspects of culture and how it has shaped our psyches and societal institutions and practices (Ciccarelli & White, 2015; Meyers & Twenge, 2013; Valsiner & Rosa, 2007). According to Ciccarelli and White (2015), today, the sociocultural perspective incorporates cultural psychology, the study of cultural expectations, values, and norms, and social psychology, the study of social roles, groups, and societal relationships. Valsiner and Rosa (2007) maintained the modern sociocultural perspective emphasized the cultural essence of human psychological occurrence. Valsiner and Rosa (2007) stated, "Sociocultural Psychology

cannot leave aside anything that is human; its challenge is to address its complexity and provide tools for its explanation and understanding" (p. x).

Psychology's forefathers initially recognized the biological and social factors, which have shaped the human mind and behavior (Valsiner & Rosa, 2007). Though culture was deemed a factor shaping the human psyche, originally it was left out of mainstream psychology (Valsiner & Rosa, 2007). Over time, Valsiner and Rosa (2007) stated psychologists finally acknowledged the impact culture has had on shaping our psychological processes. Ciccarelli and White (2015) asserted the sociocultural perspective has been significant due to the fact it has educated people on how their behavior and society's behavior has been affected by societal norms, traditions, and other cultural factors, such as ethnicity, gender, and class differences. In other words, the sociocultural perspective has been important, because it focuses on how individuals' culture and experiences influence their behaviors (Woolfolk, 2016).

Sociocultural perspective and the gender leadership gap. A gender leadership gap among school superintendents has been shown to exist within the United States (Superville, 2016). Though the explanation for this under-representation has been multifaceted, many studies have pointed to cultural barriers and gender biases as the main culprits (Eaton & Rose, 2013; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013, Kelsey et al., 2014). Eaton and Rose (2013) found cultural barriers and gender bias to be deeply embedded within the sociocultural perspective. Societal expectations and cultural norms, values, and traditions at times have encouraged gender inequities by maintaining cultural barriers (Ciccarelli & White, 2015; Eaton & Rose, 2013; Ibarra et al., 2013; Meyers & Twenge, 2013; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Eaton and Rose (2013) maintained political barriers,

structural barriers, organizational barriers, gender roles, gender stereotypes, and biases have been cultural impediments for women seeking top leadership positions (Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Kelsey et al., 2014).

According to Eaton and Rose (2013), many sociocultural factors have impacted gender differences and gender norms, such as men showing assertiveness, while women should be demonstrating "feelings of communality instead" (Flora, 2017, p. 69). However, researchers have specifically identified three sociocultural factors that strengthen the gender leadership gap (Grover, 2015; Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Hershcovis and Weinhardt (2015) mentioned the first sociocultural factor to affect the gender leadership gap has been westernized gender roles. Another sociocultural variable which has impacted the gender leadership gap has been gender stereotypes, such as women being expected to be nurturing, kind, and warm, and not be assertive or domineering (Flora, 2017; Glass, 2000; Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Khazan, 2014; Superville, 2016). Finally, Grover (2015) and Flora (2017) added gender bias, the third sociocultural factor, has been responsible for under-representation of women in top leadership positions.

Gender Leadership Gap

The gender leadership gap and its relationship to the glass ceiling have been studied by researchers beginning in the 1980s (Hymowitz, 2013; Ireland, 2014; Johns, 2013; U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Since that time, research has indicated a disproportion of women in top leadership positions within the American workforce (Brown, 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017; Rosenberg, 2017; Warner, 2014). Whether in corporate America or public education, women have continued to lag

behind their male counterparts (Brown, 2014; Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Superville, 2016; Warner, 2014). Furthermore, minority women have been least likely to obtain top leadership positions (Cook & Glass, 2013; Dishman, 2016; Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017; Superville, 2016; Warner, 2014). Though research has indicated a narrowing gender leadership gap, the gender disparity has continued to remain large and steadfast (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Grover, 2015; Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Holland, 2011; Ireland, 2014). Sadly, women have shattered the glass ceiling only to have been pushed off the glass cliff (Bennhold, 2016; Cooper, 2015; Flora, 2017; Hill, 2016; Makagon, 2014; Oelbaum, 2016).

Glass ceiling. Since the *Wall Street Journal's* column "Corporate Woman" introduced the glass ceiling phenomenon in the mid-1980s, government officials, journalists, and researchers have been actively studying the gender leadership gap and how it has related to the glass ceiling (Hymowitz, 2013; Ireland, 2014; Johns, 2013; U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Johns (2013) wrote the glass ceiling was a term coined to describe the challenges and invisible barriers which affected women attempting to move up their career ladders to executive positions. Hill et al. (2016) described the glass ceiling as an emblematic barrier that has kept women in mid-level management positions. According to Johns (2013), "In 1991, the U.S. Congress found, despite a dramatically growing presence in the workplace, women and minorities remained under-represented in management positions in business and that artificial barriers were inhibiting their advancement" (para. 2). This acknowledgment has prompted the American government to take action (Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Johns, 2013).

Through Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, Johns (2013) stated the U.S. Congress responded to the gender leadership imbalance by creating the Glass Ceiling Commission and implementing the Glass Ceiling Act. The bipartisan commission consisted of 21 diverse members (U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). The Glass Ceiling Commission's purpose was multifaceted (Gupton, 2009). First, the commission studied how companies have filled decision-making and management positions (Johns, 2013). Second, Johns (2013) wrote the commission analyzed skill refinement and developmental routines used to cultivate the essential qualifications for leadership advancement. Third, the commission reviewed workplace reward structures and compensation schemes (Johns, 2013). Fourth, Johns (2013) stated the Glass Ceiling Commission developed an annual award for companies fostering a diversified workforce in leadership and decision-making positions. All in all, the Glass Ceiling Commission's goal was to study the glass ceiling phenomenon and make recommendations on eradicating the impediments to the advancement of women and minorities to top leadership positions (U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995).

According to the U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission (1995), from 1991 to 1995, the commission compiled its research. The commission published its findings in a fact-finding report titled, "Good for Business: Making Full Use of the Nation's Human Capital" (U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). The commission's report maintained women and minorities rarely obtained the nation's top executive positions (U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). The U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) found the glass ceiling was not a fleeting phenomenon. The commission also discovered when compared to white male executives, salaries were lower for the few women and minorities who had

achieved executive positions (U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Overall, the

commission discovered the nation's leadership in organizations were not representative

of America's demographics. Members of the U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission (1995)

wrote:

> In short, the fact-finding report tells us that the world at the top of the corporate
>
> hierarchy does not yet look anything like America. Two-thirds of our population,
>
> and 57% of the working population is female, or minorities, or both. Nor,
>
> ominously, does the population of today's executive suite resemble the workforce
>
> of America's future. Women and minority men will make up 62% of the
>
> workforce by the year 2005. (p. iv)

After the Glass Ceiling Commission finished its mandate and was disbanded, the

glass ceiling phenomenon, along with other cultural barriers, has continued to affect the

gender leadership gap (Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Johns, 2013). Researchers have

been steadfast in their analyses of the gender leadership gap (Grover, 2015; Hill et al.,

2016; Rosenberg, 2017; Sandberg, 2013; Superville, 2013; Trinidad & Normore, 2005;

Warner & Corley, 2017). In-depth exploration of the gender leadership gap has

illustrated its effect in corporate America, the U.S. political arena, and the realm of

education (Grover, 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Rosenberg, 2017; Sandberg, 2013; Superville,

2016; Trinidad & Normore, 2005; Warner & Corley, 2017).

Gender leadership gap in corporate America. Gupton (2009) wrote the 1990s

were considered the decade in which women began to crack through the glass ceiling.

The Glass Ceiling Commission's report combined with an increased number of women

attaining graduate degrees looked promising for women with leadership aspirations

(Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Hill et al. (2016) stated within the last 20 years, women increasingly made more progress in securing leadership positions. However, despite the small battles won, women continued to lose the war in gender leadership parity (Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). In corporate America, very few women have made it to the boardroom (Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017).

Women's participation in the labor force surged from the mid-20th Century through the 1990s (Toossi & Morisi, 2017). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in 1950, women made up approximately 33% of the nation's labor force, but by 2015, women made up 46.8% of the labor force (Toossi & Morisi, 2017). Toossi and Morisi (2017) wrote, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' future projections, the percentage of women in the American labor force would increase to 47.2% by 2024. Interestingly, the BLS also predicted the gender gap in the American workforce would continue to narrow in the next decade (Toossi & Morisi, 2017). Toossi and Morisi (2017) reported, "From 2014 to 2024, the growth in the women's labor force is projected to be a bit larger than that for men—5.8% compared with 4.4%" (p. 5). Although labor force statistics have indicated promise to women in the workforce, the number of women in leadership positions has not gained the same momentum (Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017).

Researchers have shown the percentage of women in leadership and decision-making positions were exceedingly disproportionate to the number of men in such positions (Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). Currently, the Rockefeller Foundation (2017) reported 6% of CEOs of Fortune 500 Companies are women. The

Rockefeller Foundation (2017) maintained this percentage "has never risen above that mark since the Fortune 500 list was first published in 1955" (p. 2). Brown (2014) stated women have not fared any better in other top managerial positions. Women make up less than 9% of top management positions in the business sector (Brown, 2014). In response to the gender leadership disparity, the Rockefeller Foundation (2017) decided to begin its 100x2025 Initiative. The Rockefeller Foundation (2017) decided to work toward increasing the number of female CEOs to 100 by the year 2025. Dishman (2016) maintained the 100x2025 Initiative had challenged current male and female CEOs to prioritize placing more women in leadership positions. The 100x2025 Initiative has resulted in two significant studies aimed at determining American perceptions on gender equality in the workforce and determining solutions to achieve gender leadership parity (Rockefeller Foundation, 2017).

The 2016 Rockefeller Foundation report titled, *Women in Leadership: Why It Matters*, focused on gender equality in the workplace (Rockefeller Foundation, 2016). The 2016 report was the first report published after the inception of the 100x2025 Initiative (Rockefeller Foundation, 2016). The study polled 1,011 American adults who were 18 years of age and older and found 82% of Americans believed it was important for both genders to have equal opportunity for career advancements (Rockefeller Foundation, 2016). Interestingly, approximately 25% of the respondents stated there were zero women in leadership positions at their current places of employment (Rockefeller Foundation, 2016). The Rockefeller Foundation (2016) concluded:

> Those findings are strikingly at odds with Americans' views of gender equality in
> the workplace. Americans, men and women alike, unequivocally agree that men

and women are equally qualified to lead businesses (96%), and say that it is

highly important to them that women and men have the same opportunities for

career advancement (82%). (p. 4)

The Rockefeller Foundation's (2017) report titled, *Women in Leadership:*

Tackling Corporate Culture from the Top, elaborated upon the findings of its first report.

The 2017 study surveyed 1,010 American adults who were 18 years or older. The

Rockefeller Foundation (2017) divulged Americans stated they wanted "CEOs to

prioritize this issue to create meaningful changes in both the attitudes of employees

across the company and through investments to company-wide programs that create

conditions which allow women to move up the ranks" (p. 2). The Rockefeller

Foundation (2017) shared 83% of Americans believed movement to top leadership

positions was easier for men than for women. The report also illustrated 57% of

Americans believed corporate America offers fewer advancement opportunities for

women pursuing leadership roles (Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). The study further

demonstrated Americans believed women faced more obstacles, such as company

cultures, gender stereotypes, and gender biases, more often than their male counterparts

did (Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). Finally, 65% of Americans polled believed the

greatest impetus for change occurred from the top down (Rockefeller Foundation, 2017).

Similarly, Dishman (2016) found the gender leadership disparity within the

corporate world has continued to remain steadfast. Women have trekked the carpool to

water cooler pathway (Bergeron, 2016; Hill et al., 2016). However, the C-Suite, also

known as the corporate suite, has been primarily reserved for the men (Brown, 2014; Hill

et al., 2016; Warner, 2014). As data from the Rockefeller Foundation has illustrated,

American society has been aware of the roadblocks women with leadership ambition have experienced and continues to experience (Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). Regardless of public recognition, the Rockefeller Foundation (2017) stated the percentage of women leading the boardroom has remained stagnate. Unfortunately, Hill et al. (2016) wrote the gender leadership gap has not been solely restricted to business.

Evolution of female leadership in public education. During the mid-1800s, feminism in public education began to prosper (Levin & Pinto, 2004). Levin and Pinto (2004) stated educational employment opportunities were finally offered to the female gender. Even though women were earning paltry wages, working in education provided women the opportunity to work outside of their homes (Levin & Pinto, 2004). Thus, the educational profession provided women with a sense of independence (Levin & Pinto, 2004). As time progressed, female leadership in public education began to develop more steadily (Gupton, 2009; Rosenberg, 2017; Sparks, 2014; Superville, 2016).

Since the 1990s, women have made noticeable gains in various other educational leadership positions (Gupton, 2009). Gupton (2009) mentioned one of the biggest advancements has been in the school principalship positions. The percentage of women principals, the head authority figure of a school, has increased 17% over the last 35 years (Gupton 2009; Rosenberg, 2017). In 1993, women comprised 35% of the principals within the country (Gupton, 2009). Rosenberg (2017) found the percentage had increased to 52% by 2017. Women also have advanced in central office leadership positions, such as director of special services, director of special education, director of transportation, and other assistant superintendent classifications (Superville, 2016). Superville (2016) stated 78% of central office administrators were women. Even female

representation on public school boards has witnessed an increase in recent years (Sparks, 2014). Sparks (2014) reported women comprised 40% of the public school board members nationwide. Although there was an increase in the number of women as educational leaders, women continued to be under-represented in school districts' top leadership position—the superintendency (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Gupton 2009; Kelsey et al., 2014; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016).

Gender leadership gap in the school superintendency. The educational workforce in the United States has been primarily a female enterprise (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Kelsey et al., 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The U.S. Department of Education (2016) reported there were 3.1 million full-time-equivalent (FTE) public school teachers across the country. Hill et al. (2016) found three-quarters of public school teachers were female. According to Rosenberg (2017), women have constituted "76% of Kindergarten through 12th teaching posts" (p. 32). Despite the overwhelming female presence in education, women have been lagging behind men in the top-level educational leadership positions (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Gupton, 2009; Kelsey et al., 2014; Klatt, 2014; Rosenberg, 2017).

Within the nation's school districts, men have dominated the position of the school district superintendency (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Kelsey et al., 2014; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016). Research has illustrated there have been some gains for women superintendents (Holland, 2011; Ireland, 2014). Kowalski, McCord, Peterson, Young, and Ellerson found "the percentage of female superintendents increased nearly four times since 1992" (as cited in Connell et al., 2015, p. 38). Connell et al. (2015)

wrote in 1992, 6.6% of the school superintendents were women. Rosenberg (2017) found

the percentage of women superintendents had increased to 27% in 2015. Although there

has been an increase in the number of female superintendents within the last few decades,

women have continued to significantly trail behind men (Connell et al., 2015; Kelsey et

al., 2014).

      Disaggregating and analyzing data on female superintendent demographics and

experiences has been one of the first steps in understanding the gender leadership gap

among superintendents (Glass, 2000; Finnan et al., 2015). In 2000, the AASA conducted

its first school superintendent study titled, "2000 Study of the American School

Superintendency," which provided gender-specific data (Glass, 2000). Glass (2000)

wrote the AASA's 2000 study was a 10-year assessment of the superintendency

profession. The study collected and examined American superintendents' responses to a

survey (Glass, 2000). Glass (2000) wrote, "Women accounted for 297 of the 2,262

superintendents who responded to the 90-item survey" (p. 28). Glass (2000) stated the

study's findings provided various explanations as to why the superintendent leadership

gap existed. First, women have not been allowed opportunities in leadership positions

that typically led to the school district superintendent position (Glass, 2000; Ireland,

2014). Glass (2000) mentioned the AASA discovered the majority of superintendents

had come from the secondary level as high school assistant principals, coaches, and/or

department chairs (Ireland, 2014). Since most elementary teachers have been women,

this has put women working at the elementary level at a disadvantage in seeking the

superintendency (Glass, 2000; Ireland, 2014). Second, women lacked the necessary

credentials to achieve superintendent certification (Glass, 2000; Ireland, 2014). Third,

women were opting out of the superintendency due to personal reasons, such as commitment to family and lack of mobility (Glass, 2000; Ireland, 2014). Fourth, the glass ceiling barriers, such as school boards reluctant to hire female superintendents and women entering the superintendency applicant pool at too late of an age, has been keeping women from the superintendency (Glass, 2000; Ireland, 2014).

The AASA's most recent study titled, "The Study of the American Superintendent: 2015 Mid-Decade Update," has provided researchers with some of the most up-to-date gender specific superintendent data (Finnan et al., 2015). The study reviewed the responses from 845 of the nation's superintendents (Finnan et al., 2015). Finnan (2015) wrote 26.9% of the respondents were women. Finnan et al. (2015) reported the mean and median age of female superintendents was higher than that of their male counterparts. The AASA disclosed women superintendents were older than most male superintendents were when they were appointed to their positions (Finnan et al., 2015). The AASA's 2015 study also reported women superintendents had typically spent more years as teachers than male superintendents (Finnan et al., 2015). Finnan et al. (2015) maintained the findings indicated male superintendents were hired for their personal characteristics, whereas, female superintendents were hired for their knowledge of curriculum and instructional leadership abilities. Interestingly, the AASA also reported fewer women superintendents divulged they were married (Finnan et al., 2015). Finnan et al. (2015) concluded the data illustrated female superintendents reported slightly lower satisfaction with their choices of profession.

Research has provided multiple explanations for the dearth of women superintendents within the public school sector (Finnan et al., 2015; Glass, 2000; Hill et

al., 2016). The AASA's 2000 and 2015 studies have provided some of the explanations

for this phenomenon (Finnan et al., 2015; Glass, 2000). Other studies have also

examined the gender leadership imbalance among superintendents (Connell et al., 2015;

Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Ireland, 2014; Kelsey et al., 2014; Klatt, 2014). Klatt (2014)

discovered personal reasons have often become the primary reasons why many principals

did not strive to become superintendents. Klatt (2014) utilized a detailed case study

method to collect and to assess data about the topic. Three factors creating barriers to

female superintendents were recognized: a) spousal issues and considerations, b) having

school-age children, and c) quality of life (Klatt, 2014). The AASA's 2008 survey of

7,552 superintendents also cited family sacrifices as a disincentive of the superintendency

(as cited in Kelsey et al., 2014). According to Kelsey et al. (2014), the AASA reported

"women (52%) ranked family sacrifices as a disincentive more often than males (45%)"

(p. 3). In Barrios' 2004 study of 38 superintendents, female participants identified family

commitments and limited time with family as barriers to obtaining a superintendent

position (as cited in Connell et al., 2015).

A lack of mentors and networking opportunities also were listed as another major

barrier for women vying for superintendency roles (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland &

Calhoun, 2014). Connell et al. (2015) stated, "The limited availability of mentors and

coaches relates closely to the ability of females to network with peers" (p. 41).

Additionally, Glass's 2007 study titled, "State of the American School Superintendency,"

acknowledged a lack of mentors and role models as a major obstacle for females aspiring

to the superintendency (as cited in Copeland & Calhoun, 2014). Copeland and Calhoun's

(2014) study also identified a lack of female mentors as a barrier to women. Copeland

and Calhoun (2014) wrote it was difficult for many female superintendents to develop the necessary networking and leadership skills because there was a lack of mentors available for that population.

Gender bias and gender stereotyping have been impediments to women's superintendency aspirations as well (Connell et al., 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Holland, 2011; Superville, 2016; Webb, 2016). Connell et al. (2015) found "gender bias existed at the individual or institutional level and surfaced as blatant or concealed acts" (p. 40). Superville (2016) maintained women superintendents have been scrutinized more closely than men. For example, female superintendents have faced harsher treatment when they have asserted their power (Superville, 2016). A review of the literature revealed gender bias has affected school boards' hiring and selection processes (Holland, 2011; Superville, 2016; Webb, 2016). Typically, school board members have consisted of retired school administrators and community members (Connell et al., 2015). School boards were often led by men who have perpetuated the good ole boy system (Connell et al., 2015). According to Connell et al. (2015), the good ole boy system has inadvertently prohibited women from obtaining the superintendency.

Minority women and the gender leadership gap. The female gender has been greatly affected by the leadership gap (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Gupton, 2009; Kelsey et al., 2014; Klatt, 2014; Rosenberg, 2017). However, when seeking top executive positions, research has indicated minority women have suffered the most (Cook & Glass, 2013; Dishman, 2016; Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017; Superville, 2016; Warner, 2015). African-American, Hispanic, and Asian women have been less likely to attain leadership positions within organizations (Cook & Glass,

2013). Consequently, when minority women have been promoted, they generally have advanced to lower-level to mid-level management positions (Cook & Glass, 2013). Minority women's perceptions have relayed the injustices shown through data (Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). The Rockefeller Foundation (2017) stated, "Women of color report facing discrimination at work even more widely. Black (45%) and Hispanic (49%) women are more likely to have felt judged more harshly at work as a result of their gender than White women (37%)" (p. 5). Statistics of minority female leaders have given credence to the under-represented demographic (Cook & Glass, 2013; Warner, 2015). In the 1990s, there was not one minority CEO leading a Fortune 500 company (Cook & Glass, 2013). Warner (2015) found in 2013, minority women held only 3.1% of Fortune 500 companies' board seats. Furthermore, minority women have held less than 4% of senior-level positions (Hill et al., 2016).

Cook and Glass (2013) identified three barriers to the mobility of minority leaders. Racial bias and discrimination was the first barrier (Cook & Glass, 2013). Cook and Glass (2013) wrote minorities had been denied access to leadership positions because of racial bias and discrimination. Common racial stereotypes, such as minorities not having leadership capabilities, have affected minority men and women who have aspired to leadership positions. Cook and Glass (2013) stated "stereotypes regarding minorities' inability to lead limits minorities' access to leadership positions" (p. 170). The second obstacle of minority leaders has been occupational segregation (Cook & Glass, 2013). Cook and Glass (2013) wrote, "Minorities tend to be concentrated in jobs, occupations, and sectors that offer limited opportunities for advancement" (p. 170). The final barrier of minority leaders has been the exclusion from professional networking systems, which

have been crucial for leadership and career advancement (Cook & Glass, 2013). Cook and Glass (2013) found exclusion from professional and informal networking systems has restricted availability to information about career opportunities, prospective mentors, and high-status networks. Though research has illustrated various barriers to leadership positions for all minorities, minority women have experienced the greatest obstacles (Cook & Glass, 2013; Dishman, 2016; Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017; Superville, 2016; Warner, 2015).

Glass cliff. The ascent up the corporate ladder has been problematic for women seeking leadership positions (Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Oelbaum, 2014; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). Multiple barriers have created a glass ceiling, which has continued to block women from top executive positions (Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Oelbaum, 2014; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). Oelbaum (2016) wrote, "Even when armed with superior experience, qualifications, and credentials, a woman's ascent is often encumbered by the glass ceiling: the invisible, yet rigid barrier that prevents women from accessing the very upper echelons of an organization's hierarchy" (p. 1). Within the last few decades, female leaders have been concerned with shattering the glass ceiling (Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Johns, 2013). Consequently, while attempting to break the glass ceiling, some female leaders have fallen off a glass cliff (Bennhold, 2016; Cooper, 2015; Flora, 2017; Hill, 2016; Makagon, 2014; Oelbaum, 2016).

In 2005, Ryan and Haslam created the glass cliff concept (Bennhold, 2016; Hill, 2016). The "glass cliff" has been used to describe the tendency for companies to appoint women in top leadership roles during a time of crisis (Bennhold, 2016; Cooper, 2015; Flora, 2017; Hill, 2016; Makagon, 2014; Oelbaum, 2016). Unfortunately, research has

shown the likelihood of success was poor for women leaders put in charge of failing companies (Bennhold, 2016; Cooper, 2015; Hill, 2016; Makagon, 2014; Oelbaum, 2016). Makagon (2014) mentioned "women are more frequently hired into precarious roles, not positioned to succeed, and eventually replaced with men" (para. 1). Makagon (2014) found companies in crisis tended to look for leaders with collaborative qualities who could motivate workers. However, when female leaders failed to turn the company around in a timely manner, they were often shoved off the glass cliff (Makagon, 2014).

There have been negative effects associated with the glass cliff phenomenon (Hill, 2016; Oelbaum, 2016). One, the glass cliff has reinforced gender stereotypes (Hill, 2016). Makagon (2016) maintained pushing women leaders off the glass cliff has sustained the negative stereotype female leaders were less effective and less capable than men. Two, women who accepted leadership roles of failing companies have often experienced unfavorable consequences (Oelbaum, 2016). Oelbaum (2016) identified increased levels of stress and anxiety, increased turnover, and diminished commitment to the company as examples of unfavorable consequences. Three, Hill (2016) wrote, women aspiring to top leadership positions were less likely to "approach the edge of the cliff if they see their role models slipping over it" (para. 7). Overall, Hill (2016) stated the glass cliff phenomenon could stagnate women's leadership progress.

The gender leadership gap: Fact or myth? A plethora of research has been conducted over the gender leadership gap (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Grover, 2015; Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Ireland, 2014; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017; Rosenberg, 2017; Sandberg, 2013; Superville, 2013; Warner & Corley, 2017). Most research has supported the idea the gender leadership gap exists in

almost all aspects of the American workforce (Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017; Sandberg, 2013). However, within the realm of education, some researchers have studied whether the gender leadership gap is a myth, a fact, or something in between (Holland, 2011; Ireland, 2014). Ireland (2014) stated research has pointed to a shrinking gender gap among school superintendents. According to Ireland (2014), "The environment has changed dramatically in the last three decades for women interested in pursuing leadership opportunities within education" (p. 38). Holland (2011) reported the percentage of women superintendents has increased approximately four times since 1992. Alan Long's survey of 121 superintendents found further evidence supporting gender parity among superintendents (as cited in Ireland, 2014). Long's study concluded there were no substantial differences in salary between female and male superintendents (as cited in Ireland, 2014). Ireland (2014) concluded, "While challenges exist for female superintendents, the gender gap has closed significantly since the 1990s and, thus, the disproportionate number of female superintendents should reflect this improved climate" (p. 39). Other researchers' data analyses pertaining to the school superintendency has illustrated a diminishing gender leadership gap (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Holland, 2011; Ireland, 2014; Kelsey et al., 2014; Rosenberg, 2017). Regardless of the gains which have been made, the disproportion of male to female superintendents has remained substantial (Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016). The educational arena, a female enterprise, has continued to be spearheaded by men (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Holland, 2011; Kelsey et al., 2014; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016). Thus, research has proven the gender leadership gap is not a myth, but rather an unfortunate fact (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Grover, 2015; Gupton, 2009; Hill

et al., 2016; Ireland, 2014; The Rockefeller Foundation, 2017; Rosenberg, 2017;

Sandberg, 2013; Superville, 2013; Warner & Corley, 2017).

Gender Roles

Gender roles have helped shape the American leadership model (Bailey, 2014;

Hill et al., 2016). However, traditional American gender roles have evolved within the

past few decades (Cauchon, 2013; Myers, 2016; Weir, 2017). This change has occurred

because of the feminist movement and a changing American family dynamic (Angier,

2013; Bergeron, 2015; Coontz, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2015a; Rosegrant, 2014;

Schulte, 2014). Thus, the change has affected American men, as well as American

women (Myers, 2016; Reyes, 2013; Weir, 2017). Despite the evolving gender roles,

research on gender and leadership has demonstrated traditional male gender roles have

been associated with successful leadership characteristics (Bailey, 2014; Hill et al., 2016;

Trinidad & Normore, 2005).

Evolution of American gender roles. American gender roles have evolved from

the traditional Westernized gender roles of our parents and grandparents (Cauchon, 2013;

Myers, 2016; Weir, 2017). This evolution has progressed due to the feminist movement

and the changing family structure (Coontz, 2013). The changing American gender roles

have had a profound effect on men and women (Reyes, 2013; Weir, 2017). Though

American gender roles have evolved, in the context of leadership, traditional male gender

roles have helped to advance men and hurt women (Latu, Mast, Lammers, & Bombari,

2013; Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015).

Traditional Westernized gender roles. Various personality characteristics have

often been viewed as masculine or feminine (Kassin, Fein, & Markus, 2014). Assertive,

aggressive, adventurous, task-oriented, and independent were characteristics which have been associated with men (Kassin et al., 2014). Kassin et al. (2014) wrote emotional, gentle, sensitive, people-oriented, and dependent are characteristics, which have been associated with women. Gender characteristics have frequently been influenced by culture (Kassin et al., 2014). In turn, gender characteristics and beliefs have helped shape cultural gender roles (Kassin et al., 2014).

Gender roles have been present in every society and have been heavily influenced by culture (Ciccarelli & White, 2015; Lindsey, 2015). Weir (2017) found, starting in infancy, gender roles have been taught to children by their parents, relatives, peers, and teachers. Ciccarelli and White (2015) defined gender roles as a culture's norms and expectations for masculine and feminine behaviors. American society has historically followed traditional Westernized gender roles (Davis, 2016; Weir, 2017). Cauchon (2013) wrote traditional American female and male gender roles have looked like a script from the 1950s sitcom, *Ozzie and Harriet*. Dependency, emotionality, caregivers, and domestic goddess have been examples of traditional feminine gender roles (Davis, 2016; Haines, Deaux, & Lofaro, 2016). Examples of traditional masculine gender roles have included power over women, self-reliance, restrictive emotionality, dominance, playboy behavior, toughness, and avoidance of female gender roles (Davis, 2016; Weir, 2017). Though traditional Westernized gender roles have led female and male behavior in American society, a shift has started to occur (Cauchon, 2013; Myers, 2016; Weir, 2017). American traditional gender roles have been evolving due to the feminist movement, a transforming family structure, and a changing U.S. economy (Coontz, 2013; Weir, 2017; Weisberg & Galinsky, 2014).

Feminist movement. Women leaders have been present in numerous social movements in the United States, such as the suffrage movement or the civil rights movement (Bergeron, 2015; Hill et al., 2016). Though leaders of all social movements have given voices to minorities, the leaders of the women's movement have provided American women with a platform to speak against gender injustices and inequities (Bergeron, 2015; Coontz, 2013; Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1997). Coontz (2013) stated the modern-day feminist movement began in the 1960s with the publication of Betty Friedan's book, "The Feminine Mystique." According to Coontz (2013), "In 1963, most Americans did not yet believe gender equality was possible or even desirable. Conventional wisdom held that a woman could not pursue a career and still be a fulfilled wife or successful mother" (p. SR1). Hence, during the early 1960s, gender equality had been described as a figment of one's imagination (Coontz, 2013).

By the late 1960s, the feminist movement had built up steam (Bergeron, 2015; Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1997). Bergeron (2015) found the development of the National Organization for Women (NOW), along with leading feminists helped establish the feminist movement as one of the top social movements of the nation. The National Organization for Women, established in 1966, has begun to advocate for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) (Bergeron, 2015). Bergeron (2015) wrote, around the same time, Steinem's 1969 *New York Magazine* article, "After Black Power, Women's Liberation," had turned America's attention toward the feminist movement. By the 1970s, the second wave of the feminist movement had gained serious momentum (Bergeron, 2015). The *TIME Magazine's* 1970 article "Who's come a Long Way, Baby?" addressed the feminist movement and its goals (Bergeron, 2015). As explained in *TIME Magazine*:

They want equal pay for equal work and a chance at jobs traditionally reserved for

men only. They seek nationwide abortion reform – ideally, free abortions on

demand. They desire round-the-clock, state-supported child-care centers in order

to cut the apron strings that confine mothers to unpaid domestic servitude at

home. The most radical feminists want far more. Their eschatological aim is to

topple the patriarchal system in which men by birthright control all of society's

levers of power –in government, industry, education, science, the arts. (as cited in

Bergeron, 2015, para. 7)

Bergeron (2015) mentioned *TIME Magazine* further acknowledged the feminist

movement by awarding its 1975 "Man of the Year" to the women of America. The

feminist movement had continued to gain strength through the advocation of the ERA

(Bergeron, 2015). By the end of the 1970s, 35 of the states ratified the ERA (Bergeron,

2015). In the 1970s, women gained more rights, but many Americans' beliefs and

attitudes were slow to change (Coontz, 2013). In 1977, approximately 66% of Americans

had continued to support the traditional gender roles of men working to provide for their

families while women took care of the household (Coontz, 2013). However, albeit

slowly, American gender roles began to evolve (Coontz, 2013). Coontz (2013)

maintained, since the 1960s, the following three decades had contributed to a

metamorphosis of American attitudes regarding balancing home and work gender roles

for both sexes.

   Changing family structure. The idyllic American family has been portrayed in

Norman Rockwell's "Thanksgiving" painting and most 1950s sitcoms (Angier, 2013). A

working father, a stay-at-home mom, and two to three children, living in a house

surrounded by a white picket fence was the typical representation of the picturesque

American family (Schulte, 2014). Angier (2013) wrote, however, the typical American

family no longer existed. According to Schulte (2014), "The breadwinner-homemaker

family, the norm since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, is being

replaced by a new norm of diversity" (para. 2). In the past decade, researchers have

discovered the contemporary American family has now become complex and

multifaceted (Angier, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2015a; Rosegrant, 2014; Schulte, 2014).

 Researchers have discovered various trends within the American family

occurring over the last few decades (Angier, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2015a; Schulte,

2014). Angier (2013) discovered a smaller percentage of women were becoming

mothers. Furthermore, Angier (2013) found women who were having children had fewer

children than in previous decades. In the mid-1960s, 36% of the American population

was 18 years old or younger (Angier, 2013). By 2012, only 23.5% of the American

population was 18 years old or younger (Angier, 2013).

Another trend researchers uncovered about the American family concerned the

marriage and divorce rates of American citizens (Angier, 2013; Pew Research Center,

2015a; Schulte, 2014). Angier (2013) and Schulte (2014) wrote marriage rates have

drastically fallen, while divorce rates have significantly increased. Schulte (2014) wrote,

since the 1950s, married couple families have decreased from 66% to 45%. Divorce rates

have increased, hitting their peak in 1996 at 50%. However, current divorce rates have

recently fallen to 40% among first marriages of Americans (Schulte, 2014).

In more recent years, the increase of single parent and cohabitation households

has been another major trend contributing to the evolution of the American family

(Angier, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2015a; Schulte, 2014). The Pew Research Center (2015a) stated, "While in the early 1960s babies typically arrived within a marriage, today fully four-in-10 births occur to women who are single or living with a non-marital partner" (p. 15). Recently, Schulte (2014) found 7% of children in the U.S. were living with a parent in a cohabitation relationship. Nevertheless, it was estimated a higher percentage of children eventually lived in a cohabitation household at some point in their lives (Pew Research Center, 2015a). The Pew Research Center (2015a) reported estimates suggested "that about 39% of children will have had a mother in a cohabiting relationship by the time they turn 12; and by the time they turn 16, almost half (46%) will have experience with their mother cohabitating" (p. 18). Interestingly, decades ago, cohabitation was not such a common occurrence (Schulte, 2014). Schulte (2014) maintained, in the 1960s, cohabitation was so unusual that the U.S. Census Bureau did not count it in its data collection.

Another often ignored trend changing the American family dynamic has been the increased number of children with parents behind bars (Angier, 2013). In 1990, one in 125 children in the U.S. had one parent incarcerated (Angier, 2013). Angier (2013) stated, in recent years, one in 28 children has had a parent in prison. Over the last three decades, with the enactment of mandatory minimum sentences and harsher drug laws, the inmate population within the United States has quadrupled (Angier, 2013). Sadly, approximately 1.15 million prison inmates reported having children 18 years old or younger (Angier, 2013). In 2013, Angier (2013) estimated 2.7 million children had a parent in prison.

The American family has increasingly become more diverse and intricate (Angier, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2015; Schulte, 2014). Schulte (2014) stated a changing U.S. economy, the women's movement, an increase in education, and an increase in job opportunities had affected the American family structure. Consequently, changes in the American family structure has induced the evolution of American gender roles (Myers, 2016). Angier (2013) wrote the "Paycheck Mommy" has become the new American norm (para. 21). The percentage of women who have become the primary breadwinner of their families has increased nearly 30% since 1960 (Angier, 2013). Women have now taken on the male traditional Westernized gender norm of provider (Angier, 2013; Cauchon, 2013).

Leave no man behind? While gender researchers have widely studied and supported transforming gender roles for women, the gender revolution has been one-sided (Reyes, 2013). According to Reyes (2013), "Even as American society has seen sweeping transformations—expanding roles for women, surging tolerance for homosexuality—popular ideas about masculinity seem to have stagnated" (para. 3). American men have been undergoing gender role transformations, yet society has been leaving them behind without any support (Reyes, 2013). Myers (2016) stated the traditional American male has been, and has continued to be, a dying species. Myers (2016) wrote men in their late 20s will be the last American generation of traditional masculine men.

Reyes (2013) found most men have come to a dead stop regarding gender progress. The gender role disparity has continued to appear at home and work (Reyes, 2013). The one-time phenomenon of women working outside the home has become

customary, but stay-at-home dads are rare (Myers, 2016; Reyes, 2013). The U.S. Census

Bureau (as cited in Reyes, 2013) reported stay-at-home dads made up only 1% of married

couples with children 15 years or younger in 2013. Furthermore, women have moved

into careers previously ruled by men (Reyes, 2013). Reyes (2013) stated, on the other

hand, men have been slow to move into careers deemed as feminine, such as becoming

nurses, elementary teachers, or secretaries.

The cultural shift away from traditional Westernized gender norms has been

having a profound effect on men striving to keep traditional masculine gender norms

(Weir, 2017). Weir (2017) wrote higher rates of mental health issues had been found in

men conforming to traditional masculine gender roles. Weir (2017) reported traditional

male gender norms that promote sexist attitudes, such as self-reliance and restrictive

emotionality, have had the most disastrous effect on men's psychological well-being.

Self-reliance has been helpful to men in the past, but in today's interdependent world, it

has become antiquated (Weir, 2017). Restrictive emotionality, another traditional

masculine gender norm, has damaged men's mental health by not giving men the

implements to share their thoughts and feelings in appropriate ways (Weir, 2017).

Another traditional male gender role affecting today's American men has been avoidance

of anything deemed as being feminine (Weir, 2017). Most men who have followed

traditional male gender roles will be less likely to consider female-dominated occupations

(Weir, 2017). Weir (2017) found this has harmed men who have been grappling with

unemployment.

Myers (2016) stated today's American young men have been growing up in a

world which starkly contrasts that of their fathers' generations. More and more young

men have been raised in households where no fathers were present, and women were the primary breadwinners (Myers, 2016). Times have changed, yet traditional gender norms have been intensely embedded (Weir, 2017). Luckily, according to Weir (2017), these traditional gender roles have not been fixed. Weir (2017) found providing additional educational opportunities has been the most helpful suggestion in combating the stagnation of traditional male gender roles.

Gender roles and leadership styles. Gender roles have influenced leadership styles (Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Trinidad and Normore (2005) found female gender roles have been associated with relationship-oriented leadership styles. Male gender roles, on the other hand, have been associated with task-oriented leadership styles (Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Bailey (2014) suggested society has often equated successful leadership with masculine gender roles. Traditional male gender norms, such as decisiveness, strength, dominance, and assertiveness, have been considered effective leadership characteristics (Bailey, 2014; Hill et al., 2016).

Latu et al. (2013) wrote, due to gender norms and stereotypes, men have been associated with qualities of leadership. This perception has hurt women aspiring to leadership positions (Bailey, 2014; Latu et al., 2013). Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, and Woehr's (2014) meta-analysis of gender perceptions of leadership effectiveness found, however, in some instances, the opposite has been true. Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2014) stated, "there may be a female gender advantage in modern organizations that require a 'feminine' type of leadership" (p. 1129). Many contemporary organizations have moved toward an elaborative and collaborative leadership style, thus, putting women at an advantage (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Consequently, even though there has been a

shift in the views of leadership and femininity, women have continued to utilize male

leadership styles (Hill et al., 2016). The balancing act of male versus female leadership

styles has caused women leaders to walk a gender tightrope (Hershcovis & Weinhardt,

2015; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Sadly, society has penalized women for violating

gender roles (Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015).

Gender Stereotypes and Biases

Research has shown gender stereotypes and biases have greatly affected women

seeking leadership positions over the years (Flora, 2017; Grover, 2015; Hershcovis &

Weinhardt, 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2015; Khazan,

2014; Reuben, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2014; Schieman, Schafer, & McIvor, 2013; Vial et

al., 2016). Gender stereotypes in the workforce and gender biases, such as second-

generational gender bias and the cycle of illegitimacy, have hindered women's success,

thus, widening the gender leadership gap (Flora, 2017; Grover, 2015; Hershcovis &

Weinhardt, 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Vial et al., 2016). Specifically,

these barriers have become significant barriers for women striving to become school

superintendents (Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Superville, 2016).

Gender stereotypes in the workplace. Stereotypes have been present in all

aspects of society (Ciccarelli & White, 2015). However, gender stereotypes have

dominated the workplace setting (Flora, 2017; Hill et al., 2016). Stereotypes have been

defined as assigned characteristics people believed were shared by all members of a

particular group, such as race, gender, and ethnicity (Ciccarelli & White, 2015). Hill et

al. (2016) wrote positive and negative stereotypes have hindered women's progress in the

office. For example, positive stereotypes about nurturing mothers have been problematic

for women aspiring to become leaders (Hill et al., 2016). Though gender stereotypes have negatively affected women, men have also suffered adverse effects from stereotypes. In one study, Hill et al. (2016) reported men who did not display aggression, a typical masculine trait, were ranked lower than men who do display these traits.

Stereotypes have also influenced people's perceptions of leaders based on their gender (Hill et al., 2016). Hill et al. (2016) stated, "Stereotypes and bias affect how we see ourselves, as well as how we see others" (p. 22). This has been evident in the way many female leaders dress (Flora, 2017). For example, Flora (2017) mentioned women leaders who wear clothes deemed as too feminine have been deemed as possessing professional incompetence. On the other hand, women leaders who dress in masculine attire have been judged as being too masculine (Flora, 2017). Thus, women's attire has been perceived on both sides of the pendulum, making it difficult for female leaders to determine how to appropriately dress in leadership positions in order to be perceived gender neutral (Flora, 2017). The self-confidence gap has been another example of how stereotypes have impacted perceptions (Hill et al., 2016). Hill et al. (2016) wrote the self-confidence gap has been the tendency for men, during self-evaluation, to overestimate their professional competence and skills, whereas, women have underestimated their achievements and skills. Personal experience has also influenced gender stereotypes (Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015). Hershcovis and Weinhardt (2015) found many married men whose wives did not work have viewed female workers less favorably, did not want to work for women leaders, and did not promote women within their organization.

Leadership stereotypes have hampered women's treks up the career ladder (Flora, 2017). Women who have been viewed as power-seeking and self-promoting were typically not well received by men (Flora, 2017; Vial et al., 2016). Flora (2017) maintained many men "expect women to show feelings of communality instead" (p. 69). Displaying only masculine traits have led to stereotypes adversely affecting women leaders (Flora, 2017). Flora (2017) discovered women who take on masculine traits have been ridiculed and disliked. Khazan (2014) wrote this has occurred due to gender role violation. Gender role violation has explained why men and women view women leaders as less adept in the workforce (Khazan, 2014). Regrettably, women have been dealing with gender stereotypes and discrimination by disparaging one another (Flora, 2017). The Pew Research Center (2014) reported 35% of women stated they would rather work for a male boss and 23% preferred to work for a female boss. Research, however, has provided some promising evidence regarding women's perceptions of women leaders. According to Flora (2017), women who recently had female supervisors were more likely to favor having female supervisors in the future.

Lack of fit theory to the cycle of illegitimacy. Vial et al. (2016) found female leaders have been less accepted than male leaders. The lack of fit concept has been one of the ways researchers explained why workers have been averse to female leaders (Vial et al., 2016). Vial et al. (2016) stated the lack of fit theory, the mismatch between the traits associated with effective leaders and the traits associated with women, has driven the "expectations that women will be less competent leaders than men with identical credentials" (p. 403). Researchers have used gender stereotypes, biases, and the lack of fit theory to explain the model known as the cycle of illegitimacy (Vial et al., 2016).

Flora (2017) wrote the cycle of illegitimacy was a term utilized to describe the vicious cycle of when a woman in a leadership position has a more difficult time gaining her subordinates' respect and esteem. In turn, the less appreciation and respect a female leader received caused her subordinates to view her as less legitimate (Flora, 2016). The illegitimate view of female leadership has caused subordinates to become less obliging and more critical (Flora, 2016). Flora (2016) stated the common response of the female leader in this situation has been to respond unfavorably, thus, reinforcing the damaging cycle. Vial et al. (2016) wrote the cycle of illegitimacy has helped explain the persistence of the gender leadership gap.

Second-generational gender bias. Gender bias against women has been a natural occurrence for thousands of years (Grover, 2015). Grover (2015) wrote gender bias has been found in all institutions of life, such as educational, political, cultural, economic, and family structures. The earlier form of gender bias, known as first-generational gender bias, created overt prejudice and discrimination (Grover, 2015). In recent years, society's gender bias has transformed from overt discrimination to covert discrimination (Grover, 2015). This covert, implicit bias transpired when an individual has consciously spurned judgments based on stereotypes, but, at the same time, unconsciously made judgments founded on stereotypes (Hill et al., 2016). Hill et al. (2016) explained, "The social psychologists Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald introduced the concept of implicit bias in 1995, building on earlier findings showing individuals' actions are not always under their conscious control" (p. 24). Hill et al. (2016) wrote researchers have found implicit bias has been difficult to identify because it is revealed by in-group preferential treatment. Ibarra et al. (2013) discovered researchers

studying the under-representation of women in leadership positions had directed their focuses on the implicit bias, known as second-generational gender bias.

Ibarra and Petriglieri (2016) defined second-generational gender bias as the strong, hidden impediments to women's advancement in leadership roles. Second-generational gender bias has emerged from society's cultural ideas regarding gender (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016). Ibarra et al. (2013) and Grover (2015) found the barriers created by second-generational gender bias have unintentionally benefited men over women by reinforcing the ideology, traditions, and values which have supported male advancement. Grover (2015) stated, "As men are responsible for building organizational systems of the society in which we function, it is expected that these systems will benefit them, although they may not even recognize it or deny recognizing it" (p. 1). Furthermore, most women have yet to recognize they have been victims of this implicit bias (Ibarra et al., 2013). Ibarra et al. (2013) wrote women have been unaware of second-generational gender bias and the ramifications it has had on their professional careers, even when there was objective evidence of gender discrimination.

Research has identified four barriers that strengthen the presence of second-generational gender bias (Ibarra et al., 2013). First, having fewer females in leadership roles has created a system in which there have been fewer female role models (Ibarra et al., 2013). Ibarra et al. (2013) maintained this was problematic because having a limited number of women role models has led younger women aspiring to leadership roles to believe being a woman was a hindrance. Second, multiple institutional practices and employment customs have been designed to fit traditional male lives (Ibarra et al., 2013). Ibarra et al. (2013) wrote some leadership positions have required people to move

locations. Ibarra et al. (2013) elaborated, individuals who have obtained these positions

typically require a spouse who has no career of their own. This family dynamic has been

more typical for men, thus, giving them the advantage (Ibarra et al., 2013). Third,

women have lacked access to mentors in the workplace creating less networking

opportunities (Ibarra et al., 2013). Fourth, the discrepancy between the traditional

feminine traits and the traditional leadership traits have created a double bind for women

leaders (Ibarra et al., 2013). Ibarra et al. (2013) wrote traditional leadership traits have

been associated with masculinity. For women who have made it to the upper echelons of

the organizational hierarchy, they are seen as competent, yet not likable (Flora, 2017;

Ibarra et al., 2013).

Grover (2015) stated there are various strategies utilized by organizations and

women which have helped combat the effects of second-generational gender bias. One

strategy has been for organizations to make institutional issues, such as recruitment,

responsibilities, promotion, and evaluations gender-free (Grover, 2015). Another

strategy used to tackle the second-generational gender bias issue is having women

acknowledge the fact there has been an invisible gender bias problem in the workplace

(Grover, 2015). Grover (2015) explained having women seeking leadership positions to

think, feel, and act like a leader has been another successful strategy. Finally, grooming

other women for leadership roles has proven to be an effective method to become leaders

(Grover, 2015).

Summary

The gender leadership gap has been proven to exist in many aspects of the

American workforce (Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). Only 6% of

Fortune 500 companies' CEOs have been reported to be women (Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). Those in the realm of public education also have witnessed the gender leadership disparity (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Gupton, 2009; Kelsey et al., 2014; Klatt, 2014; Rosenberg, 2017). Rosenberg (2017) stated a little over one-fourth of America's school superintendents are women, yet women make up three-fourths of public school educators. Though there has been an increase in the percentage of female educational administrators, in 2017, women remained under-represented in the school superintendent leadership role (Connell et al., 2015; Gupton, 2009; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016).

The gender leadership gap has been established by cultural barriers, gender roles, stereotypes, and biases (Eaton & Rose, 2013; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Kelsey et al., 2014). These sociocultural factors have helped create a glass ceiling for women aspiring to leadership positions (Hymowitz, 2013; Ireland, 2014; Johns, 2013; U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). The evolution of traditional Westernized gender roles, due to the feminist movement and changing family structure, have moved more women from domestic duties to the workforce (Coontz, 2013; Weir, 2017; Weisberg & Galinsky, 2014). Despite women's increased involvement in the American labor force, women have not progressed in leadership roles at the same rate as men (Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017; Toossi & Morisi, 2017). Gender stereotypes and implicit bias have also prevented women from obtaining leadership positions (Flora, 2017; Grover, 2015; Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2015; Khazan, 2014; Reuben et al., 2014; Schieman et al., 2013; Silverman, 2015; Vial et al., 2016). Unfortunately, workplace stereotypes, the cycle of illegitimacy,

and second-generational gender bias have provided formidable barriers to women seeking

leadership positions (Flora, 2017; Grover, 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Vial

et al., 2016). Chapter Three will include the methodology of this study. Also, Chapter

Three will provide an in-depth analysis of the mixed-method approach and research

design utilized by the researcher.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The gender leadership gap, the disproportion of women in top leadership positions, has been present in nearly all facets of the American workforce (Dishman, 2016; Gupton, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Johns, 2013; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017; Warner & Corley, 2017). Hill et al. (2016) found researchers have analyzed the gender leadership gap phenomenon and its effects on the corporate world. Though women have made momentous gains in the U.S. labor force, their progress toward obtaining top leadership positions has stagnated (Dishman, 2016; Hill et al., 2016; Rockefeller Foundation, 2017; Toossi & Morisi, 2017). The Rockefeller Foundation (2017) reported only 6% of Fortune 500 companies have been led by women. Within the upper echelons of the educational sector, women have not fared much better (Hill et al., 2016; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016). Though 76% of public educators were reported to be women, only 27% of public school superintendents were reported to be female (Rosenberg, 2017). Thus, public education, a predominately female organization, has continued to be spearheaded by men (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Finnan et al., 2015; Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Kelsey et al., 2014; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016; Webb, 2016).

The researcher provided a detailed account of the research methodology used for this mixed-methods study. The researcher restated the problem, purpose of the study, and the two research questions guiding this study. The researcher used Chapter Three to describe the ethical considerations of the study. Furthermore, Chapter Three provided an in-depth account of the instrumentation created for this study. Finally, the researcher

used this chapter to explain the methods utilized to collect and analyze the data for this research project.

Problem and Purpose Overview

American decision-makers have made great strides in gender parity over the last few decades (Bergeron, 2015; Coontz, 2013; Eisenberg & Ruthsdotter, 1997; Gupton, 2009). Nevertheless, gender researchers have indicated the U.S. has continued to come up short in leveling the gender gap playing field (Hausmann et al., 2014; Leopold et al., 2016). Leopold et al. (2016) found, due to the United States' ranking within the *Global Gender Gap Report*, there has been a systematic gender gap dilemma within the United States. Most noticeably, one of the nation's biggest gender gap problem has involved the gender leadership gap (Dishman, 2016; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Johns, 2013; Warner & Corley, 2017). Hill et al. (2016) wrote the gender leadership imbalance has affected various aspects of the American workforce. Interestingly, the gender leadership gap has continued to be present within female enterprises, such as education (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Palmer, 2016; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016).

This gender leadership gap was examined furthered for numerous reasons. Research related to the gender leadership gap continued to enlighten individuals about the existence of the gender disparity. Added knowledge about the gender leadership imbalance has helped to reduce the implicit biases and stereotypes which have greatly contributed to the problem. Additionally, by examining the gender leadership gap, individuals became informed on how the problem can adversely affect both sexes. Once educated on the gender leadership gap phenomenon, institutions, such as businesses and

school districts, strived to create solutions to help attain gender parity. Specifically, devising solutions to address the gender leadership imbalance has increased the odds of achieving gender parity in public education.

The researcher closely examined the potential gender leadership gap among Missouri school superintendents. This study had multiple objectives. First, the study was conducted to determine which demographic variables showed the greatest impact on gender leadership. Second, the researcher conducted this study to analyze Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the variables which impacted the gender leadership gap in public education. Third, the analysis of the Missouri superintendents' perceptions provided possible solutions to the gender leadership gap dilemma.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What demographic variables show the greatest impact on gender leadership?

2. What are Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the variables impacting the gender leadership gap in public education?

      a. Gender roles

      b. Stereotypes

      c. Biases

Research Design

This study was developed to evoke the perceptions of Missouri school superintendents regarding the factors which impact the gender leadership gap in public education. The researcher accomplished this by gathering and analyzing data on Missouri superintendents' perceptions pertaining to their personal experiences as

superintendent and the obstacles women face when seeking the superintendency. The research design for this study was a mixed-method approach. The researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data on Missouri school superintendents' perceptions regarding the variables affecting the gender leadership gap in public education. Fraenkel et al. (2015) found researchers who utilized a mixed-methods approach to their research design supplied a more thorough comprehension of the research problem. The researcher chose a mixed-methods approach for this study, because it provided more detail about the superintendents' perceptions pertaining to the gender leadership gap.

The researcher used an online survey (see Appendix D) to measure the Missouri superintendents' perceptions. The survey was sent out electronically to all current Missouri school superintendents in 2018. The survey contained both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study. The researcher utilized a Likert scale for the quantitative portion of the study. After a review of the literature, the researcher decided to incorporate two surveys from previous studies. Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* and the Pew Research Center's (2015b) *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* were modified to create the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* (see Appendix D). The researcher used open-ended questions to identify common themes among the research participants for the qualitative portion of the study. Survey results were collected electronically, and all participants remained anonymous.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study was Missouri school superintendents. The list of Missouri school superintendents was identified through the Missouri School District

List (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017b). Currently, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2017b) found there were 561 Missouri superintendents (see Table 1). There were precisely 427 male superintendents and 134 female superintendents (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017b). In the case of this study, the sample and the population were identical. After the researcher received approval from Lindenwood University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A), all 561 Missouri superintendents were contacted electronically.

All Missouri superintendents received an electronic copy of the Informed Consent (see Appendix C). A link to the survey (see Appendix D) was included in the initial electronic communication. Participants were able to review the Informed Consent Form once they clicked on the link to the survey. Participants were then provided the opportunity to agree to participate in the study by clicking on the link below the Informed Consent Form. The superintendents who provided consent to participate in this study were able to start the survey by answering the questions through the available link. Participation was not forced, and all responses remained anonymous. To reach a level of significance, the researcher determined a minimum of 100 responses would be needed. Furthermore, the researcher determined at least 20% of the respondents would need to be women.

Table 1

Research Population and Sample: 2017-2018 Missouri Superintendents

Population/Sample Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Missouri Superintendents	561	100%
Men Superintendents	427	76.1%
Women Superintendents	134	23.8%

Note. Data provided by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2017b).

Research Bias

Researcher bias was defined as a process in which the researcher's personal experience, background, and goals can influence the outcome of the study (Maxwell, 2013). Maxwell (2013) explained, traditionally, research bias has been something researchers have sought to eliminate. However, Maxwell (2013) stated the complete exclusion of research bias from research goals is impossible and unnecessary. According to Maxwell (2013), "What is necessary is to be aware of these goals and how they may be shaping your research, and to think about how best to achieve these and to deal with possible negative consequences of their influence" (p. 27).   Since the researcher was a female, the researcher's personal and professional gender experience in educational administration could have unintentionally affected the research process and data analysis. By understanding the possibility of researcher bias, the researcher sought to eliminate any potential bias throughout the research process.

Ethical Considerations

Before seeking IRB approval, the researcher passed an National Institutes of Health Protection of Human Research Participants Online Training Examination. The researcher began conducting the study once approval from Lindenwood University's IRB was procured (see Appendix A). Upon receiving IRB approval, the researcher sent out an e-mail, which discussed the purpose of the study and invited all 561 superintendents to participate. The introductory e-mail (see Appendix B) provided a link to the online survey and explained to potential participants they could review the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C) once they clicked on the link to the online survey (see Appendix D). Furthermore, Missouri school superintendents were asked to review the copy of Informed Consent before they agreed to take the survey. Participants were able to provide consent to participate in the study by clicking the link at the bottom of the Informed Consent Form. Only participants who provided consent were able to take the online survey.

The primary investigator took steps to maintain privacy and confidentiality of participants. Thus, the researcher did not include the names or identification of the participants' school districts in which the superintendents served. The researcher asked participating superintendents to identify the region in which their school districts were included, but responding was voluntary. Since there were multiple districts within a region, anonymity was guaranteed. The researcher maintained confidentiality throughout the study, and all collected data—both electronic and hard copies—were secured through password and key entry.

Instrumentation

The researcher utilized a mixed-method approach in the instrumentation with a Likert-scale survey and open-ended written-response items. Specifically, the instrumentation used for this mixed-method study was an electronic survey administered through Google Form 2018 (see Appendix D). Fraenkel et al. (2015) stated researchers who utilize a mixed-methods approach have an advantage since researchers can collect and analyze multiple types of data. Thus, as stated, the researcher chose to use a mixed-methods approach, because it provided a more in-depth examination of the Missouri superintendents' perceptions about the factors influencing the gender leadership gap in public education (Fraenkel et al., 2015). After a review of the literature, the researcher chose to use a modified portion of two surveys—one designed by Askren-Edgehouse (2008) and the other developed by the Pew Research Center (2015b). The researcher created a survey based upon a compilation of items from the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* by Askren-Edgehouse (2008) and the *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* by the Pew Research Center (2015b). Thus, the blended instrument was titled, *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. The researcher obtained permission from Askren-Edgehouse (see Appendix E) and the Pew Research Center (see Appendix F) to use and to modify their survey instruments for this study.

Askren-Edgehouse's Ohio Women Superintendents Survey. Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) study focused on the personal and professional demographics and the barriers Ohio female superintendents experienced in their career paths while in the positions as school superintendents. In her study, Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) also examined the personal differences in skills, knowledge, and abilities of Ohio

superintendents who were women. In her research, Askren-Edgehouse (2008) accomplished this by collecting and analyzing data on the characteristics and career path barriers of Ohio women superintendents. Askren-Edgehouse's instrument, the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey*, included items from a previously conducted 2004 survey of female superintendents in a Midwestern state developed by Montz (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Askren-Edgehouse (2008) reported out of the 120 Ohio female superintendents, 77 (64%) participated in the study. Askren-Edgehouse's six-part survey consisted of 46 items (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). The survey included the following demographic sections: a) Part I contained district and board demographics; b) Part II consisted of career path information; and c) Part III included personal demographics (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Parts I, II, and III were given in a multiple choice and open-ended format (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008).

Also in this instrument, the researcher, Askren-Edgehouse (2008), requested information on characteristics, such as a) assertiveness, b) competence, and c) decisiveness, in Part IV. Part V comprised items rating one's knowledge, skills, and abilities (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Part VI of Askren-Edgehouse's survey of women superintendents asked participants to rate their beliefs pertaining to the barriers to female superintendency (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Part IV and Part V were formatted using open-ended questions and a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Disagree), to 2 (Mildly Disagree), to 3 (Mildly Agree), to 4 (Agree) (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Askren-Edgehouse (2008) formatted Part VI of the survey with a frequency scale and an open-ended question. The frequency scale ranged from 1 (Never), to 2 (Hardly Ever), to 3 (Sometimes), to 4 (Frequently) (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008).

Modifications to Askren-Edgehouse's 2008 survey. The researcher modified

sections and items from *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* created by Askren-

Edgehouse (2008). One of the most notable differences was the *Missouri Superintendent*

Gender and Leadership Survey polled Missouri male and female superintendents.

Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey only polled female Ohio superintendents. Therefore,

the researcher renamed the survey, since the instrument surveyed both genders. The

researcher believed it was very important to include both genders' opinions and

experiences in the study in order to obtain a complete picture of the gender leadership

phenomenon.

The researcher included similar demographic sections. Both surveys included

personal demographics and district and school board demographics. However, Askren-

Edgehouse (2008) titled one demographic section, "Career Paths" (p. 183). The

researcher changed the title of this section to "Professional Demographics." Within

Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey, the demographics were designed in the following

sequence: a) Part 1: District and Board Demographics, b) Part 2: Career Paths, and c) Part

3: Personal Demographics. The order was changed in the demographic sections of the

Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey to the following order: a) Part I:

Personal Demographics, b) Part II: Professional Demographics, and c) Part III: District

and School Board Demographics.

The researcher modified some of the items in each of the demographic sections.

Not all items within Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey were included in the *Missouri*

Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey. Part I of the *Missouri Superintendent*

Gender and Leadership Survey included six items, five of which were modified from

Questions 35, 36, 37, 38, and 40 from the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Questions 35, 36, 37, 38 and 40 dealt with personal demographics, such as ethnicity, age, marital status, number of children, and age of children living in the household during the first year as superintendent. The researcher modified the questions in wording and provided an additional multiple choice option of "choosing not to answer" or "choosing not to identify" for four of the six items within Part I of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*.

Part II of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* included seven items, six of which were modified from Questions 10, 14, 23, 26, 29, 30, 31, and 32 from the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Questions 10, 14, 23, 26, 29, 30, 31, and 32 included information pertaining to career path/professional demographics, such as highest degree earned, years as a classroom teacher, years as a superintendent, movement within superintendency positions, professional mentor(s), and gender of mentor(s) (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). The researcher reworded most of the questions coming from Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey. Questions 29 and 31 were combined into one question for the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. This led to Questions 30 and 32 to be combined into one question for the researcher's survey.

Part III of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* included four items, two of which were modified from Questions 4 and 5 from the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Askren-Edgehouse (2008) asked participants to share information pertaining to the number of students enrolled in their district and the number of women school board members their district had in Questions 4

and 5. The questions were reworded for the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. The format for answering the questions was modified too. Askren-Edgehouse (2008) utilized a short answer format for Questions 4 and 5. The researcher changed the format to multiple choice.

Part IV of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* included 10 items, six of which were modified from Questions 45 and 46 of the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Part 6 of Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey included survey items pertaining to the barriers women superintendents have experienced. The researcher included Question 45a/45g/45h/45i/45l in the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Askren-Edgehouse (2008) asked participants to rate their experiences with personal anxiety about the effect of their careers on family life, discrimination based on personal appearance, level of professional networking and mentoring, amount of family support, and the inability to relocate for new positions in Question 45 survey items. The researcher reworded the five items from Question 45 to make them pertain to the personal experiences of men and women superintendents. The researcher modified the format from a 4-point Likert scale to a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents were asked to respond to each item within Part IV: Personal Experiences as Superintendent by marking a 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), or 5 (Strongly Agree). Question 46 in the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* was an open-ended question which asked participants to provide comments regarding the career barriers they experienced (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). The researcher modified this question in the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and*

Leadership Survey to allow participants to provide additional comments regarding their personal experience as a superintendent and to clarify any of the items within the section.

Part V of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* included 16 items, two of which have been modified from Questions 45t and 46 of the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Askren-Edgehouse (2008) asked participants to rate how frequently males were seen as more qualified by the staff and community in item 45t. The researcher reworded Question 45t. The researcher modified the format from a 4-point Likert scale to a 5-point Likert scale. The 5-point Likert scale was the same as in Part IV of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey.* Question 46 of the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* was an open-ended question which asked participants to supply comments pertaining to the barriers they have experienced (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). The researcher kept the same open-ended format. The researcher reworded this question to include additional comments and/or opinions regarding the perceptions of the barriers to the female superintendency.

Pew Research Center's Gender and Leadership Online Survey. The Pew Research Center (2015b) conducted the *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* in November 2015. The Pew Research Center (2015b) electronically surveyed 1,835 American adults over their opinions related to gender leadership in American business and politics. Men constituted 914 participants and women made up 921 of the participants (Pew Research Center, 2015b). The survey consisted of 25 questions; however, the Pew Research Center (2015b) disclosed there were no Questions 2, 3, 11, 14, and 15. Also, Questions 9 and 10 were held for future reporting (Pew Research

Center, 2015b). The *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* broke all responses down into two categories: men and women (Pew Research Center, 2015b). The Pew Research Center (2015b) utilized a multiple-choice format for all questions. Respondents were requested to select which statement most closely matched their opinions, beliefs, and/or attitudes (Pew Research Center, 2015b).

Modifications to Pew Research Center's 2015 survey.

The researcher modified the Pew Research Center's (2015b) *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* because items within the survey addressed the gender leadership gap and possible barriers women experienced when seeking top leadership positions. Though the Pew Research Center's (2015b) survey focused on the business and political arena, the barriers have been relevant to all aspects of female leadership. Thus, modified items were changed to focus on the leadership position of school superintendent. Three items were incorporated from Pew Research Center's (2015b) *Gender and Leadership Online Survey*. The *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* included eight items, which were modified from Question 12, Questions 16a/16b/16c/16d/16f/16g, and Question 22d of the *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* (Pew Research Center, 2015b). All modified questions were included within Part V: Obstacles to Female Superintendency of the researcher's survey instrument.

The Pew Research Center's (2015b) researchers asked participants whether they believed it was easier for men or women to get top executive positions in business in Question 12. The researcher modified this question by asking if it was easier for men to become superintendents than women. The researcher included and modified most parts

of the Pew Research Center's (2015b) Question 16. The Pew Research Center

researchers requested participants to rate possible reasons why there were few top

executive positions filled by women in Questions 16a/16b/16c/16d/16f/16g. Possible

reasons included: a) family responsibilities, b) toughness of women, c) personal

networking and connections, d) higher standards women were held to, and e) the belief

women were not as good of managers as men (Pew Research Center, 2015b). Questions

16a/16b/16c/16d/16f/16g were modified into six questions. The six questions were

altered to specifically address the position of the school superintendency. Question 16e

from the Pew Research Center's (2015b) survey was omitted from the *Missouri*

Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey. Question 22d of Pew Research Center's

(2015b) survey was also modified and included in the researcher's survey. The Pew

Research Center's researchers asked participants to share their beliefs on whether fewer

women had the experience needed for higher political office in Question 22d. The

researcher modified this item to make it relevant to the administrative experience needed

for school superintendents. Though the Pew Research Center (2015b) requested

participants to respond using multiple choice format, the researcher required participants

to respond to all items in Part V using a 5-point Likert scale.

Additional aspects of the *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* were modified

for the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. The researcher

incorporated the gender and leadership portion of Pew Research Center's (2015b) survey

title into the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* title. Pew Research

Center's (2015b) survey, the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* had

male and female participants. Thus, the researcher included gender demographics in the survey.

Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey. The survey consisted of six parts and 45 items. Part I, Part II, and Part III consisted of personal, professional, and district demographics. The researcher asked participants to share their personal experiences as superintendent in Part IV. The researcher requested participants to relay their opinions on the various obstacles women faced when seeking the superintendency in Part V. Part VI solicited participants to provide open-ended responses about their personal experiences and/or opinions about the gender leadership gap in public education and the obstacles to the female superintendency.

Part I: Personal Demographics. Part I of the researcher's survey consisted of six items requesting personal demographic information. Part I of the survey asked participants to read each item and select the response which most closely matched their personal experience. Participants were asked to identify their gender, current age, and ethnicity. Participants were also requested to share their marital statuses, number of children, and the ages of children living in the household during their first year as superintendent. The study's participants were given the opportunity to choose not to answer the six items, if they deemed it necessary. The researcher utilized a multiple-choice and short answer format for the survey items in Part I. Six items have been modified from Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey*. One item was modified from Pew Research Center's (2015b) *Gender and Leadership Online Survey*.

Part II: Professional Demographics. Part II of the study's survey consisted of seven items soliciting professional demographic information. The researcher asked research participants to read each item and to select the response that most closely matched their professional experiences in Part II of the survey instrument. Participants were asked to share how many years they were a classroom teacher as well. Participants were also asked to share their ages during their first year as a school superintendent. Part II requested participants to share how many years they spent as a school superintendent and whether they spent those years in one school district or more. Furthermore, Part II requested respondents to identify the highest degree earned. Another item in Part II asked if participants had a mentor before becoming a superintendent or during their first year of the superintendency. If participants stated they had mentors, then they were asked to share the genders of their mentors. The items included in Part II of the survey were in multiple-choice and short answer. Six items were modified from Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey*. One item was created by the researcher.

Part III: District and School Board Demographics. Part III of the survey was comprised of four items inquiring about district and school board information. Part III of the survey asked participants to identify which region in which their school districts fell (see Figure 1). The eight districts were based on Missouri School Administrators' Association's (2017) (MASA) Districts Map. Research participants were given the choice to not identify with this item, if they chose not to identify. Part III requested participants to identify the type of district they lead. The researcher also requested participants to share how many students were enrolled in their school districts in Part III.

Lastly, Part III inquired about the number of female school board members the

participants' districts had. The researcher utilized a multiple-choice format for the items

in Part III of the survey.   Two items in Part III were developed by the researcher.

However, the other two items within Part III were modified from Askren-Edgehouse's

(2008) *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey.*

Figure 1. The Missouri School Administrators' Association (MASA) Districts Map. The

MASA divided Missouri into eight districts/regions: 1) Northwest, 2) Kansas City, 3)

West Central, 4) Southwest, 5) South Central, 6) Southeast, 7) St. Louis, and 8)

Northeast. The MASA map was retrieved from the MASA website at

www.masaonline.org.

Part IV: Personal Experience as Superintendent. Part IV of the *Missouri*

Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey was developed to help the researcher gain

insight into the participants' personal experiences as a school superintendent. Part IV

included 10 items. The researcher designed this portion of the survey using a Likert scale

format. Fraenkel et al. (2015) explained a Likert scale is a type of attitude scale.

According to Fraenkel et al. (2015), "The basic assumption that underlies all attitude

scales is that it is possible to discover attitudes by asking individuals to respond to a

series of statements of preference" (p. 127). Since the researcher wanted to gain an understanding of the participants' personal experiences as superintendents, the researcher decided a Likert scale would be the best method to use. The Likert scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree), to 2 (Disagree), to 3 (Neutral), to 4 (Agree), to 5 (Strongly Agree). Part IV of the survey also included one open-ended item which will allow participants to provide additional comments regarding their personal experience as a superintendent and/or to clarify any of the statements within Part IV.   Six items were redesigned from Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey. Three items were original items developed by the researcher.

Part V: Obstacles to Female Superintendency. Part V of the survey was created to help the researcher understand the barriers and/or obstacles to the female superintendency career path if there were any. This portion of the research instrument consisted of 16 items. Participants were asked to rate each item using a Likert scale. The Likert scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree), to 2 (Disagree), to 3 (Neutral), to 4 (Agree), to 5 (Strongly Agree). Part V also included one open-ended item which asked participants to supply additional comments regarding their personal experience and/or opinions regarding the perceived barriers to the female superintendency. Eight items were adapted from the Pew Research Center's (2015b) *Gender and Leadership Online Survey*. Seven items were original items created by the researcher. One item was modified from Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey*.

Part VI: Open-Ended Questions. Part VI, the last portion of the *Missouri Superintendent Survey: Gender and Leadership*, included two questions. Both questions were written in open-ended format. Participants were instructed to provide comments

about their personal experiences and/or opinions pertaining to the perceived gender

leadership gap within public education and the obstacles to the female superintendency.

Research participants were also requested to furnish possible solutions for achieving

gender parity in the role of superintendent. Both open-ended questions in Part V were

originally designed by the researcher.

Validity and reliability. Fraenkel et al. (2015) discussed the importance of

validity and reliability of research instruments. Fraenkel et al. (2015) maintained

validity, the meaningfulness, appropriateness, and correctness of the conclusions the

researcher makes, was vital when choosing an instrument to conduct research. Reliability

was defined as the dependability of answers or scores from one administration of a

research instrument to another (Fraenkel et al., 2015). Askren-Edgehouse's and the Pew

Research Center's surveys were tested for validity and reliability (Askren-Edgehouse,

2008; Pew Research Center, 2015b). Though the researcher used modified portions of

Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey and the Pew Research Center's (2015b) survey, the

researcher developed a few original survey items. Consequently, the researcher sought

advice from the dissertation committee and other experts in the field of educational

leadership and educational research to ensure the original items met validity and

reliability standards. Suggestions were given, and revisions were made. Hence, the

items within the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* met validity

and reliability standards.

Data Collection

Following the approval from Lindenwood University's IRB (see Appendix A),

the researcher contacted all 561 Missouri superintendents electronically using e-mail

addresses provided by MoDESE. The researcher sent out an e-mail invitation to the

Missouri superintendents explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their

participation in the study. The introductory e-mail (see Appendix B) included a link to

the online survey. The initial e-mail explained to participants that a copy of the Informed

Consent Form (see Appendix C) was included at the beginning of the online survey (see

Appendix D). The superintendents agreed to participate in the study by clicking the link

at the bottom of the Informed Consent Form. Participants who gave their consent to

participate in the survey were able to take the survey.

To administer the survey, the researcher used the online survey tool, Google

Forms 2018. The Google Form survey was formatted to keep the participants' responses

confidential. The superintendents who agreed to participate in the study and completed

the online survey remained anonymous. Participants had two weeks to complete the

online survey. After one week, the researcher sent out an e-mail to remind participants to

complete the survey, if they had not already done so. The researcher allowed participants

an additional week to complete the survey. After two weeks, the researcher printed the

survey's results from Google Form and kept them in a locked filing cabinet. Doing so

ensured the confidentiality of participants' responses.

Data Analysis

Once the data had been collected, the researcher began the data analysis portion of

the study. Fraenkel et al. (2015) defined data analysis as any statistical technique used to

analyze and to describe the data collected. Google Form 2018, the online tool used to

create the survey, disaggregated the data. The researcher used Google Form and

Microsoft Excel as the primary data analysis tools for the study. Descriptive statistics was utilized by the researcher to explain the data collected from the participants.

The measures of central tendency, the mode, median, and mean were the primary descriptive statistical techniques utilized for data analysis. Fraenkel et al. (2015) wrote the measures of central tendency or averages allow researchers to recapitulate the data using a frequency distribution with one number. The researcher also used the data analysis technique known as qualitizing. Since the study utilized a mixed-method approach, the researcher converted quantitative data into qualitative data. Fraenkel et al. (2015) maintained qualitizing is useful when a researcher wants to group individuals who have similar quantitative characteristics together. The survey findings are presented in detail in Chapter Four.

Summary

Chapter Three included the research methodology of the study. The researcher recapitulated the gender leadership gap problem, purpose of the study, and two research questions. The researcher utilized a mixed-methods approach for the research design. An online survey was used as the research instrument. A total of 561 Missouri school superintendents made up the population and sample of the study. After receiving IRB approval from Lindenwood University, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the research participants. The data analysis will be included in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

Researchers have identified a gender leadership gap within the school superintendency (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Finnan et al., 2015; Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Kelsey et al., 2014; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016). In 2016, 27% of the nation's school superintendents were female (Rosenberg, 2017). The primary investigator chose to explore the gender leadership disparity in public education in regards to the top leadership position—the school superintendent. The purpose of the study was threefold: a) to determine what demographic variables had the most influence on gender leadership, b) to determine Missouri school superintendents' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions of the factors impacting the gender leadership gap in public education, and c) to determine possible solutions to the gender leadership imbalance. The following two research questions guided this study:

1. What demographic variables show the greatest impact on gender leadership?

2. What are Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the variables impacting the gender leadership gap in public education?

    a. Gender roles

    b. Stereotypes

    c. Biases

The researcher utilized a mixed-method approach in the research methodology, employing instrumentation with a Likert-scale survey and open-ended written-response items. Within the quantitative portion of the survey, the participants rated each item by marking a 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, or 5=Strongly Disagree. The researcher created a survey by selecting and modifying items from the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* by Askren-Edgehouse (2008) and the *Gender and*

Leadership Online Survey by the Pew Research Center (2015b), which was uploaded into Google Forms.

Participants

The target population and sample were Missouri school superintendents for the 2017-2018 school year. Of the 561 Missouri superintendents, 427 (76.1%) were male and 134 (23.8%) were female. All 561 Missouri superintendents were contacted electronically and asked to complete the online survey titled *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* (see Appendix D). Precisely 137 (24.4%) Missouri school superintendents completed the survey; 91 (67.9%) were male superintendents, and 43 (32.1%) were female superintendents (see Table 2). Three participants out of the 137 respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1. The primary investigator collected survey responses using Google Forms.

Table 2

Gender of Research Participants

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male Superintendents	91	67.9%
Female Superintendents	43	32.1%
Total	134	100%

Note. Data collected from Item 1 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Three participants chose not to respond to this survey item.

Research Question One

The first question guiding this study was:

What demographic variables show the greatest impact on gender leadership?

Missouri superintendents were asked to share personal, professional, and school district demographic information in Parts I, II, and III of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Items 1 through 17 consisted of the demographic survey items. The results were displayed in Tables 2 through 18.

Table 3

Age of Superintendents

Age Range	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
Younger than 30	1	0	1	0
30-40 years	16	8	8	0
41-50 years	67	51	16	0
51-60 years	39	22	15	2
Older than 60 years	13	10	3	0
Chose not to answer	0	0	0	0
Total	136	91	43	2

Note. Data collected from Item 2 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. One participant chose not to respond to this survey item. Two of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

According to Table 3, the majority (49.2%; *n*=67) of the superintendents fell into the 41 to 50 years of age category; 56% (*n*=51) of male superintendents and 37.2%

(*n*=16) of female superintendents. Precisely 28.6% (*n*=39) of research participants fell

into the 51 to 60 years age bracket; 24.1% (*n*=22) of male superintendents and 34.8%

(*n*=15) of female superintendents fell into the 51 to 60 years age bracket. Nearly 12%

(*n*=16) of superintendents fell into the 30 to 40 years age bracket. Roughly 10% (*n*=13)

of Missouri superintendents were older than 60 years of age. Less than 1% (*n*=1) of the

superintendents were younger than 30 years old.

Table 4

Ethnicity of Superintendents

Ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
Native American or Alaskan Native	1	1	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	0
Black or African American	2	0	2	0
Hispanic or Latino	1	1	0	0
White (non-Hispanic)	130	89	39	2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Other	1	0	1	0
Chose not to Identify	1	0	1	0
Total	136	91	43	2

Note. Data collected from Item 3 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. One participant chose not to respond to this survey item. Two of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

As shown in Table 4, nearly all of the Missouri superintendents, or 95.5% (*n*=130), surveyed were White (non-Hispanic). Of the White (non-Hispanic) superintendents surveyed, 68.4% (*n*=89) were men and 30% (*n*=39) were women. One male superintendent identified as Native American or Alaskan Native (0.7%). Another male superintendent identified as Hispanic or Latino (0.7%). Two female superintendents identified as Black or African American (1.4%). One female superintendent identified as 'Other' (0.7%). One female research participant chose not to identify (0.7%). No research participants identified as Asian or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Overall, three female superintendents (6.9%) and two male superintendents (2.1%) were minorities. Thus, the data showed minority representation in the Missouri school superintendency position was severely lacking in both genders.

Table 5

Marital Status of Superintendents

Marital Status	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
Single	2	0	2	0
Married	128	88	38	2
Divorced	5	3	2	0
Widowed	0	0	0	0
Domestic Partnership	1	0	1	0
Chose not to identify	0	0	0	0
Total	136	91	43	2

Note. Data collected from Item 4 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. One participant chose not to respond to this survey item. Two of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

The vast majority of Missouri school superintendents were married ($n=128$; 94.1%) (see Table 5). Two female superintendents reported being single (1.5%). Five of the superintendents (3.6%), three males and two females, divulged they were divorced. One female superintendent reported being in a domestic partnership (0.7%). None of the research participants distinguished themselves as widowed. Finally, a higher percentage of female superintendents (11.6%; $n=5$) than male superintendents (3.2%; $n=3$) were not married.

Table 6

Number of Children

Number of Children	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
None	8	4	4	0
1	20	13	7	0
2	61	41	19	1
3-5	44	31	13	0
6	3	2	0	1
Chose not to Answer	0	0	0	0
Total	136	91	43	2

Note. Data collected from Item 5 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. One participant chose not to respond to this survey item. Two of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

According to Table 6, approximately 44.8% (*n*=61) of the superintendents reported having two children; 30% (*n*=41) were male superintendents and 14% (*n*=19) were female superintendents. Thirty-two percent (*n*=44) of respondents reported having three to five children; 22.7% (*n*=31) were men and 9.5% (*n*=13) were women. Nearly 15% (*n*=20) of the research participants had one child. Approximately, 6% of the respondents, four men and four women, of respondents did not have children. Only 2.1% (men *n*=2) of superintendents reported to have six or more children. Out of the total number of male participants who responded to this survey item (*n*=91), 36.2% had three

or more children. Out of the total number of female participants who responded to this survey item (*n=43*), 30% had three or more children.

Table 7

Age of Youngest Child in Superintendents' Households during First Year of Superintendency

Age Range of Children	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
No children	4	1	3	0
5 years old or younger	19	9	10	0
6-12 years old	15	8	7	0
13-17 years old	25	18	7	0
18 + years old	71	55	13	2
Total	134	91	40	2

Note. Data collected from Item 6 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Two female participants and one 'No Gender Identified' participant chose not to respond to this item. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

Item 6 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* asked participants to list the ages of their children living in their household during the first year of their superintendency. The researcher collected the data and included the age of the youngest child mentioned in Table 7. Overall, 52.9% (*n=71*) of the superintendents' youngest children were 18 years or older. The youngest children of 25 participants (18.6%) were 13 years to 17 years old. Nineteen superintendents (14.1%) had children

five years old or younger. Fifteen (11.1%) school superintendents' youngest children fell

between the ages of six to 12 years of age. Four (5.9%) participants reported they had

zero children during their first year of their superintendency. The majority, 42.5%

(*n*=17), of the female superintendents had children ages 12 years or younger during their

first year of their superintendency. Only 17 (18.6%) male superintendents had children

12 years or younger during year one of their superintendency. Most (60.4%; *n*=55) of the

male participants' youngest children were adults during their first year serving as

superintendents.

Table 8

Number of Years as a Classroom Teacher

Years as Classroom Teacher	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
0 years	1	0	1	0
1-3 years	13	9	4	0
4-7 years	57	43	14	0
8-12 years	43	29	11	3
13 years or more	21	8	13	0
Total	135	89	43	3

Note. Data collected from Item 7 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Two participants chose not to respond to this item. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

As shown in Table 8, most of the superintendents (42%; *n*=57) had four to seven years of teaching experience before they became administrators. Approximately 32% (*n*=43) of the participants divulged having eight to 12 years of teaching experience. However, nearly 16% (*n*=21) of Missouri school superintendents expressed having 13 or more years of experience in the classroom. One female participant reported she had zero years of experience in the classroom before obtaining an administrative position. Interestingly, 39% (*n*=52) of male superintendents shared having seven years or less teaching experience, while only 14% (*n*=19) of women reported having seven years or less teaching in the classroom. Lastly, the majority of female superintendents, 55.8% (*n*=24), had eight or more years of experience in the classroom. Whereas, the majority of male superintendents, 58.4% (*n*=52), had seven years or less teaching experience in the classroom.

Table 9

Number of Years as a Superintendent

Years as a Superintendent	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
1-3 years	41	25	16	0
4-7 years	46	29	15	2
8-11 years	25	17	7	1
12 years or more	25	20	5	0
Total	137	91	43	3

Note. Data collected from Item 8 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

Many of the Missouri superintendents (33.5%; *n*=46) reported having been a superintendent from four to seven years (see Table 9). Nearly 19% (*n*=41) of the research participants expressed they had one to three years of experience as a school superintendent. Of the female superintendents (*n*=43) who completed this survey item, 72% (*n*=31) reported they had been a superintendent for seven years or less. On the other hand, only 59% (*n*=54) of the male superintendents reported as having served in the superintendent position for seven or less years. Interestingly, 25 (18%) of the participants had served 12 years or more in the superintendency role. However, 80% (*n*=20) of those with 12 or more years of experience as a school superintendent were male.

Table 10

Mobility of the Superintendents' Careers

Mobility Status	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
Served within the same district	80	46	31	3
Served multiple districts	57	45	12	0
Total	137	91	43	3

Note. Data collected from Item 9 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey.* Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

The mobility statuses of Missouri school superintendents were depicted in Table 10. Most superintendents (*n*=80; 58%) had served within the same school district for their entire superintendency careers. Whereas, the male superintendents' mobility statuses were nearly divided equally between serving within the same district and serving multiple districts; 72% (*n*=31) of female superintendents reportedly served the same school districts throughout their careers. Thus, only 28% (*n*=12) of the women surveyed had served as school superintendents within multiple districts.

Table 11

Age of Superintendents during First Year of Superintendency

Age	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
Younger than 30 years	5	3	2	0
30-40 years	52	34	18	0
41-50 years	63	48	12	3
51-60 years	16	5	11	0
Older than 60 years	1	1	0	0
Total	137	91	43	3

Note. Data collected from Item 10 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

Most of the Missouri superintendents, 46% (*n*=63), reported being between the ages of 41 to 50 years old when they began their careers as school superintendents. Exactly 41.6% (*n*=57) of the research participants stated they were 40 years old or younger when they began their superintendency career. Approximately, 12% (*n*=17) of the school superintendents divulged they were 51 years old or older when they began their careers as school superintendents. Within the 51 years or older age range, a higher percentage of women (25.5%; *n*=11) started their superintendency careers later in life than the men (6.5%; *n*=6). However, 46.5% of the female superintendent population reportedly started their careers at 40 years old or younger. In comparison, 40.6% (*n*=37)

of male participants started their careers in the role as superintendents at 40 years old or

younger.

Table 12

Superintendents' Highest Degrees Earned

Type of Degree	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
Master's degree	1	1	0	0
Specialist degree	50	28	21	1
Doctoral degree	86	62	22	2
Total	137	91	43	3

Note. Data collected from Item 11 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

The bulk of Missouri school superintendents, 62.7% ($n=86$), had their doctoral

degree (see Table 12). Specifically, 68% ($n=62$) of the male superintendent population

had their doctoral degree, while 48.8% ($n=21$) of the female superintendent population

held the same degree. Roughly, 36% ($n=50$) of research participants reported their

highest earned degree as a specialist degree. Only one male superintendent (0.7%)

disclosed having a master's degree as his highest degree earned.

Table 13

Mentorship Experiences of Superintendents

Mentorship Experience	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
Experienced Mentorship	116	77	36	3
No Mentorship	21	14	7	0
Total	137	91	43	0

Note. Data collected from Item 12 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

As shown in Table 13, the vast majority of Missouri superintendents, 84.6% (*n*=116), reported having a mentorship experience. A little over 15% (*n*=21) of the research participants revealed they did not have a mentor to assist them in their preparation for the school superintendency. Precisely, 16.2% (*n*=7) of the female participant population and 15.3% (*n*=14) of the male participant population reportedly did not have a mentor. Thus, statistics on both genders depicted a similar mentorship experience.

Table 14

Gender of Superintendents' Mentors

Mentors' Genders	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
Male Mentors	93	63	28	2
Female Mentors	22	14	8	0
Total	115	78	36	2

Note. Data collected from Item 13 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Twenty-one participants were not included in this table, because they answered "No" to Item 12. One 'No Gender Identified' respondent chose not to answer this item. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

As shown in Table 14, almost 81% (*n*=115) of the Missouri school superintendents had a male mentor and 19% (*n*=22) had a female mentor who guided them in their preparation for the superintendency. Of the female participant population, 77.7% (*n*=28) had male mentors, while 22.2% (*n*=8) had female mentors. In comparison, 80.7% (*n*=63) of the male participant population had a male mentor, while 17.9% (*n*=14) had a female mentor.

Table 15

Regions of Missouri Superintendents' School Districts

Regions	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
(1) Northwest	22	14	8	0
(2) Kansas City	6	6	0	0
(3) West Central	16	12	4	0
(4) Southwest	29	21	8	0
(5) South Central	19	11	7	1
(6) Southeast	15	11	3	1
(7) St. Louis	13	6	7	0
(8) Northeast	17	10	6	1
(9) Chose not to identify	0	0	0	0
Total	137	91	43	3

Note. Data collected from Item 14 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

Table 15 displayed the eight districts/regions to which the participating Missouri school superintendents belonged. The eight regions were identified by MASA's (2017) Districts Map (see Figure 1). Arranged in order from largest percentage of Missouri superintendents to the smallest percentage, the following is the list of regions Missouri superintendents belonged to: a) Southwest (21.1%; *n*=29); b) Northwest (16%; *n*=22); c)

South Central (13.8%; *n*=19); d) Northeast (12.4%; *n*=17); e) West Central (11.6%;

n=16); f) Southeast (10.9%; *n*=15); g) St. Louis (9.4%; *n*=13); and h) Kansas City (4.3%;

n=6). The majority of the male superintendent population, 23% (*n*=21) belonged to the

Southwest region. Most of the female participants belonged to two regions: Northwest

(18%; *n*=8) and Southwest (18%; *n*=8). Additionally, no female participants belonged to

the Kansas City region. However, in the other metropolitan region, St. Louis, the female

participants made up 53.8% (*n*=7) of the total number of participating superintendents

(*n*=13) from that area.

Table 16

Participants' Types of School Districts

Type of Districts	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
Public	132	91	38	3
Private	0	0	0	0
Charter	5	0	5	0
Total	137	91	43	3

Note. Data collected from Item 15 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

According to Table 16, over 96% (*n*=132) of the Missouri school superintendents

led public school districts. Only 3% (*n*=5) of the superintendents led charter schools. All

five (100%) charter schools' leaders were female. Specifically, 100% (*n*=91) of the male

superintendents were public school leaders. Approximately, 88% (*n*=38) of the female

participant population was in charge of public school districts.

Table 17

Number of Students in School Districts

Number of Students	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
200 or less	20	8	11	1
200–1,000	67	44	21	2
1,000–5,000	41	32	9	0
5,000–10,000	8	6	2	0
10,000 +	1	1	0	0
Total	137	91	43	3

Note. Data collected from Item 16 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

The largest percentage of the Missouri superintendents, 48.9% (*n*=67), had 200 to

1,000 students within their school districts (see Table 17). Forty-one participants

(29.9%) were leaders of school districts with 1,000 to 5,000 pupils. Next, 14.5% (*n*=20)

of the superintendents led school districts with an enrollment of 200 or less students.

Only 6.5% (*n*=9) of the Missouri superintendents were in charge of school districts that

enrolled 5,000 or more students. Approximately, 35% (*n*=32) of the male

superintendents surveyed governed LEAs with a student population ranging from 1,000

to 5,000 students. Thirty-two (74.4%) of the female participants were leaders of school

districts that housed 1,000 students or less. On the other end of the spectrum, only 4.6%

(*n*=2) of the female participant population spearheaded larger school districts with

student enrollments ranging from 5,000 or more students. Seven (7.6%) of the male

superintendent population were in charge of school districts with 5,000 or more students.

Table 18

Number of Female School Board Members

Number of Female School Board Members	Total	Men	Women	No Gender Identified
0	17	10	6	1
1	26	15	11	0
2–3	68	49	18	1
4–7	26	17	8	1
Total	137	91	43	3

Note. Data collected from Item 17 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Three of the respondents were not included in the gender-disaggregated data, because they chose not to list their gender in Item 1.

As shown in Table 18, most (49.6%; *n*=68) of the Missouri superintendents'

school districts had two to three women school board members. Seventeen (12.4%)

superintendents claimed their school boards had no female board members. Twenty-six

(18.9%) superintendents disclosed their school districts had only one female board

member. Another 26 (18.9%) participants reported their school districts had four to

seven female board members. The responses of both genders of superintendents showed 18.6% (*n*=17) of male population and 18.4% (*n*=8) of the female population had school boards with a majority (four or more) of female members. Hence, the majority of both genders' school districts, 81.3% (*n*=74) of the male superintendents and 81.3% (*n*=35) of the women superintendents, reported a minority (three or less) of female representation on their school boards.

Research Question Two

The second research question guiding this study was:

What are Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the variables impacting the gender leadership gap in public education?

    a. *Gender roles*

    b. *Stereotypes*

    c. *Biases*

Variable a: Gender roles.

Quantitative data analysis: Gender roles. The researcher included various items from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* in order to determine Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the influence gender roles played in the gender leadership gap in public education. Items 18, 19, 20, and 26 in Part IV (Personal Experiences as Superintendent) and Items 28, 40, 41, and 42 in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency) were utilized to assist the researcher in answering the gender role portion of Question Two. With the exceptions of Questions 27 and 43, Part IV and Part V were quantitative items. The researcher asked participants to rate each item using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Figure 2 displays the mean of participants' responses to Item 18. Item 18 asked participants whether they had experienced anxiety about the effect their careers had on their families. The researcher compared the means of the total participants—male superintendents, female superintendents, and the 'No Gender Identified' participants (see Figure 2). The mean response from both genders was nearly exact—3.8 (Neutral to Agree) mean of male superintendents and 3.83 (Neutral to Agree) of female superintendents. However, the mean of the 'No Gender Identified' participants was 5 (Strongly Agree). The mode among the participants varied. The mode for the total superintendent population was 5 or Strongly Agree. The mode for the male superintendents was 4 or Agree. The mode for female superintendents was 5 and the mode for the 'No Gender Identified' participants was 5 or Strongly Agree. The majority (70%; $n=96$) of the total population reported experiencing anxiety about the effect of their careers on their families. Twenty-three (16.7%) of the superintendents had not experienced anxiety about the effect of their educational administration careers on their families. The majority, 62.7% ($n=27$), of female superintendents agreed with Item 18; 18.6% ($n=8$) of the female superintendents disagreed. Most (72.5%; $n=66$) of the male superintendents agreed with Item 18, while 15 male superintendents (16.4%) disagreed.
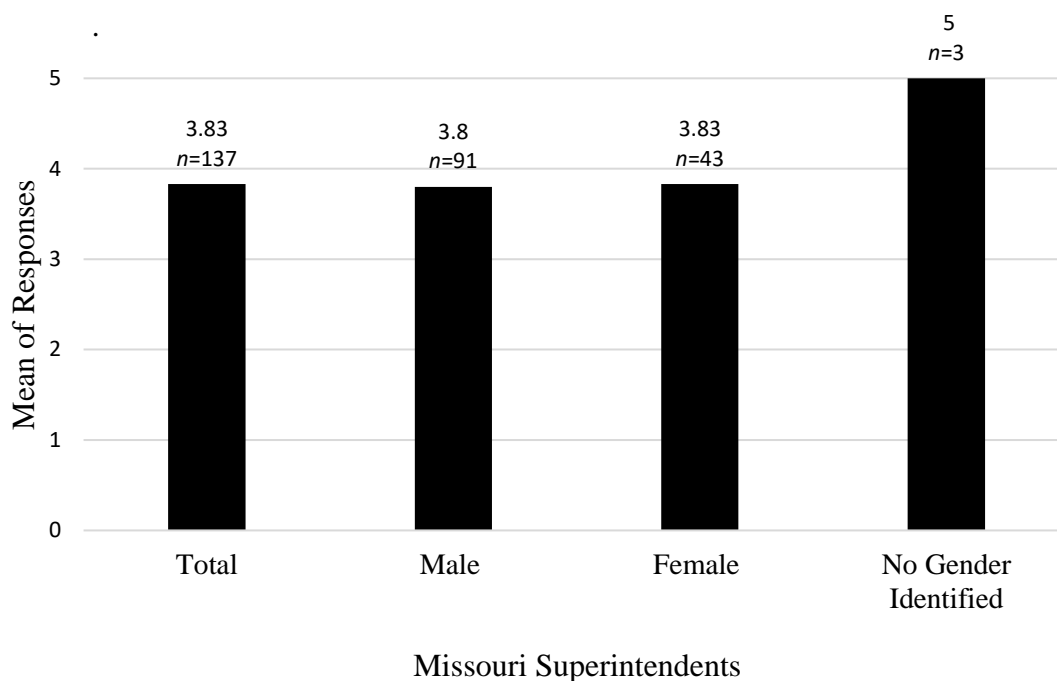
Figure 2. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 18: I have experienced anxiety about the effect my career has on my family.* 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Figure 3 illustrates the mean responses of Item 19 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey.* Item 19 asked respondents whether they lacked family support. The primary investigator analyzed the mean scores of the Missouri school superintendents. The mean for all of the superintendents combined was 1.37 or Strongly Disagree. The mean for the male superintendents was 1.56 or Disagree. The mean for the female superintendents was 1.62 or Disagree and the mean for the 'No Gender Identified' participants was 1.3 or Strongly Disagree. The mode for all categories of research participants was 1 (Strongly Disagree). Approximately 85% (*n*=117) of the

Missouri superintendents, 86% (*n*=37) of the female participants and 84.6% (*n*=77) of the

male participants, believed they had sufficient family support. Thirteen superintendents

(9.4%) were neutral about Item 19. Only 5.1% (*n*=7) of the Missouri superintendents

lacked sufficient family support.
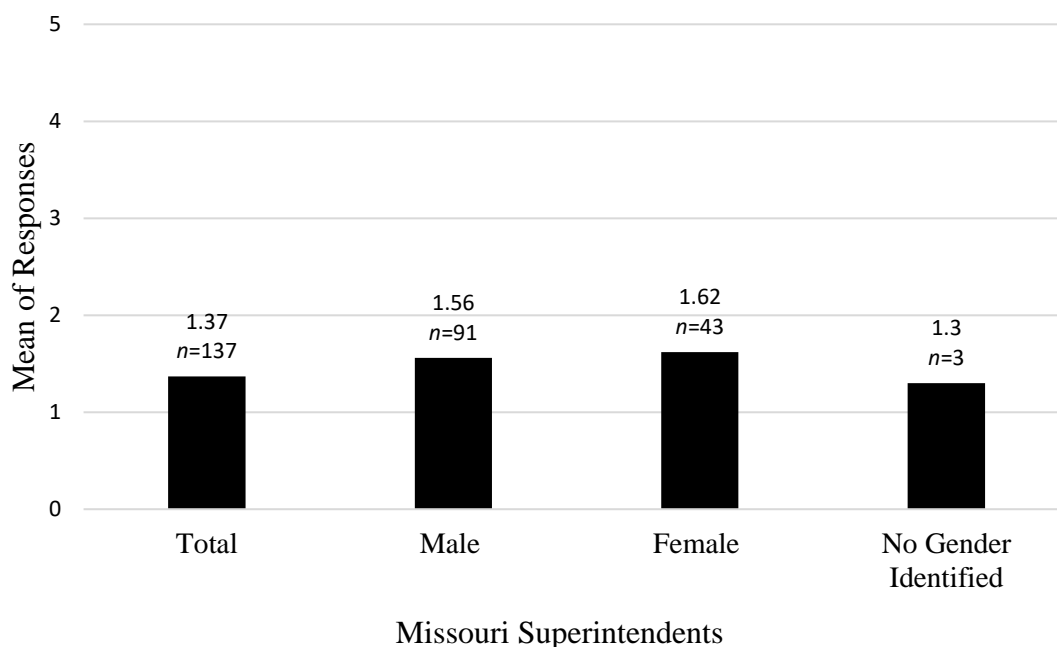
Figure 3. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 19: I lack sufficient family*

support. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 20 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* requested

Missouri superintendents to share their abilities to relocate for a new position. As shown

in Figure 4, the mean for all the superintendents was 2.67 or Disagree to Neutral. The

mean for the male superintendents was 2.46 or Disagree. The female superintendents had

a mean of 3.09, which represented Neutral. The 'No Gender Identified' participants had

a 4.6 (Strongly Agree) mean. The mode for the total number of superintendents and the

male superintendents was 1 or Strongly Disagree. However, the mode for the female population and the 'No Gender Identified' was 5 (Strongly Agree). The majority (n=72; 52.5%) of all superintendents surveyed disagreed with Item 20. When the female superintendents' responses were compared with the male superintendents' responses, a higher percentage (41.8%; n=18) of females reported they did not have the ability to relocate for a new position versus the males (24.1%; n=22).
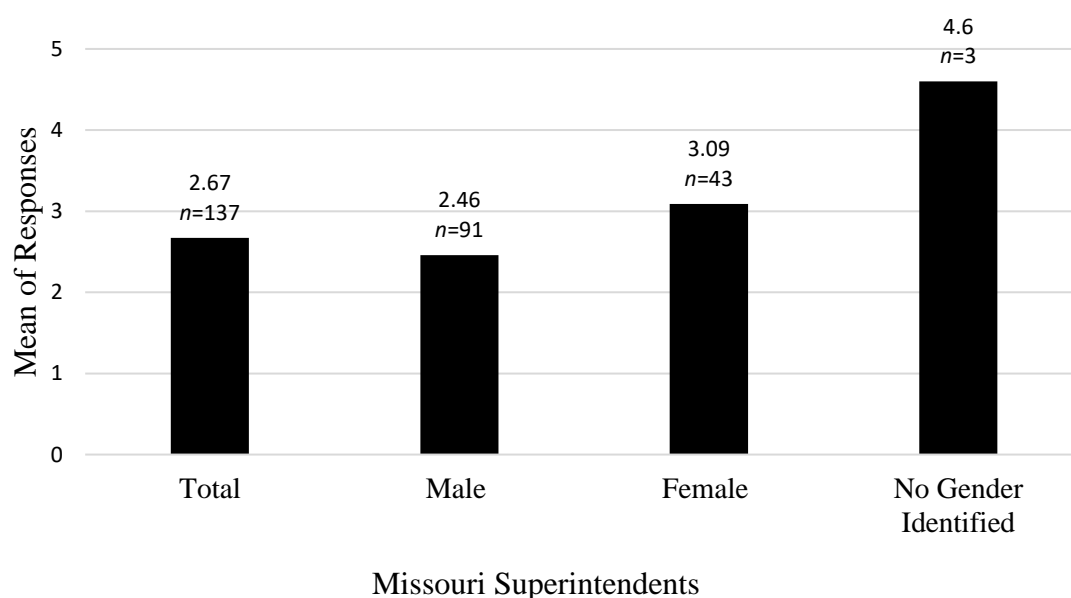
Figure 4. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 20: I do not have the ability to relocate for a new position.* 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 26 from the online survey asked the research participants to share whether their communities expected them to be assertive, decisive, and ambitious. The means of the research participants varied (see Figure 5). The mean for all of the superintendents

was 4.07 or Agree. The female participants had a 4.23 (Agree) mean. The male

participants had a 3.98 (Neutral to Agree) mean. The mean for the 'No Gender

Identified' was 4.33 or Agree. The Missouri superintendents, male superintendents, and

the 'No Gender Identified' superintendents had a mode of 4 or Agree. The female

superintendents' mode was 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree). Most (81.6%; *n*=111) of

the superintendents agreed with this statement. Only five participants (3.6%) disagreed.

Interestingly, a slightly higher percentage of (4.4%; *n*=3) males did not believe their

community expected them to be assertive, decisive, and ambitious versus the (2.3%; *n*=1)

females. All three (100%) 'No Gender Identified' participants agreed with Item 26.
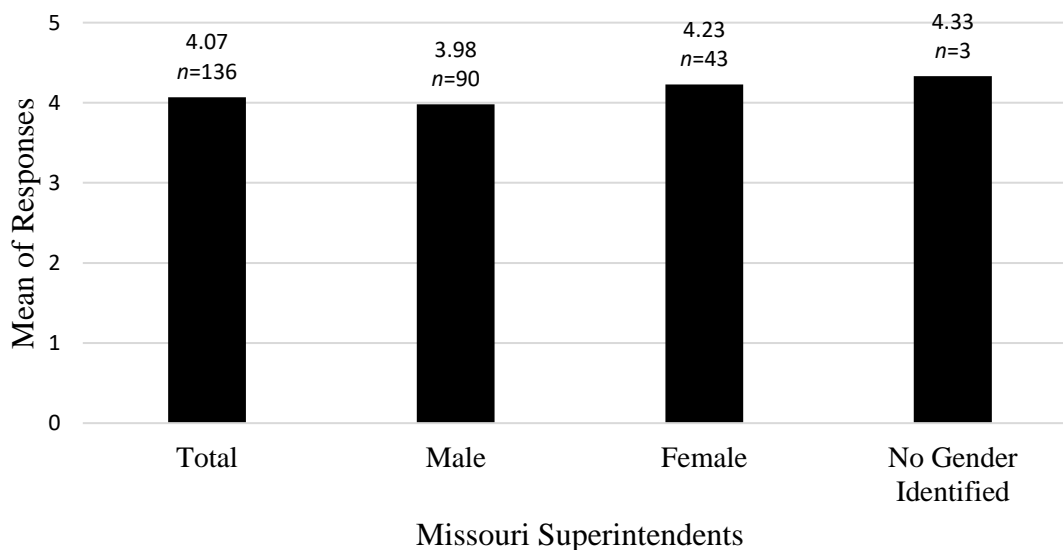
Figure 5. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 26: The community
expects me to be assertive, decisive, and ambitious.* One male participant chose not to
respond to Item 26. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and
5=Strongly Agree.

Item 28 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* sought to discover the school superintendents' perceptions about women's family responsibilities being an obstacle for females seeking the superintendency. Figure 6 shows the various means of Item 28. The mean for all of the Missouri superintendents was 2.96 (Disagree to Neutral). The male superintendents mean was 2.73 or Disagree to Neutral. The mean for the female superintendents was 3.44 or Neutral. The mean for the 'No Gender Identified' was a 3.0 or Neutral. The mode for the Missouri superintendents and male superintendents was 3 (Neutral). The female superintendents' mode was 4 (Agree). The mode for the three 'No Gender Identified' participants' was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 3 (Neutral), and 5 (Strongly Agree).

Out of all the superintendents, 31.8% (*n*=43) agreed, 34% (*n*=46) were neutral, and 34% (*n*=46) did not view women's responsibilities as an obstacle for females seeking superintendency positions. However, 25 (58.1%) female superintendents agreed with Item 28, while eight (18.6%) disagreed. The majority (39.3%; *n*=35) of the male superintendents rated Item 28 as neutral. Thirty-four (38.2%) male superintendents did not view the family responsibilities of women as obstacles for females seeking the superintendency. Yet, 22.4% (*n*=20) of men believed women's family responsibilities were impediments to women striving for the superintendency.
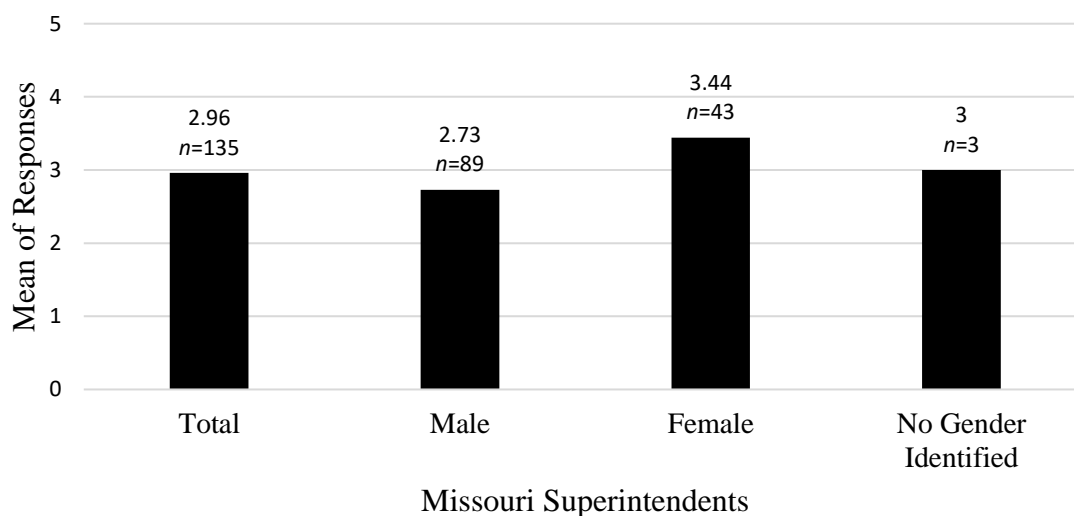
Figure 6. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 28: Women's family responsibilities are not an obstacle for females seeking the superintendency.* Two male participants chose not to respond to Item 28. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Figure 7 illustrates the mean responses of Item 40 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. Item 40 asked respondents whether they believed male superintendents were viewed as having better skills in finance and budgeting than female superintendents. The mean for all of the superintendents was 2.79 (Disagree to Neutral). The male participants' mean was 2.58 or Disagree to Neutral. The mean for the female participants was 3.23 or Neutral. The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mean was 2.6 or Disagree to Neutral. The mode for all of the Missouri superintendents, as a whole, and the male superintendents was 3 (Neutral). The mode for the female superintendents was 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree). The mode for the three 'No Gender Identified' participants was 1

(Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), and 5 (Strongly Agree). Overall, 51 participants

(37.5%) disagreed with Item 40. Forty-six (33.8%) of the Missouri superintendents rated

Item 40 as a 3 (Neutral). Thirty-nine (28.6%) participants agreed with Item 40 in the

online survey. Most (42.2%; $n=38$) of the male participants did not believe most people

viewed male superintendents as having better financial and budgeting skills.

Approximately, 21% ($n=19$) of the male research participants agreed. Thirty-three

(36.6%) male participants gave Item 40 a neutral rating.   Most of the female participants,

44.1% ($n=19$) believed male superintendents have been viewed as having better skills in

finance and budgeting. Eleven (25.5%) female participants disagreed. Thirteen (30.2%)

female participants rated Item 40 as neutral.
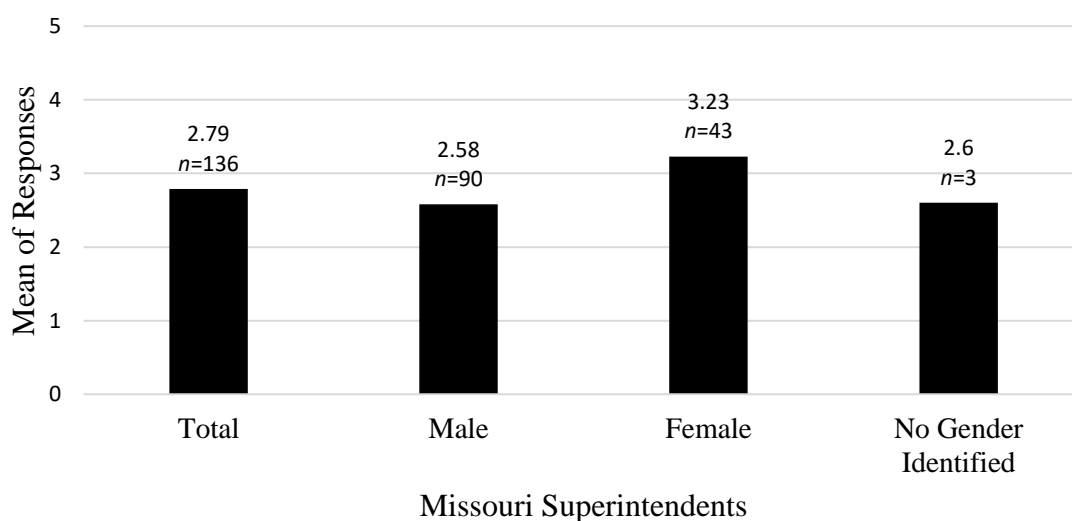
Figure 7. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 40: Male superintendents*

are viewed as having better skills in finance and budgeting. One male participant chose

not to respond to Item 40. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and

5=Strongly Agree.

Item 41 within the online survey asked the research participants whether they believed male superintendents were viewed as more assertive and decisive than their female counterparts. The means of the research participants varied (see Figure 8). The mean for all the Missouri superintendents and the 'No Gender Identified' participants was 3 (Neutral). The male participants' mean was 2.78 or Disagree to Neutral. The mean for the female participants was 3.46 or Neutral. The mode for all the total number of participants and the male participants was 3 (Neutral). The female participants' mode was 4 (Agree). The mode was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 3 (Neutral), and 5 (Strongly Agree) for the three 'No Gender Identified' participants. Approximately 30% *(n=41)* of the Missouri superintendents did not believe male superintendents were viewed as being more assertive and decisive as female superintendents. Yet, the majority (38.9%; *n*= 53) of the Missouri superintendents agreed with Item 41. The researcher compared gender differences in the responses and found while 53.4% (*n*=23) of the female superintendents believed male superintendents were typically seen as being more assertive and decisive. The same was not true for the male participants' beliefs. More male superintendents disagreed (34.4%; *n*=31) with Item 41 than agreed (32.2%; *n*=29). However, 33.3% (*n*=30) of the male superintendents remained neutral.

Figure 8. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 41: Male superintendents are viewed as being more assertive and decisive than female superintendents.* One male participant chose not to respond to Item 41. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 42 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* aimed to determine the school superintendents' perceptions about whether women superintendents were looked upon as being more sensitive and people-oriented than their male counterparts. Figure 9 shows the various means of Item 42. The mean for the total number of superintendents was 3.23 or Neutral. The male superintendents' mean was 3.04 or Neutral. The mean for the female superintendents as 3.62 or Neutral to Agree. The 'No Gender Identified' mean was 3.33 or Neutral. The mode was 4 (Agree) for the total number of research participants, the male participants, and the female participants. The 'No Gender Identified' mode was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), and 5

(Strongly Agree). Most (n=69; 51.1%) of the research participants believed female

superintendents were viewed as being more people-oriented and sensitive than their male

counterparts. Thirty-five (25.9%) participants remained neutral. Thirty-one (22.9%) of

the superintendents disagreed. After comparing the male participants' data with the

female participants' data, the researcher determined a higher percentage (69.7%; n=30) of

female superintendents than male superintendents (n=38; 42.6%) believed women

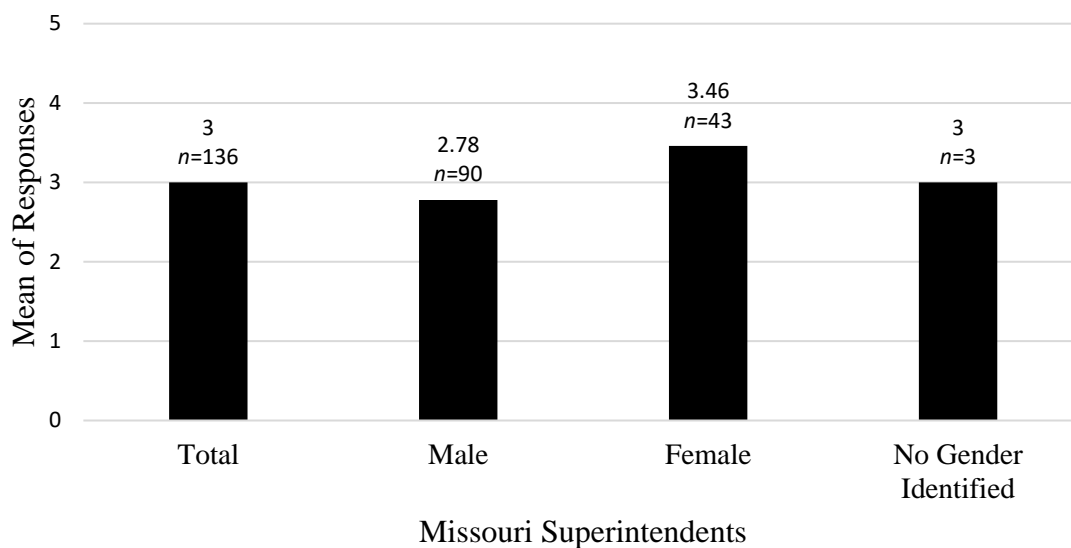superintendents were viewed as being more sensitive and people-oriented than male
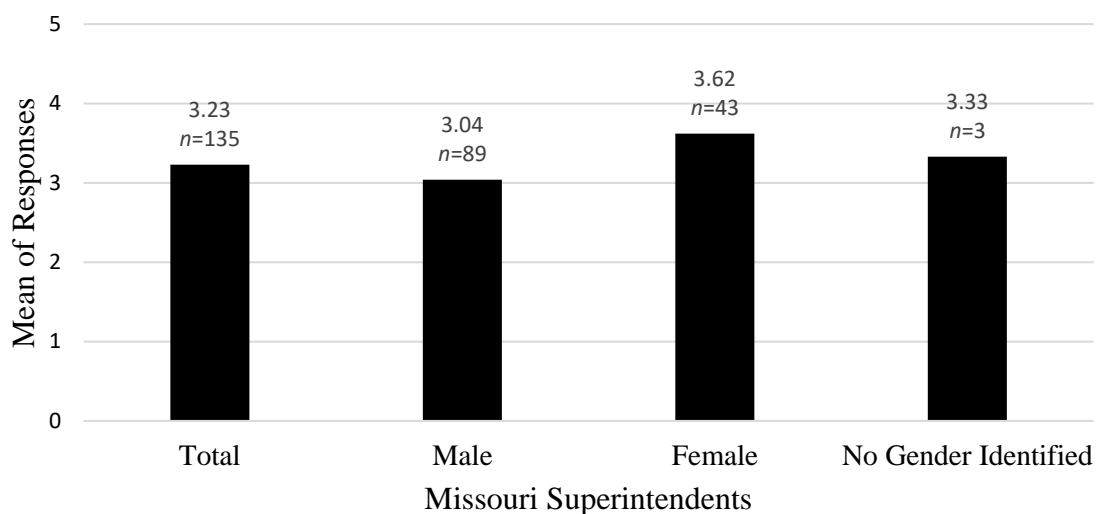
superintendents.

Figure 9. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 42: Female*

superintendents are viewed as being more sensitive and people-oriented than their male

counterparts. Two male participants chose not to respond to Item 42. 1=Strongly

Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Qualitative data analysis: Gender roles. The researcher included four open-ended questions in the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey.* The open-ended questions were used by the primary investigator to provide a more in-depth analysis of Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the influence gender roles had in public education's gender leadership gap.

Question 27: Please use this space to provide additional comments regarding your personal experience as a superintendent and/or to clarify any of the statements mentioned in Part IV. Fourteen male participants, 12 female participants, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant responded to Question 27. Only nine participants (five female superintendents and four male superintendents) elaborated on gender role topics related to Part IV of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*.

Two (50%) male superintendents and three (60%) female superintendents touched on the gender leadership characteristics in their responses. Although male and female participants agreed they must be assertive and decisive for the superintendency, some women felt societal norms caused them to have more problems dealing with their communities than their male counterparts had to encounter. One female superintendent from the St. Louis region stated:

> The community expects me to be these things [assertive and decisive], but wants them to be done in a manner typically associated with socially accepted norms for females. For example, be assertive, but be sure to do it nicely and with a smile on your face. Be decisive, so long as you are humble enough about your decisions.

Another female superintendent from the Northwest region shared similar thoughts:

I am assertive and I would say I have to go out of my way not to come across as too assertive in this role. However, I do not think a man in the same role in the same situation would have that problem.

More female (*n*=2; 40%) superintendents than males (*n*=1; 25%) addressed their ability or inability to relocate. One male participant from the South Central region attributed his inability to relocate based on his family priorities. However, multiple female participants credited many women's inability to relocate for other jobs on traditional gender roles of men being the breadwinners with stay-at-home wives and other family obligations. For example, one female participant from the South Central region wrote, "Men have wives at home to make sure children are fed, homework is done, and kids go to bed on time. In my generation a lot of women did not have that type of support at home." Overall, gender role issues were addressed in Question 27. However, a higher percentage of women (80%; *n*=4) than men (25%; *n*=1) cited gender role issues as being a problem in leadership positions.

Question 43: Please use this space to provide additional comments about your personal experience and/or opinions regarding the barriers to the female superintendency in Part V. Eighteen male participants and 12 female participants responded to Question 43. Only five participants, three female superintendents and two male superintendents, provided comments related to the influence of gender roles in the superintendency. The three (100%) female participants discussed family obligations and traditional male and female gender norms as obstacles for female superintendents. One female superintendent within the 51 to 60 years old age range addressed how traditional female and male gender roles have influenced others' perceptions. She wrote, "I have

been told twice in my career that I did not need a raise, because I was not a man and the head of the household."

One female participant from the South Central region stated, "I do think most women do not pursue the position due to family obligations and, in some instances, fear of failure, both at home and work." A female participant from the Southwest region shared a similar response. She claimed:

> I also believe family is a huge barrier to advancement. I need additional support to perform my evening responsibilities and men often have 'wives' to assume those responsibilities. As a result, I am geographically restricted to being near my parents for assistance with my children.

There were only two male participants whose answers to Question 43 were related to gender norms. According to one male superintendent from the Southeast region of the state, "In my personal experience, I have seen female superintendents who are assertive and those that are more sensitive, just as I have seen male superintendents on both sides." A West Central Missouri male superintendent shared his prior experience working for a female superintendent. He stated, "I worked as an assistant to a female superintendent for a number of years, so that is my primary frame of reference. She was confident, assertive, outgoing, and respected." Thus, the male participants shared positive gender characteristics of female leaders.

Question 44: Do you believe the gender leadership gap, the disproportion of women in top leadership positions, exists in the school superintendency? If yes, why do you believe it exists? Seventy-eight male participants, 36 female participants, and three 'No Gender Identified' participants responded to Question 44. Fifty (64.1%) male

participants stated there was a gender leadership gap. A male superintendent from the St. Louis region asserted, "Yes, it has been my experience that more males pursue administrative positions." A West Central Missouri male superintendent wrote, "Yes, there are not as many women qualified to be a school superintendent." Twenty-five (32%) male superintendents stated there was not a gender leadership gap in the superintendency. One male superintendent stated, "No, in West Central there are a large number of female superintendents." A male superintendent from the Southeast region wrote, "No. It does not exist, although fake news and social media would like all of us to believe it does." Three (3.8%) male superintendents responded but did not provide a definitive yes or no answer to this question.

Thirty-two (88.8%) female participants wrote there was a gender leadership gap in the superintendency. A female superintendent from the Northwest region stated, "Yes, the numbers hold true. Actual counts of women compared to men in the positions evidence this." A South Central female superintendent wrote, "Absolutely—school boards are mainly male and do not take positively to females overpowering or outsmarting them."

Four (11.1%) female superintendents stated there was not a gender leadership gap. When asked if the gender leadership gap existed, three female superintendents simply stated, "No." One 'No Gender Identified' participant reported there was a gender leadership gap in public education. Another 'No Gender Identified' participant believed there was not a gender leadership gap within the school superintendency, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant did not provide a definitive answer.

Approximately, 15% (*n*=12) of the male participants and 22% (*n*=8) of the female participants noted they have witnessed an increase in the number of women superintendents over the years. Many of those who reported the existence of a gender leadership gap believed the gap was closing. One West Central female superintendent wrote, "I really believe that the gender leadership gap is closing and closing fast."

A male superintendent from the Kansas City region of Missouri mirrored this sentiment. He stated, "In certain areas [it exists], however, I do believe the gap is starting to finally narrow." When asked to explain their answers, 20 participants, 12 female superintendents and eight male superintendents, provided explanations for the gender leadership gap which focused on issues related to gender roles.

Both female (83%; *n*=10) and male (62.5%; *n*=5) participants listed family concerns and considerations as a primary reason for the gender leadership gap in the superintendency. One male superintendent from the Northwest region wrote:

> Yes, all you have to do is attend a regional superintendent's meeting and you will see the majority are men. I think there are fewer women advancing in leadership partly because many women that enter education have families and it is very difficult to be a mom and a superintendent. Much more challenging than for a father.

Another male participant agreed that family considerations, such as motherhood, has hindered women's progress toward the superintendency. He stated, "I also think women take time off from careers, because of family care more often than men. Because of the full-time nature of modern jobs with little daily flexibility, this often stalls women's careers more than men's careers."

Another participant, a female superintendent, also expressed these sentiments. The superintendent listed various reasons why family considerations have kept more women from the superintendency. According to this Northwest region superintendent, "Women are more geographically bound, usually because their husband is the breadwinner of the family, and it is maybe not as easy for him to leave his job." She further elaborated, "Many male superintendents have stay-at-home wives. I need one of those."

Other family considerations concerned child rearing. One female superintendent, in the 41 to 50 years of age range, divulged, "If women feel the job will take away from their ability to be good mothers, they will pass on opportunities." Some participants mentioned, due to child rearing, female educational administrators often have started their administrative careers later than men. A few even mentioned a lack of support at home. According to one female superintendent, "Most women lack support at home and that creates tension and fear of failure at home and work. This is a difficult job; support at home is crucial in order to make it work."

Some (25%; n=5) of the research participants identified traditional gender norms for feminine and masculine behaviors as one of the culprits keeping women from the superintendency. For example, a female participant stated that she believed "deep-rooted traditions with regard to gender roles, images, and community culture" has made it "difficult for females to go beyond being considered for the superintendency to actually being hired as superintendents." Another female superintendent from the Southeast region wrote:

I believe that it is still the perception that a man can do better than a woman when it comes to finance, budgeting, sports, hiring coaches, managing employees, etc. I have experienced this personally. If I correct someone, then I am being a 'moody B'. If it were a man doing the same thing, they see it as that man having strong control and 'standing for what is right'. I am expected to be more friendly and more approachable than the man that was here before me. He was never expected to be like that, and I am criticized for things that they never expected from him.

Interestingly, in Question 44, only female superintendents listed traditional gender norms for feminine and masculine behaviors as problematic for women seeking the superintendency.

Question 45: How might school districts achieve gender parity in the role of superintendent? Please explain possible solutions to minimizing the gender leadership gap among school superintendents. One of the reasons the researcher developed Question 45 was to discover if the participating Missouri superintendents would state the research question's variables (gender roles, stereotypes, and biases) as possible solutions. Fifty-seven male participants, 30 female participants, and two 'No Gender Identified' participants responded to Question 45. Sixteen participants, 11 male and five female, stated they believed gender was not, or should not, be an issue. One female superintendent from the Northwest region stated, "I do not think gender should be an issue." Another female participant from the St. Louis region wrote, "I believe women have an equal opportunity." One male superintendent over 60 years of age divulged, "It is as it should be." Another male participant from the Southeast region stated, "I disagree

with setting parity as a goal. Let us focus on putting the best people available in positions of leadership, regardless of gender."

Another possible solution provided by 13 (14.6%) research participants, which did not relate to gender roles, stereotypes, or biases, was the use of encouragement. Eleven (19.2%) male and two (6.6%) female superintendents believed encouraging women to seek top educational administrative positions was the best possible solution to the gender leadership imbalance in the school superintendency arena. Approximately, 9% (*n*=5) of the Missouri participants, which included two males and three females, provided solutions that addressed gender role issues. One female superintendent from the St. Louis region suggested:

> This goes well beyond school districts. As a society, we must honor the needs of caring for a family (for both men and women), offering maternity and paternity leave and support. We must fund education to the point that we provide adequate staffing that superintendents (or any staff members) are not expected to work 80+ hours/week, allowing time to take care of their personal lives adequately. If I ever have to choose between my child and my work—the choice is easy—I would choose my child.

A male superintendent, between the ages of 41 to 50 years old, proposed, "Allow flexible scheduling in part-time roles if a woman takes time off for maternity or raising small children." Hence, the gender role solutions were aimed at supporting women in their obligations to family.

Variable b: Stereotypes.

Quantitative data analysis: Stereotypes. The primary investigator included

numerous items from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* to

determine Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the impact stereotypes had in

the gender leadership gap within public education. Items 21 and 22 in Part IV (Personal

Experiences as Superintendent) and Items 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, and 39 in Part V

(Obstacles to Female Superintendency) were utilized to assist the researcher in answering

the stereotype portion of Question Two. With the exceptions of questions 27 and 43, Part

IV and Part V were quantitative items. The researcher requested the research participants

rate each item, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5

(Strongly Agree).

Figure 10 displays the mean responses of the Missouri superintendents to Item 21.

Item 21 asked participants whether they have personally experienced gender

discrimination at their places of employment. The mean for the total number of

superintendents was 1.85 (Disagree). The male superintendents' mean was 1.32 or

Strongly Disagree, while the female superintendents' mean was 2.88 or Disagree to

Neutral. The mean for the 'No Gender Identified' participants was 3 or Neutral. The

mode for the total number of superintendents, the male participants, and the female

participants was 1, or Strongly Disagree. The mode for the three 'No Gender Identified'

participants was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 3 (Neutral), and 5 (Strongly Agree). Over three-

fourths (*n*=103) of the Missouri superintendents reported not to have personally

experienced discrimination at work based on their genders. Twenty (14.5%) participants

stated they have experienced gender discrimination at their workplace, while 10.2%

(*n*=14) remained neutral. Noticeably, a much higher percentage of female

superintendents than male superintendents agreed with Item 21. Approximately, 41%

(*n*=18) of female superintendents and only 3.2% (*n*=3) of male superintendents divulged

they had personally experienced discrimination at their workplace based on their gender.

Figure 10. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 21: I have experienced*

discrimination at work based on my gender. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree,

3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 22 of the online survey asked participants to respond to whether they had

personally experienced discrimination at work based on their personal appearances. The

mean responses of the Missouri superintendents are presented in Figure 11. The mean of

the total number of Missouri superintendents was 1.67 or Disagree. The mean of the

male superintendents was 1.49 or Strongly Disagree. The female superintendents' mean

was 2.88 or Disagree to Neutral. The mean of the 'No Gender Identified' participants

was 2.33 or Disagree. The mode for the all of the Missouri superintendents, the male

superintendents, and the female superintendents was 1 (Strongly Disagree). The three

'No Gender Identified' participants' mode was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), and 5

(Strongly Agree). Overall, most (84.6%; n=116) of the research participants reported

they had not experienced discrimination at work based on their personal appearance.

Approximately, 10% (n=14) of research participants divulged they had experienced

discrimination at their place of employment based on their personal appearance. Only

5.1% (n=7) of the researchers rated Item 22 as neutral. The majority of male

superintendents (90.1%; n=82) and female superintendents (74.4%; n=32) disclosed they

have not experienced work discrimination based on their personal appearances.

However, a higher percentage of female superintendents (18.6%; n=8) than male

superintendents (5.4%; n=5) reported having experienced discrimination at the workplace
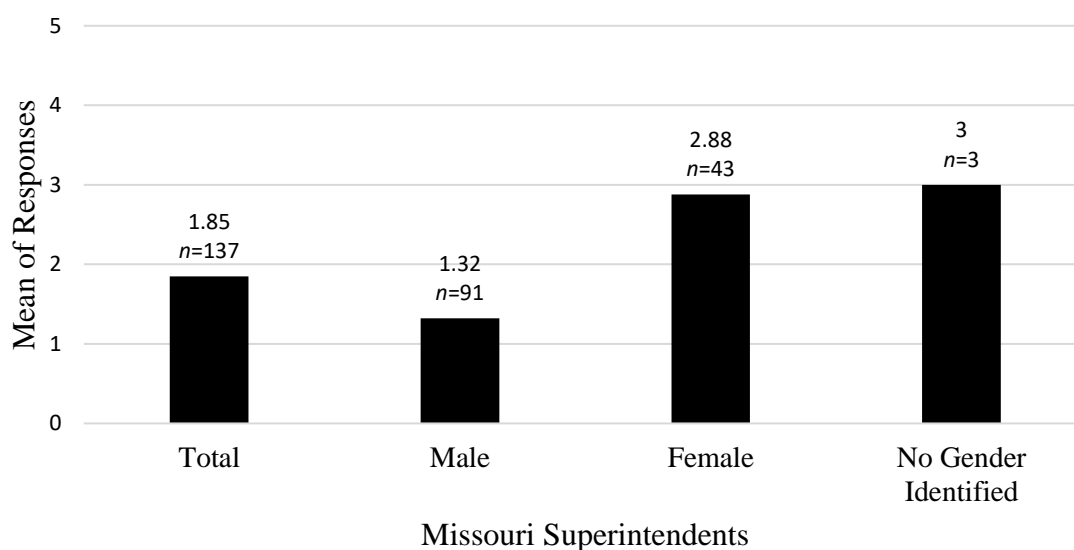
based on their personal appearance.
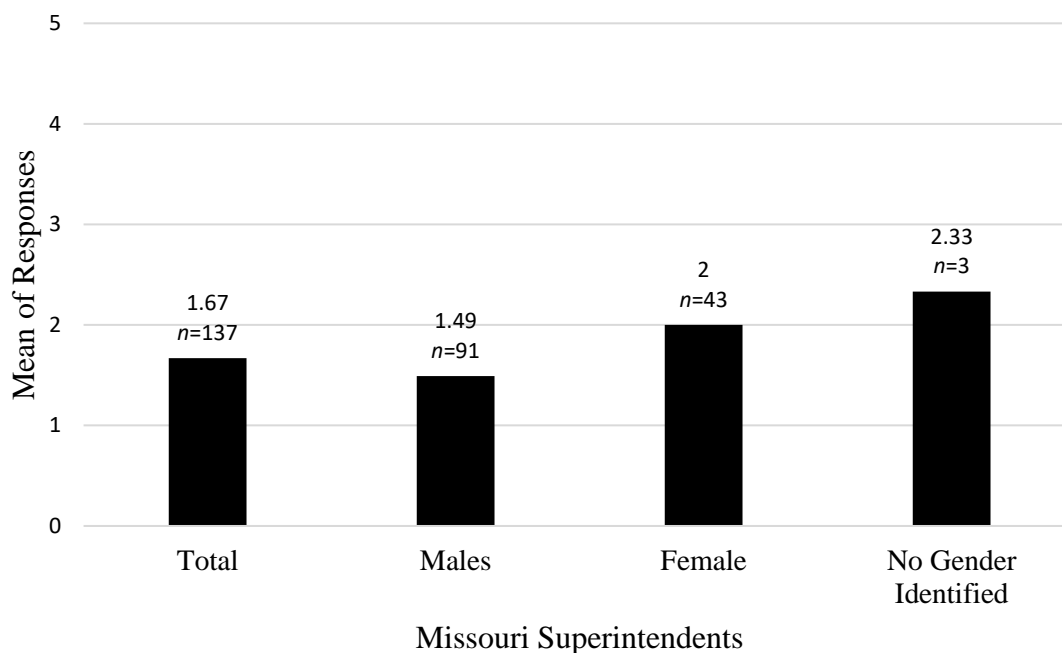
Figure 11. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 22: I have experienced discrimination at work based on my personal appearance.* 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 29 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* asked participants if they believed it was easier for men to become superintendents than women. The means for Item 29 are shown in Figure 12. The mean for all of the Missouri superintendents was 3.39 (Neutral). The male participants' mean was 3.19 or Neutral. The mean for the female participants was 4.04 (Agree). The mean for the 'No Gender Identified' participants was 3 or Neutral. The mode was 4 (Agree) for the Missouri superintendents, male superintendents, and the female superintendents. The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mode was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 3 (Neutral), and 5 (Strongly Agree). Slightly more than half (51.8%; *n*=70) of the Missouri superintendents agreed with Item 29. However, the gender data analysis revealed a wider gap. Thirty-

two (74.4%) of the female participants and only 37 (41.5%) of the male participants believed it was easier for men to become superintendents than women. On the other end of the spectrum, only 2.3% (*n*=1) of the female participants disagreed with Item 29, while 32.5% (*n*=29) of the male participants disagreed.
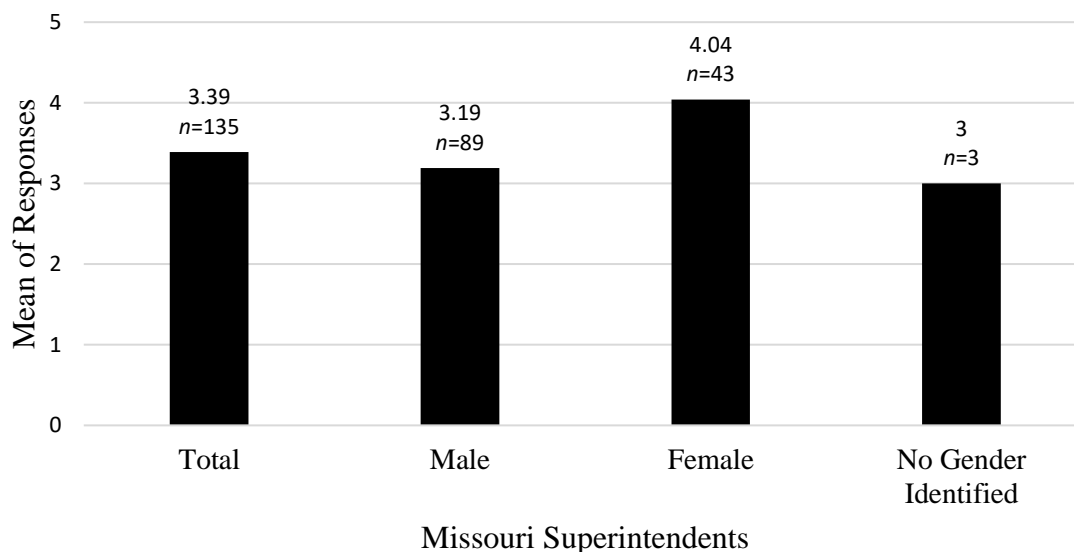
Figure 12. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 29: It is easier for men to become superintendents than women.* Two male participants chose not to respond to Item 29. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 31 of the survey instrument aimed to determine the Missouri superintendents' perceptions about whether female superintendents were held to a higher standard than their male counterparts. The mean responses of the research participants were shown in Figure 13. The mean of all the Missouri superintendents was 2.6 or Disagree to Neutral. The mean of the male superintendents was 2.31 or Disagree. The female superintendents' mean was 3.37 or Neutral. The 'No Gender Identified'

participants' mean was 3 (Neutral). The mode was 2 (Disagree) for all of the Missouri superintendents and the male superintendents. The female superintendents' mode was 4 (Agree). The three 'No Gender Identified' participants' mode was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 3 (Neutral), and 5 (Strongly Agree). Approximately, 51% ($n=69$) of the Missouri superintendents disagreed with Item 31, whereas, 29.6% ($n=40$) agreed. Another 22.2% ($n=30$) rated Item 31 as neutral. The analysis of the gender data showed a much higher percentage of female participants than male participants believed female superintendents were held to higher standards than male superintendents. Over half (53.4%; $n=23$) of the female superintendents agreed with Item 31, while only 16 (17.9%) of the male superintendents agreed. Thus, 60.6% ($n=54$) of the male superintendents disagreed with Item 31 as compared to the 23.2% ($n=10$) of the female superintendents who disagreed.
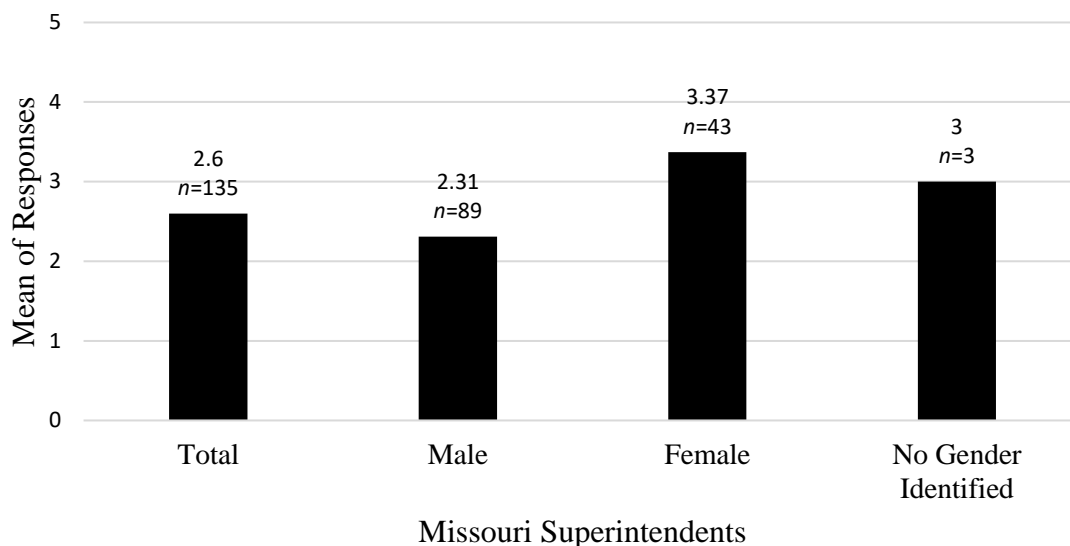
Figure 13. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 31: Female superintendents are held to higher standards than male superintendents.* Two male participants chose not to respond to Item 31. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 32 within the online survey asked the research participants whether they believed women do not make as effective superintendents as men do. The means of the research participants were displayed in Figure 14. The Missouri superintendents' overall mean was 1.43 or Strongly Disagree. The mean was 1.59 (Disagree) for the male superintendents. The female superintendents' mean was 1.11 or Strongly Disagree. The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mean was 1.33 or Strongly Disagree. All categories of research participants had a mode of 1 (Strongly Disagree). The majority (86.6%; n=117) of the Missouri superintendents surveyed disagreed with Item 32. All (100%;

n=43) of the female superintendents and all (100%; *n*=3) of the 'No Gender Identified'

superintendents disagreed with Item 32. Interestingly, though the large majority (79.7%;

n=71) of the male superintendents disagreed with Item 32, 7.8% (*n*=7) agreed women do

not make as effective superintendents as men do. Approximately, 12% (*n*=11) of the

male superintendents rated Item 32 as neutral.
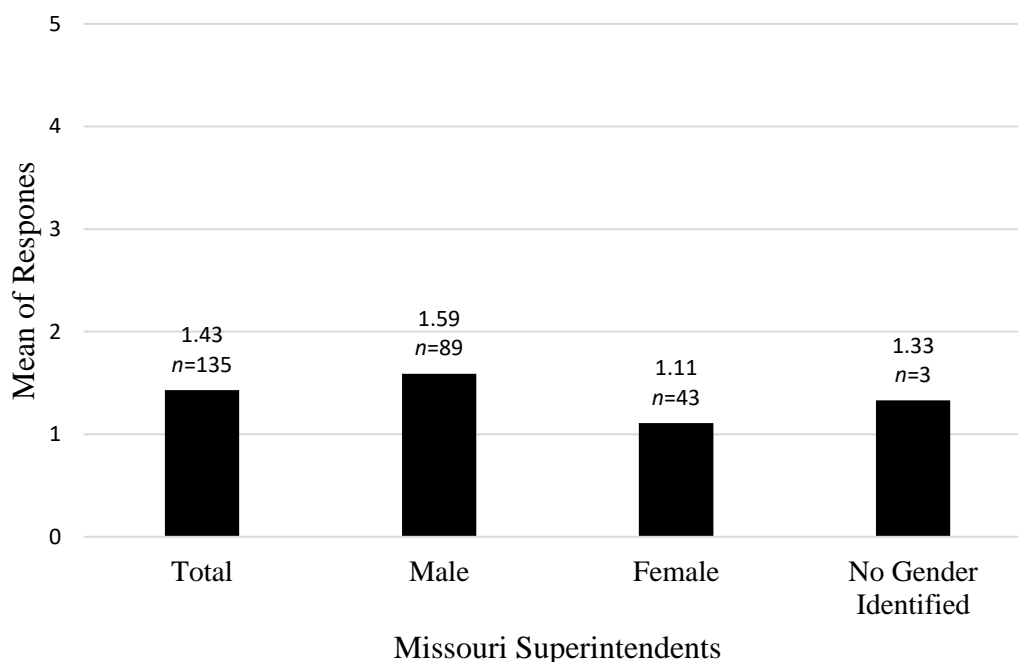
Figure 14. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents of *Item 32: Women do not make as effective superintendents as men do.* Two male participants chose not to respond to Item 32. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

The researcher included Item 33 to ascertain whether Missouri superintendents

believed women are not emotionally strong enough for the superintendency. Figure 15

displayed the mean responses for Item 33. The overall mean for the Missouri

superintendents was 1.34 or Strongly Disagree. The mean for the male superintendents

was 1.49 or Strongly Disagree. The female superintendents' mean was 1.06 or Strongly

Disagree. The mean for the 'No Gender Identified' participants was 1 (Strongly

Disagree). The mode was 1 (Strongly Disagree) for all categories of research

participants. A majority (88.8%; *n=120*) of the Missouri school superintendents

disagreed with Item 33. Eight (5.9%) participants replied with a neutral stance and seven

participants (5.1%) agreed that women were not emotionally strong enough for the

superintendency. Precisely, 100% (*n=43*) of the female participants and 100% (*n=3*) of

the 'No Gender Identified' participants disagreed with Item 33. Seventy-four (83.1%)

male superintendents disagreed, 8.9% (*n=8*) were neutral, and 7.8% (*n=7*) agreed with

Item 33.
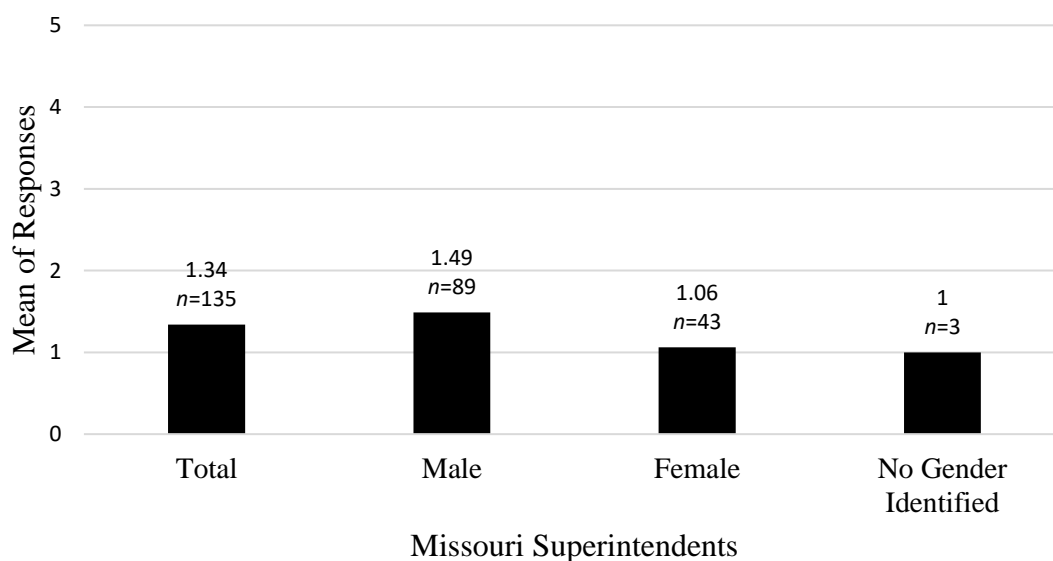
Figure 15. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents of *Item 33: Women are not*

emotionally strong enough for the superintendency. Two male participants chose not to

respond. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 34 of the online survey was utilized by the researcher to determine Missouri school superintendents' perceptions regarding the readiness of school boards in hiring female superintendents. The various means of responses were presented in Figure 16. The mean of all the research participants was 2.24 or Disagree. The male superintendents' mean was 2.16 or Disagree. The mean of the female superintendents was 2.39 or Disagree. The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mean was 2.33 or Disagree. The mode for the Missouri superintendents and the male participants was 1 (Strongly Disagree). The female participants' mode was 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 2 (Disagree). The three 'No Gender Identified' participants' mode was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), and 4 (Agree). Overall, 57.7% (*n*=78) of the school superintendents disagreed with Item 34. Thirty-five (25.9%) of the school superintendents rated Item 34 as 'Neutral'. Twenty-two (16.2%) of the school superintendents believed school boards were not ready to hire a female superintendent. A higher percentage (60.4%; *n*=26) of female superintendents than male superintendents (56.1%; *n*=50) disagreed with Item 34. Conversely, a higher percentage of female superintendents (20.9%; *n*=9) than male superintendents (13.4%; *n*=12) believed school boards were not ready to hire a female for the superintendency.
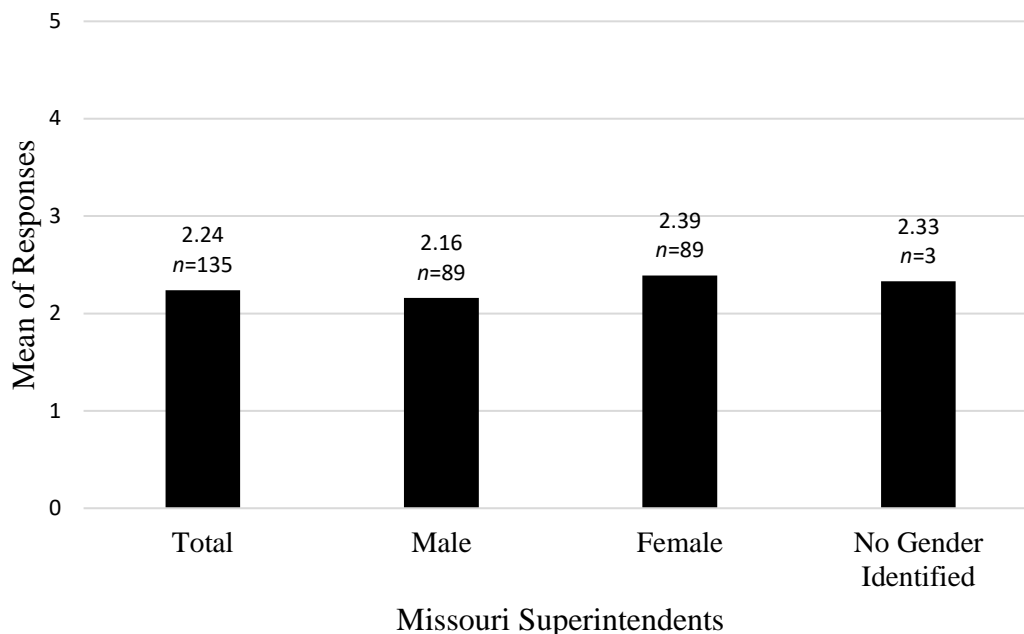
Figure 16. Mean of responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 34: School boards are not ready to hire a female superintendent.* Two male participants chose not to respond to Item 34. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

The researcher used Item 36 to collect Missouri school superintendents' perceptions about whether female superintendents experienced discrimination from school board members more than their male counterparts. The primary investigator presented the mean responses of Item 36 in Figure 17. According to the data analysis, the mean of the Missouri superintendents was 2.64 (Disagree to Neutral). The mean of the male participants was 2.57 (Disagree to Neutral) and the mean of the female participants was 2.76 (Disagree to Neutral). The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mean was 3 or Neutral. The mode for all Missouri superintendents, the male superintendents, and the female superintendents was 3 or Neutral. The mode for the three 'No Gender Identified' participants was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 3 (Neutral), and 5 (Strongly Agree). Altogether,

39.7% (*n=54*) of Missouri school superintendents disagreed with Item 39. Twenty-six

(19.1%) superintendents agreed with Item 36. The majority (41.1%; *n=56*) of Missouri

superintendents, however, gave a neutral rating to Item 36. After the researcher

compared the gender data, more male superintendents (46.6%; *n=42*) remained neutral.

Thirty-five (38.8%) male participants disagreed with Item 36. Thirteen (14.4%) male

participants agreed with Item 36. Exactly 27.9% (*n=12*) of the female participants

believed female superintendents experienced discrimination from school board members

more often than male superintendents. Most (41.8%; *n=18*) of the female participants

disagreed with Item 36. Approximately, 30% (*n=13*) responded with a neutral rating.

Figure 17. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 36: Female*

superintendents experience discrimination from school board members more than male

superintendents. One male participant chose not to respond to Item 36. 1=Strongly

Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

The researcher utilized Item 37 of the online survey to determine the Missouri superintendents' perceptions pertaining to whether female superintendents have experienced discrimination from their peers more than male superintendents. The mean responses were revealed in Figure 18. The mean of all the Missouri superintendents was 2.59 or Disagree to Neutral. The male participants' mean was 2.43 or Disagree. The mean for the female participants was 2.93 or Disagree to Neutral. The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mean was 2.66 or Disagree Neutral. The mode for the Missouri superintendents and the male superintendents was 3 (Neutral). The female superintendents' mode was 4 (Agree). The mode for the 'No Gender Identified' participants was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 3 (Neutral), and 4 (Agree). Most (43.2%; $n=58$) of the school superintendents did not believe female superintendents experienced discrimination from their peers more than male superintendents. Thirty (22.3%) of the school superintendents agreed with Item 37. Approximately, 34% ($n=46$) rated Item 37 with a 3, thus, giving a neutral rating. More women superintendents agree with Item 37 than men superintendents. Seventeen (39.5%) of the female participants agreed, while only 12 (13.6%) of male participants agreed female superintendents experienced discrimination from their peers more than male superintendents did. Forty (45.4%) male superintendents disagreed; 17 female superintendents (39.5%) disagreed as well. Nearly 41% ($n=36$) of the male respondents rated Item 37 as neutral. Only 20.9% ($n=9$) of female participants did the same.
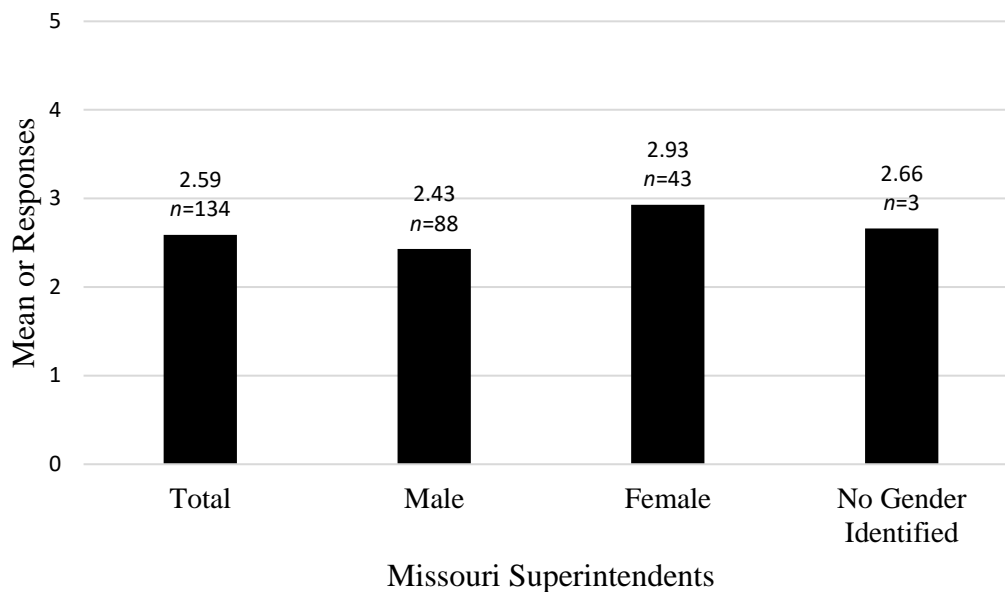
Figure 18. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 37: Female superintendents experience discrimination from their peers more than male superintendents.* Three male participants chose not to respond to Item 37. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 38 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* asked the research participants to share whether they believed female superintendents experienced discrimination from community members more than male superintendents. The means of the research participants varied (see Figure 19). The mean of the Missouri superintendents was 2.9 or Disagree to Neutral. The male superintendents' mean was 2.76 (Disagree to Neutral) and the female superintendents' mean was 3.18 (Neutral). The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mean was 3 or Neutral. The mode for the Missouri superintendents and the male superintendents was 3 or Neutral. The mode for the female superintendents was 4 or Agree. The mode for the three 'No Gender Identified'

participants was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 3 (Neutral), and 5 (Strongly Agree). The majority

(41.4%; *n*=56) of the school superintendents rated Item 38 as neutral. Forty-one

participants (30.3%) disagreed, and 38 (28.1%) participants agreed with Item 38. More

female participants, 44.1% (*n*=19), than male participants, 20.2% (*n*=18), believed female

superintendents have experienced discrimination from community members more than

their male counterparts. Fourteen (32.5%) female superintendents disagreed with Item

38. In comparison, 26 (29.2%) male participants also disagreed with Item 38. Over half

(50.5%; *n*=45) of the male participants reported being neutral in regards to Item 38 of the

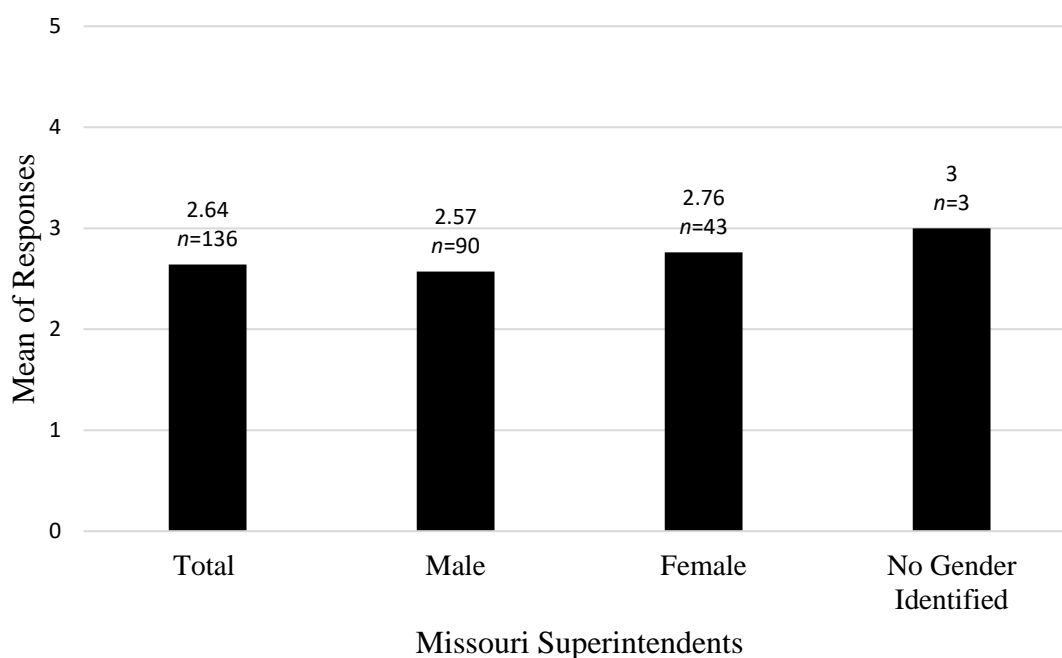survey. Whereas, 23.2% (*n*=10) of the female participants gave Item 38 a neutral rating.
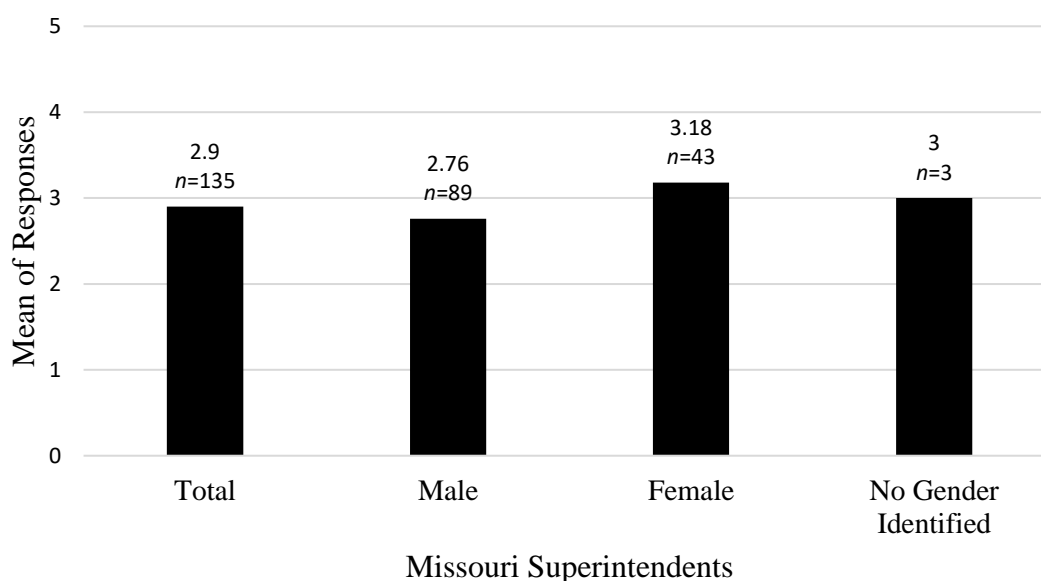
Figure 19. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 38: Female*

superintendents experience discrimination from community members more than their

male counterparts. Two male participants chose not to respond to Item 38. 1=Strongly

Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 39 of the survey instrument sought the research participants' perceptions about whether they believed male superintendents were viewed as more qualified to become school superintendents by the community and staff than their female counterparts. The results of the mean responses are displayed in Figure 20. The mean for the Missouri superintendents was 2.83 or Disagree to Neutral. The male superintendents' mean was 2.75 (Disagree to Neutral), and the female superintendents' mean was 3.02 (Neutral). The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mean was 2.66 (Disagree to Neutral). The total research participants', male participants', and female participants' mode was 3 or Neutral. The mode for the three 'No Gender Identified' participants was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), and 5 (Strongly Agree). Fifty (36.7%) research participants disagreed with Item 39. Forty (29.4%) research participants agreed with Item 39. Forty-six (33.8%) participants rated Item 39 as neutral. When the gender data was compared, the researcher discovered more female participants (34.8%; $n=15$) than male participants (26.6%; $n=24$) believed the staff and community viewed male superintendents as more qualified for the superintendency than females. Thirty-three (36.6%) male participants and 15 (34.8%) disagreed with Item 39. Thirty-three (36.6%) male superintendents and 13 (30.2%) female superintendents rated Item 39 as neutral.
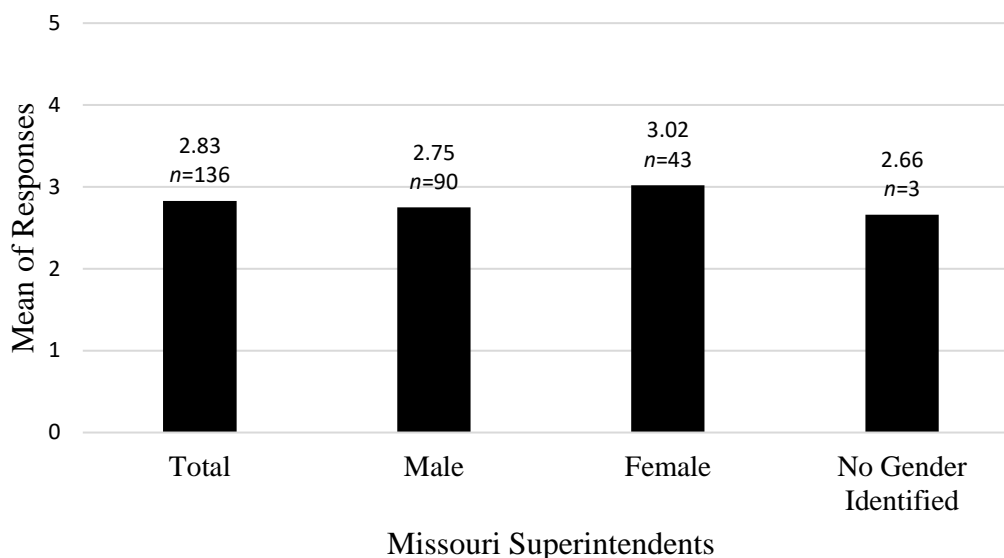
Figure 20. Mean responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 39: Male superintendents are seen as more qualified to become school superintendents by the staff and community.* One male participant chose not to respond to Item 39. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Qualitative data analysis: Stereotypes. The researcher included four open-ended questions in the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* for qualitative data analysis. The primary investigator utilized the open-ended questions to gain an in-depth analysis of Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the influence stereotypes had in public education's gender leadership gap.

Question 27: Please use this space to provide additional comments regarding your personal experience as a superintendent and/or to clarify any of the statements mentioned in Part IV. Twelve female participants, 14 male participants, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant responded to Question 27. Eight participants (three male

superintendents, four female superintendents, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant)
elaborated on their experiences with stereotypes. Two female superintendents reported
they had not experienced gender discrimination in the workplace. One female participant
from the Southwest region stated, "My success as an administrator has been hampered
more by my own apprehension about being a female in a male-dominated career than by
anyone or anything." Two other female participants shared they had experienced some
gender discrimination during their careers. Another female superintendent from the
Southwest region wrote:

> I felt more gender discrimination as a secondary principal than as a
> superintendent. The biggest issue is how much I am questioned on decisions and
> actions when my male counterparts are not. I find the females question me more
> than the males on the school board. On the other hand, fathers question me more
> than mothers do. This is the same with staff.

All three of the male participants who responded to Question 27 disclosed they
had personally experienced various forms of discrimination, such as those related to age
and appearance. According to one male superintendent from the West Central region,
"As a young superintendent, it was difficult to obtain a level of respect from
administrators, faculty, and staff." Another male participant related his experience with
discrimination based on his personal appearance. He wrote, "As a 6'9" 275 lb. man, I
have been accused by board members at a previous district of intimidation of teachers
due to my size, of which I have zero control over." Interestingly, none of the male
participants who responded to Question 27 reported experiencing any gender
discrimination at work.

Question 43: Please use this space to provide additional comments about your

personal experience and/or opinions regarding the barriers to the female

superintendency in Part V. Twelve female participants and 18 male participants

responded to Question 43. Twenty-two participants, 13 male superintendents and nine

female superintendents, provided comments pertaining to the influence of stereotypes in

the superintendency. Hill et al. (2016) found rigid gender stereotypes can often lead to

varying acts of discrimination. Due to this fact, the researcher asked various questions

pertaining to gender discrimination in Part V of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and*

Leadership Survey. Approximately, 46% (*n=6*) of the male superintendents reported they

were not aware of, or had not witnessed, gender discrimination against female

superintendents. One male superintendent from the South Central region wrote:

> It is hard to answer the questions, because I have not had any experience or
>
> conversations with female superintendents on these topics. As far as hiring, I
>
> would say in today's world, gender is not the issue it once was for boards and
>
> staff. In the 80s and 90s, I would say that was true. This is based on how the
>
> demographics were with males holding most of the positions. Today, as a male, I
>
> am almost if not in the minority when going to meetings. Females are being hired
>
> for positions.

Two (15.3%) male superintendents wrote they believed women experienced gender

discrimination, thus making it harder for women seeking leadership positions. One male

superintendent, whose age was between 30 to 40 years old, stated:

> I believe that women, in general, are often discriminated against in most work
>
> forces. This does not diminish, in my opinion, their worth and value to any given

district. Women are just as capable, if not more in some instances, to lead a

district.

Five (38.4%) male superintendents did not provide a definitive answer regarding

gender discrimination. However, all five of the participants stated there needs to be more

women in the superintendency or they have worked with great female leaders. A South

Central male superintendent stated, "We need more females in the superintendent

position." Another male superintendent, from the Kansas City region of the state of

Missouri, wrote, "My perception of this topic may be different than most as I have

worked for and know personally several outstanding female superintendents."

Nine female superintendents responded to the issues of stereotypes and

discrimination. One (11.1%) female participant from the South Central region reportedly

had experienced no gender discrimination. She wrote, "As a female, I have never felt

inferior or discriminated against." A female superintendent from the Northeastern region

(11.1%) remained "neutral," or had "no opinion," on the issue of stereotypes and

discrimination. The other seven (77.7%) female superintendents reportedly experienced

discrimination or felt certain stereotypes and practices led to discriminatory practices.

One female superintendent from the Southwestern region divulged, "I have experienced

more discrimination within professional organizations, such as [omitted] than I have

locally. The good old boys club that leads our state organization is very chauvinistic and

does not support women in leadership roles!!!!!!!!!!!" Another female superintendent

from the St. Louis region replied, "In my experience, male superintendent colleagues are

condescending to women superintendents."

One female superintendent from the Northwestern region provided personal examples of stereotypical behavior. She wrote:

> I am not easily offended, but when I was first named superintendent, one of the main things community members asked that got under my skin was whether or not my husband drove the roads for me when I needed to make a decision on closing school or not.

Interestingly, stereotypical and discriminatory behavior against female leaders have come from both women and men. A female superintendent from the Northwestern region disclosed:

> I have experienced this firsthand. I was a strong contender for a superintendent position and their six male, one female board hired the male candidate who had far less experience than me but reminded them of their outgoing retiring superintendent. Supporting evidence: I was told offhand after one of the interviews that one of the assistant superintendents (who was a female) liked me and I should be proud that I won her over because she was not expecting to like me, because I was female. I am guessing that was not how all the male candidates had to enter that interview. I was also told that if I were hired, then the office would be all women and only one man—that was a concern.

One South Central female superintendent reported she did not believe "discrimination occurs maliciously." Additionally, some (22.2%; $n=2$) of the female superintendents who believed stereotypes and discrimination occurred in the workplace shared it was improving. One female superintendent from the Northeast region stated, "I

have seen a marked change in attitude toward female superintendents in the 10 years I have served."

Question 44: Do you believe the gender leadership gap, the disproportion of women in top leadership positions, exists in the school superintendency? If yes, why do you believe it exists? Thirty-six female participants, 78 male participants, and three 'No Gender Identified' participants responded to Question 44. Twenty-seven participants, 18 male participants and nine female participants, provided explanations for the gender leadership gap which focused on issues related to stereotypes. Thirteen (72.2%) male participants believed the gender leadership gap existed and was connected to traditional stereotypes which have hindered women's progress. Five (27.7%) male participants cited negative stereotypes of women by male school board members as reasons for the gender leadership imbalance within the school superintendency. One male superintendent from the Southeast region wrote, "Yes, I think in this area there are still a lot of communities and school boards that view men as leaders above women." Another male superintendent gave a similar explanation. He stated, "Boards decide on their superintendent and many communities see men as stronger, not necessarily better, leaders."

Seven (38.8%) male participants cited old gender stereotypes, such as the belief that men made better leaders, as the primary reason the gender leadership gap existed. According to one male superintendent from the Southeastern region stated:

There are still members of the education community, board members, and the general public that still have the archaic notion that a woman should not be in charge. They are okay with a woman being an elementary principal or an

assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum and instruction but have concerns

with the secondary principalship and the superintendency.

One (5.5%) male participant explained the gender leadership gap was partly due to

negative stereotypes female teachers had of female administrators. He wrote:

When interviewing administrative candidates, I have witnessed that the female

candidate's ability to lead is often questioned by the female teachers they would

be supervising. I do not think I have ever had a male teacher express that

concern. For the first female administrator I hired, I had to overrule the teacher

committee (all female), because they did not think the candidate was strong

enough to lead. However, I knew this candidate was the best person for the job.

Initially, the committee was upset with me, but, after the first few months of

school, most of the committee members apologized and expressed how great of a

job this female administrator was doing.

Five (27.7%) male participants did not believe the gender leadership gap existed

and provided explanations which touched upon the issue of stereotypes. One male

participant from the Southwest region shared his personal belief of women in the

superintendency. He simply stated, "No. It is a job for men." One male from the St.

Louis region did not view school board members as holding negative stereotypes against

women. He expressed, "School boards love to hire women superintendents." The other

three (16.6%) male participants did not view gender stereotypes or discriminatory

practices as issues affecting the superintendency. One West Central male superintendent

communicated, "I believe that each organization is looking for a specific person, with

specific skills that are unique to that organization. I believe it is more about the personal

fit, as opposed to a gender issue."

The nine (100%) female participants who addressed stereotypes in Question 44

believed the gender leadership gap existed and stereotypes were responsible for it.

Approximately, 44% (n=4) of the female participants mentioned the gender stereotypes

held by school board members. One female superintendent from the Northwestern region

wrote, "Yes, I believe that school boards see males as the best choice for leadership and

that females are unable to lead in the same manner." A female superintendent from the

Southeast region disclosed, "In southeast Missouri, there are mostly rural areas which are

still very male dominated—this trickles over to the school boards where they feel more

comfortable hiring and working with men." The same female superintendent illustrated

how gender stereotypes and biases influenced professional meetings and interactions.

She stated:

> When I first became a superintendent and I attended regional professional
>
> meetings with other superintendents, there were only about four other women.
>
> We sat at the 'girls' table'. Now, there are a few more, but there still seems to be
>
> a 'girls' table'.

Five (55.5%) female participants mentioned the traditional gender stereotypes,

such as men are mentally stronger and more decisive, as being the main stereotypes that

have made it more difficult for women to obtain the school superintendency. One female

superintendent from the Northwestern region believed the gender leadership gap existed,

"because of the existing views that men are better prepared and 'deserving' of top school

roles." Another female superintendent mimicked this sentiment. She stated, "I believe

that it is still the perception that a man can do better than a woman when it comes to finance, budgeting, sports, hiring coaches, managing employees, et cetera."

Question 45: How might school districts achieve gender parity in the role of superintendent? Please explain possible solutions to minimizing the gender leadership gap among school superintendents. The primary investigator created Question 45 to discover if the participating Missouri superintendents would state the research question's variables (gender roles, stereotypes, and biases) as possible solutions. Eighty-nine participants (30 females, 57 males, and two 'No Gender Identified' participants) responded to Question 45. Fourteen (15.7%) participants (five males, eight females, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant) provided solutions, which included stereotypes and issues associated with stereotypes. Three (60%) male participants' solutions included making changes within the local school boards' stereotypes and perceptions. One male superintendent from the Southwest region suggested, "I do not feel that parity is the answer or even desirable—but I do think there is a need for perceptions of local school boards to see through these stereotypes and just hire the best applicant." One West Central male superintendent mentioned the discriminatory actions of school board members, but maintained female and male superintendents get the job based on their own qualifications. He wrote:

> There is no need to pursue 'parity' related to gender. There's a need to pursue leadership development and access no matter the gender. In general, women that are great leaders become superintendents; it is a skill set that is developed over time and people generally notice this fact. Certainly, a school board (the weak link) can be discriminatory at times in unspoken ways and there are instances

when this occurs, but it is not spoken. Moreover, man or woman—a superintendent or potential superintendent is barred based on their merits or lack thereof. Your study is starting with the supposition that there is widespread discrimination or perceived discrimination against women. Be careful, that is a fallacy of composition.

Two (40%) male participants proposed time will change stereotypical perceptions. For example, on male superintendent from the Southwest region wrote, "I think it will just take time to change mindsets. The continued success of female superintendents will help with that."

Two (25%) female participants suggested the change in stereotypes should start with local school boards. A female superintendent from the St. Louis region explained, "Educating school board members on the perceptions that men are more able to give more time, are more intelligent, and more effective." Three (37.5%) female participants maintained it would take major societal change for progress to be made, thus, reducing stereotypes. Thus, one female superintendent from the Northwestern region proposed:

> It has got to start with their Board, but there is a whole lot of societal shifts that have to happen before gender parity exists. When a President is elected who openly has zero respect for women, we are fighting a losing battle. I am ashamed to say it, but I have pretty much given up on it. It is too exhausting.

A female superintendent from the Southeastern reported:

> A cultural awakening! Sorry—being flippant! Actually, being a female superintendent is equally difficult in working with other women—so it is a 'fight'

on both male/female fronts as the females see you as a threat or are jealous. It is

sometimes overwhelming and can be very lonely!

Two (25%) female participants expressed having more female leaders will change

perceptions, thus, eliminating stereotypes. A female superintendent from the Northeast

region proposed, "Having strong women in varying positions of leadership in schools, as

well as in society, is needed for people to be able to believe that women can and will be

great leaders." Finally, one (12.5%) South Central female participant suggested women

should not use any aspect of gender (stereotypes and biases) as an excuse. Specifically,

she wrote:

> Hire the best candidate. If a woman views gender as a reason she did not get the
>
> job, she should consider her qualifications and experience and do her best to
>
> improve upon those—use her gender as an excuse for not getting the job.

One 'No Gender Identified' participant from the Northeast region recommended getting

rid of stereotypes by being open-minded. They conveyed:

> By being more open-minded…that regardless of education, background, gender,
>
> or race, we are all intelligent and can do the job equally well. Male dominated
>
> school boards are awful to deal with as a women superintendent. Gender equality
>
> training is vital to changing mindsets, especially in rural school districts!!

Variable c: Biases.

Quantitative data analysis: Biases. The researcher included multiple items from

the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* in order to determine

Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the influence biases had in the public

education's gender leadership gap. Items 23, 24, and 25 in Part IV (Personal Experiences

as Superintendent) and Items 30 and 35 in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency) were utilized to assist the primary investigator in the biases portion of Question Two. With the exceptions of questions 27 and 43, Part IV and Part V were quantitative items. The researcher asked participants to rate each item using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The primary investigator utilized Item 23 in the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* to determine the superintendents' personal experience with appropriate professional networking opportunities. The mean responses to Item 23 was displayed in Figure 21. The mean was 4.43 (Agree) for the total number of research participants. The male participants' mean was 4.51 or Strongly Agree. The mean was 4.23 (Agree) for the female participants. The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mean was 4.66 or Strongly Agree. The mode for the Missouri superintendent research participants, male participants, and female participants was 5 or Strongly Agree. The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mode was 5 or Strongly Agree. The majority (90.5%; n=124) of the Missouri superintendents surveyed believed they had adequate opportunities for professional networking. Approximately, 5% (n=7) claimed they did not have sufficient opportunities for professional networking. Another seven participants (5.1%) rated Item 23 as neutral. Sixty (93.4%) of the male superintendents and 81.3% (n=35) of the female superintendents surveyed believed they have had sufficient opportunities for professional networking. Only 5.4% (n=5) of the male superintendents and 4.6% (n=2) of the female superintendents disagreed with Item 23. However, a higher percentage (17%; n=6) of female superintendents than male superintendents (1%; n=1) rated Item 23 as neutral.
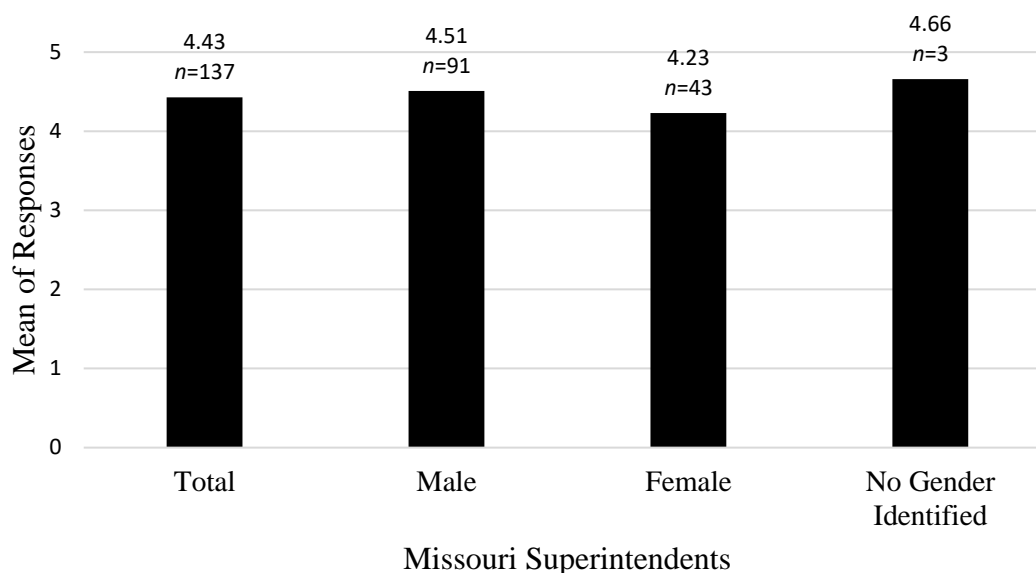
Figure 21. Mean of responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 23: I have had*

adequate opportunities for professional networking. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree,

3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 24 of the electronic survey was used by the primary investigator to discover

the research participants' beliefs regarding whether they preferred working for male

supervisors. The researcher presented the mean responses to Item 24 in Figure 22.

Overall, the research participants' mean was 2.69 or Disagree to Neutral. The mean was

2.57 (Disagree to Neutral) for the male superintendents and the mean was 2.95 (Disagree

to Neutral) for the female superintendents. The 'No Gender Identified' participants'

mean was 2.66 or Disagree to Neutral. The mode was 3 (Neutral) for the Missouri

superintendents, male superintendents, and female superintendents. The mode was 1

(Strongly Disagree), 3 (Neutral), and 4 (Agree) for the three 'No Gender Identified'

superintendents. Over half (55.8%; *n*=76) of the Missouri superintendents surveyed rated

Item 24 as neutral. Nineteen (13.9%) of the superintendents surveyed reported they preferred working for male supervisors, while 41 (30%) disagreed. Interestingly, more male superintendents (36.2%; *n*=33) than female superintendents (16.6%; *n*=7) disagreed with Item 24. Furthermore, a slightly higher percentage of female superintendents (14.2%; *n*=6) than male superintendents (13.1%; *n*=12) divulged, before becoming superintendents, they preferred working for men in supervising roles. However, 69% (*n*=29) of female participants and 50.5% (*n*= 46) of male participants rated Item 24 as neutral.
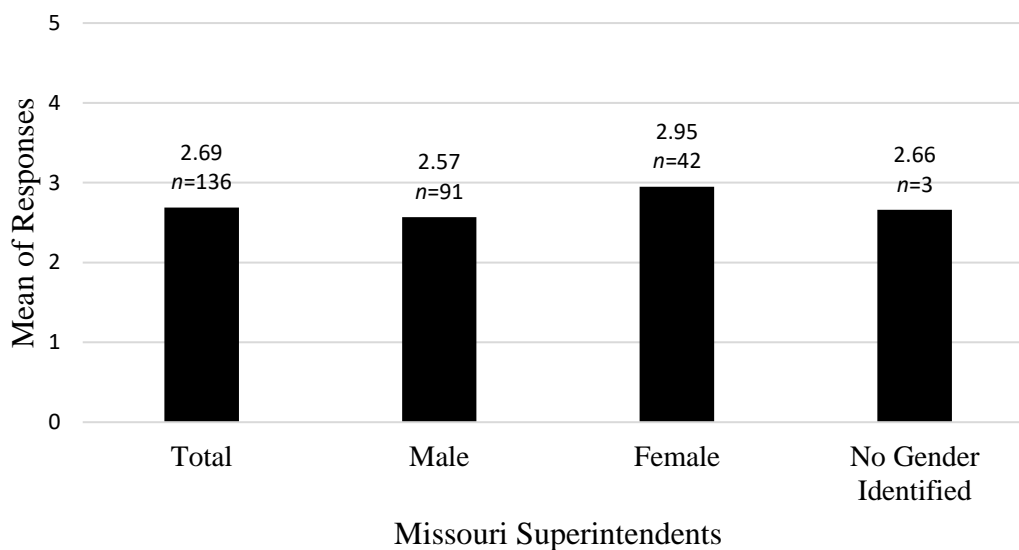
Figure 22. Mean of responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 24: Before becoming a superintendent, I preferred working for men in supervising roles.* One female superintendent chose not to respond to Item 25. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 25 of the online survey was utilized by the primary investigator to deduce the research participants' beliefs about whether they preferred working for females in a supervising role. Through data analysis, the researcher calculated the mean responses for Item 25 (see Figure 23). The mean for all the Missouri superintendents surveyed was 2.43 or Disagree. The male superintendents' mean was 2.3 (Disagree) and the female superintendents' mean was 2.73 (Disagree to Neutral). The mean was 4 (Agree) for the 'No Gender Identified' participants. The mode was 3 (Neutral) for the Missouri superintendents surveyed, the male superintendents, and the female superintendents. The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mode was 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly Agree). Eighty-three (61%) of the research participants rated Item 25 as neutral. Forty-two (30.8%) participants disagreed with Item 25. Seven (5.1%) participants reported, before becoming superintendents, they preferred working for female supervisors. A higher percentage of female superintendents (71.4%; $n=30$) than male superintendents (57.1%; $n=52$) surveyed rated Item 25 as neutral. Also, 7.1% ($n=3$) of the female superintendents and 3.2% ($n=3$) of the male superintendents polled agreed with Item 25. Thirty-four (37.3%) male superintendents and nine (21.4%) female superintendents disagreed with Item 25.
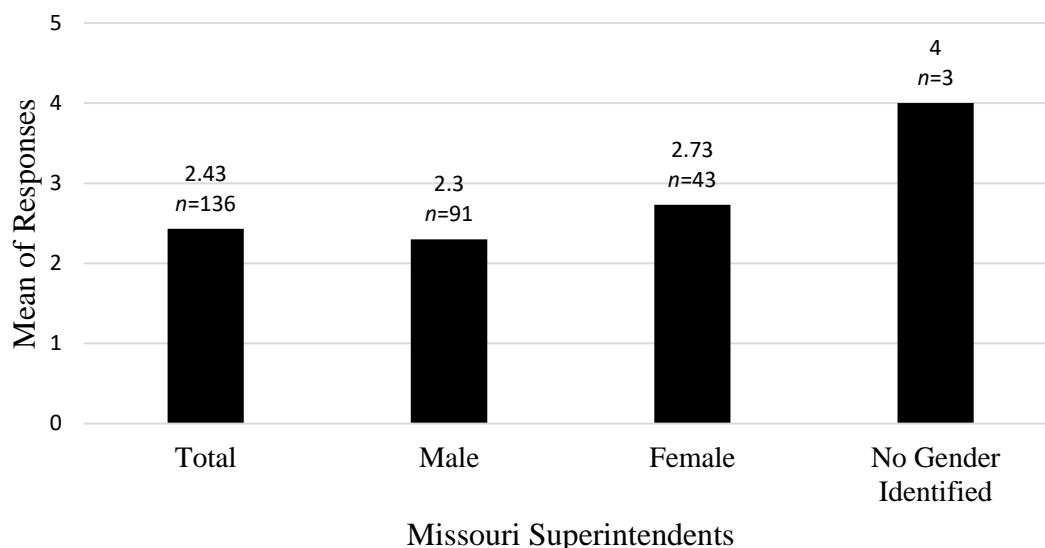
Figure 23. Mean of responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 25: Before becoming a superintendent, I preferred working for women in supervising roles.* One female participant chose not to respond to Item 25. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 30 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* asked research participants to share whether they believe fewer women have the administrative experience needed for the school superintendency. The mean of responses has been illustrated in Figure 24. The mean for all of the study's participants was 2.42 or Disagree. The mean for the male and female participants was very close; the male superintendents' mean was 2.40 (Disagree) and the female superintendents' mean was 2.41 (Disagree). The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mean was 3 or Neutral. The mode for the Missouri superintendents, male superintendents, and female superintendents was 2 or Disagree. The 'No Gender Identified' participants' mode was 1 (Strongly

Disagree), 3 (Neutral), and 5 (Strongly Agree). The bulk, 59.7% (*n*=80) of the research

participants disagreed with Item 30. Twenty-six (19.4%) participants believed less

women have the administrative experience required for the superintendency. Twenty-

eight (20.8%) participants rated Item 30 as neutral. Approximately, 16% (*n*=7) of female

superintendents and 20.4% (*n*=18) of male superintendents agreed with Item 30 in the

online survey. However, the majority (55.8%; *n*=24) of female superintendents and the

majority of male superintendents (62.5%; *n*= 55) disagreed with Item 30. Finally, 15

(17%) male participants and 12 (27.9%) female participants gave Item 30 a neutral rating.
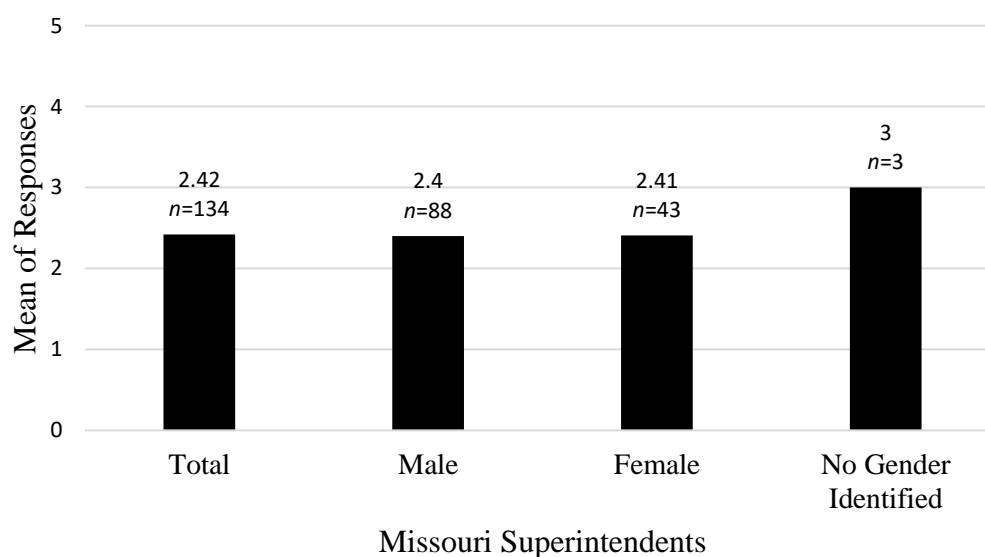
Figure 24. Mean of responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 30: Fewer women*

have the administrative experience required for the superintendency. Three male

participants chose not to respond to Item 30. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree,

3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Item 35 in the online survey had participants respond to whether they believed male superintendents had better access to personal and professional networking systems than female superintendents. Figure 30 presented the mean responses of the various categories of research participants. The overall mean of the Missouri superintendents surveyed was 2.5 or Disagree to Neutral. The male superintendents' mean was 2.26 (Disagree) and the female superintendents' mean was 2.97 (Disagree to Neutral). The mean of the 'No Gender Identified' participants was a 2.66 or Disagree to Neutral. The mode was 1 (Strongly Disagree) for the Missouri superintendents and the male superintendents. The female superintendents' mode was 2 (Disagree) and the 'No Gender Identified' participants' mode was 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), and 5 (Strongly Agree). Seventy-five (55.5%) participants disagreed, while 37 (27.4%) participants agreed with Item 35. Twenty-three (17%) participants rated Item 35 as neutral. A higher percentage of female participants (41.8%; n=18) than male participants (20.2%; n=18) believed male superintendents had better access to personal and professional networking systems than their female counterparts. On the other end of the spectrum, a higher percentage of male participants (59.5%; n=53) than female participants (46.5%; n=20) disagreed with Item 35. Eighteen (20.2%) male superintendents and five (11.6%) female superintendents rated Item 35 as neutral.
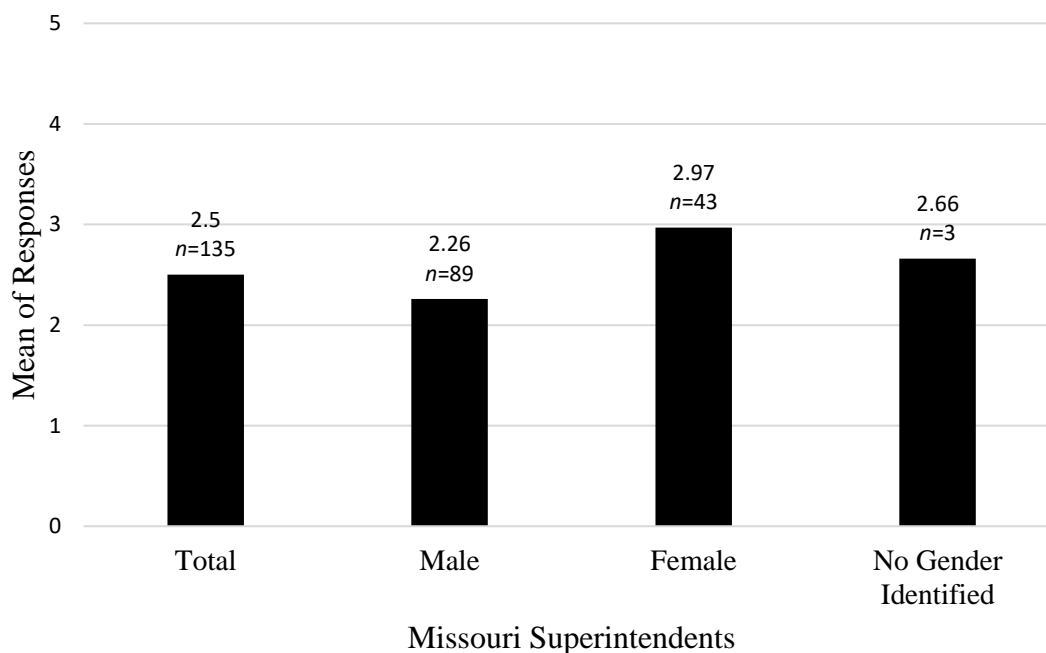
Figure 25. Mean of responses of Missouri superintendents to *Item 35: Male superintendents have better access to personal and professional networks than their female counterparts.* Two male participants chose not to respond to Item 35. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree.

Qualitative data analysis: Biases. The primary investigator included four open-ended questions in the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* for qualitative data analysis. The researcher utilized the open-ended questions to gain an in-depth analysis of Missouri superintendents' attitudes, opinions, and beliefs regarding the influence biases had in public education's gender leadership gap.

Question 27: Please use this space to provide additional comments regarding your personal experience as a superintendent and/or to clarify any of the statements mentioned in Part IV. Twelve female participants, fourteen male participants, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant responded to Question 27. Ten participants, seven

males and three females, responded to Question 27 citing topics pertaining to biases. Interestingly, all seven male participants used Question 27 to expand upon Items 24 and 25, which focused on gender bias. The seven (100%) male participants reported they had both female and male supervisors before becoming superintendents. Six (85.7%) of the male superintendents claimed they had no preference. One (14.2%) male superintendent disclosed he had a female supervisor who "did not understand the role of a high school principal". He stated, "Consequently, it was not that she was female, but the fact she was elementary trained."

Two (66.6%) female participants wrote they had both men and women as supervisors before becoming a superintendent. Both expressed they had "no preference" for working for a man or a woman. One (33.3%) female superintendent elaborated on Item 23 of the survey. She wrote, "I have been given numerous opportunities to expand my professional learning network as well as initiate new programs in my district and community." All in all, the majority of the male and female participants reportedly had no gender bias when asked if they preferred a male or female supervisor.

Question 43: Please use this space to provide additional comments about your personal experience and/or opinions regarding the barriers to the female superintendency in Part V. Twelve female participants and 18 male participants responded to Question 43. Five participants, one male and four females, provided explanations for the gender leadership gap which focused on issues related biases, such as gender bias or implicit bias. One (100%) male participant responded to the level of professional support and networking availability for female superintendents. He stated, "I see a growing support network for women leaders that state and national associations

are promoting." The three (75%) female participants' responses dealt with the professional and personal networking availability for women. They maintained there were inequities in the gender aspect of the professional networking system. However, most claimed they believed it was getting better. For example, one female superintendent from the West Central region noted:

> From what I see, the superintendent position has been mostly dominated by men, so we have what we call 'the good ole boy' network in which they help each other and network. However, recently, I feel like this is changing and it is easier to network with all my peers.

Another female participant shared her experience:

> I do, often, find myself at superintendent meetings that are all or almost all men, primarily white men. There is clearly a male network within the superintendent group that brings new male superintendents into the fold. I am not certain it is conscious, but an unconscious connection that provides networking not always easily accessible to female superintendents. Again, I have excellent male colleagues. However, the fact remains it is a different dynamic for women.

Two (50%) of the four female participants mentioned implicit biases as an issue which unconsciously stymied women's progress up the educational administrative ladder. A female superintendent from the Northwestern region replied:

> I have been pleasantly surprised by the male superintendents who are welcoming of diversity. That being said, they still do not understand the differences between themselves as primarily white, middle-aged men and superintendents who are female and/or non-white. I do not think they do it purposefully. They are just

156

blind to the struggles because they have never experienced them. I think there is a misconception of the 'good ole boys' club. Is it there? Yes. Is it prevalent? I would say no. But what does happen is, for example, a break in a meeting where all the men end up in the bathroom continuing a discussion. Guess who is left out? Again, this is not on purpose. It just happens.

Question 44: Do you believe the gender leadership gap, the disproportion of women in top leadership positions, exists in the school superintendency? If yes, why do you believe it exists? Thirty-six female participants, 78 male participants, and three 'No Gender Identified' participants responded to Question 44. Eighteen participants, 12 male participants and six female participants, provided explanations which adduced issues related to gender biases and implicit biases, such as second-generational gender bias, as the main culprits. All 18 (100%) research participants agreed the gender leadership gap existed. Ireland (2014) found a majority of male superintendents moved up the ranks through the secondary principalship. Research demonstrated most female administrators have been elementary principals, thus, making the transition from elementary principal to superintendent more difficult for females (Ireland, 2014). Approximately, 33% (*n*=4) of the 12 male superintendents discussed the career path/positioning differences between male and female superintendents. One male superintendent stated, "They [board members] are okay with a woman being an elementary principal or an assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum and instruction, but have concerns with the secondary principalship and the superintendency." A male superintendent from the Southwest region wrote:

In my observation, Boards tend to favor superintendents with secondary backgrounds over elementary. Female administrators tend to work in elementary roles. I think Boards are open to female superintendents (a female replaced me in a prior position), but I do think, for whatever reason, secondary experience is seen as superior to elementary experience when administrators are attempting the leap to central office.

Three (25%) male participants discussed gender bias as the primary impediment for women seeking the superintendency. A West Central male superintendent stated, "Yes. I believe it [gender leadership gap] exists mostly because of society's inherent bias against women." Another male participant reported, "Yes, because gender bias still exists." Three (25%) male participants considered societal norms and traditions as the major obstacles for women striving for the school superintendency. Two (16.6%) male participants mentioned the "good ole boy" system within their explanations. One male superintendent from the Northwestern region expressed the gender leadership gap existed because of the "good old boy networking". However, a male superintendent from the Southeast region believed the good ole boy system no longer existed. He shared:

I do believe it exists, but times are changing, and the demands of the job are starting to change. It is no longer the good ole boy network of former coaches and heavy hitters. It has become an instructional and servant leadership position which drastically equals the playing field.

Two (33.3%) female participants cited gender differences in career paths/positioning as the reason the gender leadership disparity existed among the ranks of the school superintendency. One South Central female superintendent wrote, "I think it is the fact

that the majority of superintendents come from the high school principal role or coaching role." A female superintendent from the Northeastern region stated, "Yes. It has been my experience that school boards and communities tend to favor females more as elementary principals and males for high school principals and superintendents."

Precisely, 50% (*n=3*) of the female superintendents identified professional and personal networking as a major obstacle for women seeking the superintendency. One St. Louis female superintendent wrote, "It is a male dominated role with greater levels of networking and support for males." A female superintendent from the Southeast region divulged:

> I hear of other male superintendents who go fishing with their male board
> members—if a female superintendent did that there would be rumors they were
> having an affair—not that any of our male board members would even ask me to
> go.

One (16.6%) female participant believed gender bias was a significant hindrance for women aspiring to the superintendency. One female superintendent asserted:

> Gender bias still expects that women are less capable in leadership positions. One
> has to be emotionally strong, confident, and able to take on tough issues. People
> do not expect that women are as capable of doing this. And, when they do
> demonstrate confidence and take on the tough issues, it makes people
> uncomfortable with women being outside of expected gender norms.

> *Question 45: How might school districts achieve gender parity in the role of*
superintendent? Please explain possible solutions to minimizing the gender leadership
gap among school superintendents. The primary investigator created Question 45 to

discover if the participating Missouri superintendents would state the research question's

variables (gender roles, stereotypes, and biases) as possible solutions. Eighty-nine

participants (30 females, 57 males, and two 'No Gender Identified' participants)

responded to Question 45. Sixteen participants, which included eight males, seven

females, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant, furnished answers related to gender

and implicit biases. Three (37.5%) male participants' solutions were to address the

career path/positioning gender differences of educational administrators. A West Central

male superintendent suggested:

> One of the concerns is the expectations placed on the superintendents and this
>
> probably coordinates with the desire of the small schools to hire people with high
>
> school principal experience. The high school principalship has a huge disparity of
>
> male versus female.

> Another West Central male superintendent believed gender parity could be

achieved if there were more female principals in secondary schools. He wrote, "More

secondary female principals. I would venture to say more middle school and high school

principals ascend to the superintendency." A male superintendent from the South Central

region discussed how secondary principals and athletic directors have better access for

networking. He stated:

> In my opinion, many superintendents have been coaches, athletic directors, and
>
> high school principals, and in those roles you are supervising games and dealing
>
> with the public more frequently. When a superintendent opening happens, many
>
> of these administrators have already built relationships with school board
>
> members. Several first-time superintendents were promoted from within. I am

not sure how solutions to this could be achieved other than gaining experience

which promotes relationships outside of the regular school day.

Three (37.5%) male participants' responses identified biases in their responses. A

male from the Northwest region wrote, "I would think that even the requirement to

interview the same amount of females as males would help. Many times, females do not

even get the opportunity for an interview based on gender bias." A St. Louis male

superintendent suggested bias is not the problem. He recommended women start their

educational administrative careers earlier if they want to become superintendents. He

reported:

> The pool of apps has to reflect equal numbers of male to female. More females
>
> must apply for jobs so the female side is more visible. Females have to set their
>
> ambitions on getting the top job 20 years ahead of time in order to get the
>
> experience. They will be hired in education without bias, but they have to apply
>
> and also they have to climb the ladder of experience that leads to a resume that
>
> fits the job.

Two (25%) male participants proposed initiating mentorship programs for female school

administrators as a solution to public education's gender leadership dilemma. One male

superintendent from the Southeast region prescribed:

> Provide mentoring programs for women in leadership roles. Develop a 'Women
>
> in Leadership' training program that helps leaders develop skills that will support
>
> them in their career as a superintendent. The program should provide ways to
>
> break down stereotypes and misconceptions about women in leadership roles.

Three (42.8%) female participants advised for school districts to create mentorships for women seeking leadership roles in school administration. A South Central female superintendent simply stated, "Mentoring is key." A female superintendent from the St. Louis region urged:

> Specific to school districts, the parity will not come independent of a major social shift, leading to parity in all fields. Just putting women in the roles will not fix it. We need to provide support, mentorship, and an acceptance of varied leadership styles, including those deemed more feminine.

Two (28.5%) female participants mentioned professional networking and development as key tools to level the playing field. A Northwestern female superintendent wrote, "Have more professional development opportunities for females." One female superintendent from the St. Louis region stated, "Opening minds to the dynamic leadership of women. Growing internal candidates. Expanding male networks to actively seek out and connect with women." Two (28.5%) female superintendents provided responses which directly and indirectly addressed gender biases. A female superintendent from the Northwestern region suggested school districts provide "blind interviewing" to assist in reducing gender bias. A female superintendent from the Southwestern region did not provide a solution, but, rather expressed her concerns about biases that occurred from some male superintendents. She wrote:

> The gender leadership gap in schools is closing, but the gender gap among superintendents in cohort organizations and mutual respect towards each other is not. I am not sure what you do about the all too common "good ole boy" system.

Hence, a portion of the Missouri school superintendents surveyed perceived biases and issues related to second-generational gender bias as being problematic for female school administrators.

Summary

The mixed-methods study was presented in Chapter Four. The researcher analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data received from the 137 research participants. The information provided by the research participants allowed for the analysis of the following: a) which demographic variables of Missouri superintendents showed the greatest impact on gender leadership and b) what were Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the variables (gender roles, stereotypes, and biases) impacting the gender leadership gap in public education. The researcher applied descriptive statistical methods to analyze the quantitative data. The primary investigator used tables and graphs to display the quantitative data. The qualitative data was presented in categories, according to the three variables guiding Research Question Two: a) gender roles, b) stereotypes, and c) biases. A summary of the research findings, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research can be found in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

The gender leadership gap, disparity of the number of men in top-level leadership positions versus the number of women, has been present in almost every dimension of the American workforce (Hill et al., 2016; Warner & Corley, 2017). Even within the upper echelons of the public educational system, men have dominated the school superintendency (Superville, 2016). Although three-fourths of the nation's educational workforce has been made up of women, a little more than one-fourth of the school superintendents were female (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Gupton, 2009; Kelsey et al., 2014; Klatt, 2014; Rosenberg, 2017). The purpose of the study was to determine: a) what demographic variables of Missouri superintendents had the most influence on gender leadership, b) Missouri school superintendents' perceptions of the factors impacting the gender leadership gap in public education, and c) possible solutions to the gender leadership disparity.

The researcher sent out the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* (see Appendix D) electronically to all 561 Missouri school superintendents for the 2017-2018 school year. Exactly 137 Missouri superintendents, which included 91 males, 43 females, and three 'No Gender Identified' participants, participated in this study. The researcher used a mixed-method approach in the study. The quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed according to the two research questions guiding this study. To address Research Question One, the researcher analyzed research participants' demographic data to determine which demographic variables showed the greatest impact on gender leadership in public education. To address Research Question Two, the researcher analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data according to the three variables

(gender roles, stereotypes, and biases). This chapter will present the research findings, the primary investigator's conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Findings

Before the research was conducted, the researcher investigated the gender leadership gap in public education. In 2015, 27% of the school superintendents were women (Rosenberg, 2017). As shown in Table 1, data collected from MoDESE's (2017b) website illustrated Missouri had fallen behind the national percentage of women in the school superintendency position. Within the 2017-2018 school year, only 23.8% of the Missouri school superintendents listed were women. Although state data showed a gender leadership gap among Missouri school superintendents, the researcher wanted to discover current Missouri superintendents' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions regarding the gender leadership gap. Therefore, the researcher electronically sent out the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* to determine: a) what demographic variables show the greatest impact on gender leadership and b) the Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the variables (gender roles, stereotypes, and biases) impacting the gender leadership imbalance.

Research Question One—What demographic variables show the greatest impact on gender leadership? Data for Research Question One was collected from Items 1 through 17 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* (see Appendix D). Nearly all demographic variables (see Tables 2 through 18) were found to have some influence on gender leadership. However, after the researcher analyzed the

data, some demographic variables showed more of an impact on gender and leadership than others.

   Marital status. Table 5 displayed the marital status of the participating Missouri superintendents. Data was collected from Item 4 of the online survey. Approximately, 94% (*n*=128) of the research participants reported to be married. Interestingly, a higher percentage of female superintendents (11.6%; *n*=5) than male superintendents (3.2%; *n*=3) were not married or in a domestic partnership. Specifically, 4.6% (*n*=2) female superintendents were divorced as compared to only 3.2% (*n*=3) of the male superintendents. Furthermore, 4.6% (*n*=2) female superintendents disclosed being single. Whereas, none of the male superintendents reported being single. Thus, a higher percentage of male superintendents than female superintendents had spouses at home. The AASA's 2015 study of American superintendents reported fewer women superintendents were married than their male counterparts (Finnan et al., 2015). Data from this study elicited similar results.

   Number of children. As shown previously in Table 6, the majority of male (63.7%; *n*=58) and female (69.7%; *n*=30) superintendents had two or less children. A higher percentage of male superintendents (36.2%; *n*=33) disclosed they had three or more children. Only 30.2% (*n*=13) of female superintendents stated they had three or more children. Other studies showed women identified family obligations and limited time with family members as obstacles to obtain a superintendent position (Connell et al., 2015, Klatt, 2014). Thus, family considerations, such family size or childrearing issues, have affected women in leadership (Connell et al., 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Klatt, 2014).

Number of years as a classroom teacher. According to Table 8, the majority (55.8%; *n*=24) of the female superintendents spent eight years or longer in the classroom before becoming school administrators. The majority (58.4%; *n*=52) of the male superintendents, on the other hand, spent seven years or less in the classroom before becoming administrators. Finnan et al. (2015) reported the AASA's 2015 study discovered female superintendents spent more years as classroom teachers than male superintendents. Hence, by spending more years in the classroom, the researcher found the majority of women superintendents started their educational administration careers later than their male counterparts began their administrative careers.

Number of years as a superintendent. The research participants reported the total number of years they had been superintendents (see Table 9). The majority (72%; *n*=31) of female superintendents reported having been superintendents seven years or less. Whereas, 27.9% (*n*=12) of the female superintendents shared they had been school superintendents eight years or longer. Furthermore, 37.2% (*n*=16) of the female participants stated they had been superintendents three years or less. Therefore, more female participants have reportedly been hired by local school boards within recent years as compared to years prior. This finding has mirrored previous studies that demonstrated there has been a shrinking gender leadership gap within the school superintendency (Holland, 2011; Ireland, 2014).

Mobility of the superintendents' careers. Glass (2000) wrote female school administrators were electing not to go into the superintendency because of personal reasons, such as lack of mobility. Table 10 presented the level of mobility of the superintendents' careers. A little over half (50.5%; *n*=46) of the male participants

reported serving as superintendents within the same district in which they started their

superintendency careers, while the other half (49.5%; *n*=45) reported they had served as

superintendents in multiple districts. Women superintendents were less mobile than men

superintendents were. Approximately, 72% (*n*=31) of the female superintendents had

only served as superintendents in one district. Only 27.9% (*n*=12) have relocated to serve

as superintendents to other districts. Ergo, more male superintendents than female

superintendents have had the ability to relocate.

Gender of superintendents' mentors. Research studies provided a lack of

mentors and role models as a major barrier to women aspiring to the superintendency

(Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014). Though 84.6% (*n*=116) of the

participants had a mentorship experience, the data showed most mentors were men (see

Tables 12 and 13). Precisely, 80.8% (*n*=93) of the superintendents reported having a

male mentor. Approximately, 19% (*n*=22) of the superintendents identified the gender of

their mentors as female. Consequently, the majority (77.7%; *n*=28) of the female

participants reportedly did not have female mentors to help guide them in their school

administrative careers. According to Ibarra et al. (2013), having less females in

leadership positions has devised a system in which there have been less female role

models, thus, strengthening implicit biases in the workforce.

Numbers of students in school districts. As shown in Table 17, nearly three-

fourths (74.4%; *n*=32) of the female superintendents were in charge of school districts

with a student enrollment of 1,000 pupils or less. A higher percentage (42.8%; *n*=39) of

male superintendents led school districts with student enrollments of 1,000 pupils or

more. Surprisingly, the majority of the female superintendents surveyed were in charge

of smaller school districts, while a higher percentage of males were in charge of larger

school districts.

Number of female school board members. Gender biases have influenced local

school boards' hiring and selection processes (Holland, 2011; Superville, 2016; Webb,

2016). Connell et al. (2015) found men who perpetuated the good ole boy system were

often in charge of local school boards. Sparks (2014) discovered females made up 40%

of the nation's public school boards. Table 18 displayed the number of female school

board members the superintendents had on their current school boards. The majority

(81%; *n*=111) of the superintendents reported their school districts' boards of education

had three female board members or less. Exactly 18.6% (*n*=17) of the male

superintendents and 18.6% (*n*=8) of the female superintendents stated they had four

female board members or more. Interestingly, 12.4% (*n*=17) of the research participants

reportedly led school districts whose local school boards had no female board members.

Thus, most local school boards had a majority of male board members. Since local

school boards hired district superintendents, gender biases could have influenced the

interviewing and selection processes (Holland, 2011).

Research Question Two. What were Missouri superintendents' perceptions

regarding the variables impacting the gender leadership gap in public education?

   a. Gender roles

   b. Stereotypes

   c. Biases

The *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* collected

quantitative and qualitative data from 137 Missouri superintendents who consented to

participate in this study. The researcher used Items 18 through 45 to gather information

to answer Research Question Two. Research findings were presented by the three

variables listed in Research Question Two. The researcher chose gender roles,

stereotypes, and biases as the three variables, because a review of the literature found all

three variables have been cultural hindrances for women aspiring to top leadership

positions, such as the school superintendency (Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al.,

2013; Kelsey et al., 2014).

   Variable a: Gender roles. Researchers discovered westernized gender roles have

strengthened the gender leadership gap (Glass, 2000; Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015;

Hill et al., 2016). A review of the literature revealed gender and leadership have

demonstrated traditional male gender roles have hurt women and helped to advance men

in seeking leadership positions (Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015; Latu et al., 2013).

Traditional female gender roles, such as being emotional, sensitive, people-oriented, and

nurturing, have been characteristics typically associated with women (Kassin et al.,

2014). Unfortunately, for women, traditional male gender roles, such as assertiveness,

aggressiveness, decisiveness, and ambitiousness, have been associated with successful

leadership characteristics (Bailey, 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Trinidad & Normore, 2005).

For those women who have acquired top level leadership positions, the balancing act of

female versus male leadership styles have caused many to walk a gender tightrope

(Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Too often, society has

punished women for violating traditional gender roles (Hershcovis & Weinhardt).

Furthermore, traditional westernized gender roles have put women in the positions of

caregivers and domestic goddesses (Davis, 2016; Haines et al., 2016). Traditional gender

roles have put working women at a disadvantage when trying to balance their careers with family life (Davis, 2016; Haines et al., 2016; Weir, 2017).

In this study, the researcher used five items in Part IV (Personal Experience as Superintendent), five items in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency), and two items in Part VI (Open-Ended Questions) of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* to determine the research participants' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about the influence of gender roles in the gender leadership gap. The primary investigator used a mixed-methods approach to answer Research Question Two.

Quantitative findings. The researcher used Items 18, 19, 20, and 26 in Part IV (Personal Experience as Superintendent), and Items 28, 40, 41, and 42 in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency) to gather quantitative data to determine research participants' perceptions of the impact gender roles have had on the gender leadership gap in the superintendency. The researcher utilized a Likert scale for all quantitative data. The Likert scale range was as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree, to 2=Disagree, to 3=Neutral, to 4=Agree, to 5=Strongly Agree. The researcher asked participants to rate *Item 18: I have experienced anxiety about the effect my career has on my family*. The majority (70%; *n*=96) of the research participants agreed they had experienced some amount of stress/anxiety about the effect their position as superintendent had on their family. Interestingly, a higher percentage of males (72.5%; *n*=66) than females (62.7%; *n*=27) agreed with this statement. Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* asked Ohio women school superintendents about whether they had experienced personal anxieties about the effect their careers had on their family. When data from Item 18 was compared to Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey data, the

researcher discovered similar findings. Precisely, 63.2% of the Ohio women superintendents surveyed and 62.7% of the participating Missouri female superintendents had experienced anxiety about their careers and the effects it had on their families.

The primary investigator asked participants to rate *Item 19: I lack sufficient family support.* Approximately, 85% (*n*=117) of the research participants disagreed with Item 19. Thus, most of the Missouri superintendents surveyed believed they received adequate support from their families. Surprisingly, 86% (*n*=37) of the female superintendents disagreed with Item 19. A smaller percentage (84.6%; *n*=77) of the male superintendents disagreed. The data to Item 19 demonstrated that a higher percentage of females reportedly received sufficient family support than their male counterparts. Various studies have pinpointed family considerations and obligations as major barriers to women vying for superintendency positions (Glass, 2000; Klatt, 2014). When data from Item 19 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* was compared to Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) data, the researcher discovered similarities. Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* asked women whether they felt they lacked family support. Specifically, 86% of the participating female Missouri superintendents and 88.2% of the Ohio women superintendents polled did not believe they lacked sufficient family support (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008).

Research participants responded to *Item 20: I do not have the ability to relocate for a new position.* Precisely, 52.5% (*n*=72) of the Missouri superintendents surveyed disagreed with Item 20. However, 41.8% (*n*=18) of female superintendents did not feel they had the ability to relocate for a new superintendency position. Only 24.1% (*n*=22) of the male superintendents stated the same. Consequently, more female participants

lacked the ability to move for a new position than the male participants. This finding

echoed similar findings from the AASA's 2000 study (Glass, 2000). Glass (2000)

reported the AASA's findings revealed personal factors, such as a lack of mobility, as

obstacles for women vying for the school superintendency. According to the *Missouri*

Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey's findings, a higher percentage of female

superintendents than male superintendents did not have the ability to relocate for new

positions. Thus, this study's data supported the findings reported by the AASA (Glass,

2000).

 The Missouri superintendents who participated in this study responded to *Item 26:*

The community expects me to be assertive, decisive, and ambitious. The bulk (81.6%;

n=111) of the research participants agreed with Item 26. When comparing the gender

differences in the data, the researcher discovered more male superintendents (4.4%; *n*=3)

than female superintendents (3.6%; *n*=5) did not believe their communities expected

them to be assertive, decisive, and ambitious. Assertiveness, decisiveness, and

ambitiousness were traditional male gender roles that were associated with effective

leadership characteristics (Bailey, 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Kassin et al., 2014). The

findings for Item 26 showed the majority of the participating Missouri superintendents

believed society expected them to possess the three leadership traits mentioned above.

Hence, participating school superintendents affirmed society expected them to display

traditional masculine gender roles—gender roles associated with effective leadership

traits (Hill et al., 2016).

 The researcher asked participants to respond to *Item 28: Women's family*

responsibilities are an obstacle for females seeking the superintendency. Approximately,

32% (*n*=43) of the superintendents surveyed agreed, while 34% (*n*=46) disagreed, and

34% (*n*=46) remained neutral with Item 28. However, there were noticeable gender

differences in the responses to Item 28. Approximately, 58% (*n*=25) of the female

superintendents believed family responsibilities have been barriers to women aspiring to

the school superintendency. Only 22.4% (*n*=20) of the male superintendents shared this

sentiment. The majority (39.3%; *n*=35) of the male participants rated Item 28 as neutral.

According to this study, more female participants viewed family responsibilities and

obligations as a hindrance for female superintendents than male participants did. This

finding mimicked other studies focused on the school superintendency. Klatt's (2014)

study found spousal issues and having school-aged children were impediments to women

striving for the school superintendency. The AASA's 2000 and 2008 studies also

reported family considerations and obligations as hindrances to the female

superintendency (Glass, 2000; as cited in Kelsey et al., 2014). Barrios' 2004 study

identified having limited time with families as a major obstacle for women seeking the

superintendency (Connell et al., 2015).

Research participants responded to *Item 40: Male superintendents are viewed as*

having better skills in finance and budgeting. Most (37.5%; *n*=51) of the Missouri

superintendents surveyed disagreed with Item 40. Specifically, 33.8% (*n*=46) of the

research participants rated Item 40 as neutral, while 28.6% (*n*=39) disagreed. The

majority (42.2%; *n*=38) of the male superintendents polled did not believe most people

viewed male superintendents as having better financial and budgeting skills. An

estimated 21% (*n*=19) of the male participants believed society viewed male

superintendents as being more skilled in budgeting and finance. Exactly 44.1% (*n*=19) of

the female superintendents agreed and 25.5% (*n*=11) disagreed with Item 40. Hence, a

higher percentage of female superintendents believed male superintendents were seen as

more skilled in budgeting and finance. According to Glass (2000), the AASA discovered

76% of women superintendents believed local school boards did not view them as adept

in finance and budgeting. When compared to the AASA's 2000 study, the findings in

this study suggested a significant percentage of the female participants believed society

viewed male superintendents as having superior budgeting and financial skills (Glass,

2000). However, the findings within the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and*

Leadership Survey suggested the percentage of female superintendents who held this

belief has decreased over the years.

The Missouri superintendents who participated in this study responded to *Item 41:*

Male superintendents are viewed as being more assertive and decisive than female

superintendents. Overall, 38.9% (*n*=53) of the research participants agreed with Item 41,

while 30.1% (*n*=41) disagreed. A higher percentage (53.4%; *n*=23) of female

superintendents believed society viewed male superintendents as more decisive and

assertive as their female counterparts. In contrast, only 32.2% (*n*=29) of the male

superintendents held the same belief. Precisely, 34.4% (*n*=31) of the male

superintendents and 20.9% (*n*=9) of the female superintendents surveyed disagreed with

Item 41. However, 33.3% (*n*=30) of the male participants and 25.5% (*n*=11) of the

female participants remained neutral. As mentioned with Item 26, decisiveness,

assertiveness, and ambitiousness were traditional masculine gender roles, which have

were associated with effective leadership characteristics (Bailey, 2014; Hill et al., 2016;

Kassin et al., 2014). Hence, a higher percentage of female superintendents believed male

superintendents were viewed as being more ambitious, decisive, and assertive. If the participants' perceptions were correct, then society would view male superintendents as more effective leaders than female superintendents (Hill et al., 2016).

The primary investigator requested participants to rate *Item 42: Female superintendents are viewed as being more sensitive and people-oriented than their male counterparts.* Approximately, 51% (*n*=69) of the Missouri superintendents polled agreed with Item 42. Only 22.9% (*n*=31) disagreed, while 25.9% (*n*=35) remained neutral. A much higher percentage of female participants (69.7%; *n*=30) than male participants (42.6%; *n*=38) believed society viewed female superintendents as being more sensitive and people-oriented. Therefore, a higher percentage of women superintendents believed female superintendents were viewed as more people-oriented and sensitive than male superintendents. Sensitivity and being people-oriented were traditional feminine gender roles (Davis, 2016; Haines et al., 2016). Female gender roles, such as people oriented and sensitivity, have been associated with relationship-oriented leadership styles (Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Since traditional male gender norms were related to qualities of effective leadership, society typically viewed males as successful leaders (Latu et al., 2013). This perception has damaged women aspiring to leadership roles, such as the school superintendency (Bailey, 2014; Latu et al., 2013).

Qualitative findings. The researcher created four open-ended questions to gather qualitative data for the study. Question 27 in Part IV (Personal Experience as Superintendent), Question 43 in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency), and Questions 44 and 45 in Part VI (Open-Ended Questions) were included in the survey to gather qualitative data to determine research participants' perceptions of the impact

gender roles had on the gender leadership gap in the superintendency, if any. The

researcher asked participants to respond to Question 27 by providing additional

comments regarding their personal experiences as a superintendent and/or to clarify any

of the statements mentioned in Part IV. Nine participants, which included four males and

five females, reported on gender role issues related to Part IV of the *Missouri*

Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey. On the topic of gender and leadership,

60% (*n=3*) of female participants and 50% (*n=2*) of male participants discussed gender

leadership characteristics and how they related to the superintendency. Both genders

agreed school superintendents needed to be assertive and decisive. However, 40% (*n=2*)

of the female superintendents felt societal norms created more issues in dealing with their

communities for women superintendents than men felt in dealing with communities.

Research participants also mentioned family considerations, specifically, their abilities or

inabilities to relocate. When the responses were compared, 40% (*n=2*) of the female

participants maintained, according to their responses, it was harder for women

superintendents to relocate. Only one male (25%) superintendent mentioned his personal

inability to relocate for a new position. Overall, 80% (*n=4*) of the female respondents

identified gender role topics, such as gender and leadership characteristics and family

considerations, as problems experienced with leadership. Only 25% (*n=1*) of the male

participants shared sentiments.

Research participants were given the opportunity to respond to Question 43,

which provided them with the opportunity to furnish additional comments about their

opinions regarding the barriers to the female superintendency. Five participants, three

females and two males, provided responses that touched upon issues related to gender

roles. All three (100%) female participants responded citing traditional male and female gender roles and family obligations, such as childrearing, as hindrances for women superintendents. The male participants who responded did not report traditional gender roles or family obligations as being barriers for women. Rather, the male participants discussed gender role characteristics of female leaders. All (100%; $n=2$) male superintendents shared positive sentiments about the abilities and characteristics of the female leaders' they personally knew or had worked for.

Question 44 asked research participants if they believed the gender leadership gap existed in the school superintendency. If so, respondents were asked to elaborate their answers. Though 117 research participants responded to Question 44, only (17%) 20 participants, which included 12 female superintendents and eight male superintendents, provided explanations for the gender leadership gap which emphasized issues related to gender roles. Exactly 83% ($n=10$) of the female superintendents and 62.5% ($n=5$) of the male superintendents who responded identified family considerations and obligations, such as childrearing and lack of support at home, as the main reason for the gender leadership gap within public education. Only (25%; $n=3$) female participants discussed traditional gender norms for masculine and feminine behaviors as being problematic for women superintendents.

The researcher created Question 45 to provide participants with the opportunity to offer solutions to the leadership gap. Out of the 89 participants who responded to Question 45, five (two males and three females) provided solutions which addressed gender role issues. All five participants (100%) provided solutions to the gender leadership disparity by supporting women in their family obligations, such as maternity

leave and other childrearing concerns. The solutions given by participants would lessen the "mom guilt" experienced by many female educational leaders with children at home.

The qualitative data pertaining to the Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the influence of gender roles in the gender leadership gap provided three common themes. The three common themes of gender roles were: a) family obligations and considerations, b) traditional gender roles, and c) gender roles' association with leadership characteristics. Family obligations and considerations, such as childrearing and a female's inability to relocate for a new position, were the most cited gender role issues as being problematic for women aspiring to the superintendency. Traditional gender roles, such as men being the breadwinners and women being the nurturers and caretakers of the family, were also mentioned as being barriers for female school administrators. Finally, traditional gender roles and their relationship to successful leadership characteristics were discussed as another major hurdle for women aspiring to the superintendency. Since most models of successful leadership mirrored traditional masculine gender roles, such as assertiveness, ambitiousness, and decisiveness, some participants felt this was a hindrance to female leaders (Hill et al., 2016).

Variable b: Stereotypes. Researchers found gender stereotypes have hindered women's progress in obtaining leadership positions, thus, widening the gender leadership gap (Flora, 2017; Hill et al., 2016; Khazan, 2014). Flora (2017) explained gender and leadership stereotyping have become obstacles for women leaders. For example, women who were viewed as self-promoting or power seeking were not looked upon kindly by men (Flora, 2017; Vial et al., 2016). Furthermore, exhibiting masculine traits has created stereotypes negatively affecting female leaders (Flora, 2017). This has occurred due to

gender role violation (Khazan, 2014). Hill et al. (2016) found rigid gender stereotypes can often lead to varying acts of discrimination. A review of the literature has also revealed gender stereotypes and biases have affected local school boards' hiring and selection processes (Connell et al., 2015). Connell et al. (2015) maintained the proverbial *good ole boy* system often leads local school boards. This, in turn, has inadvertently kept women from obtaining superintendent positions (Connell et al., 2015).

The primary investigator used three items in Part IV (Personal Experience as Superintendent), 10 items in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency), and two items in Part VI (Open-Ended Questions) of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* to determine the research participants' perceptions regarding the impact of stereotypes in the gender leadership gap. The researcher utilized a mixed-methods approach to answer Research Question Two.

Quantitative findings. The researcher used Items 21 and 22 in Part IV (Personal Experience as Superintendent), and Items 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, and 39 in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency) to gather quantitative data to determine research participants' attitudes, opinions, and beliefs pertaining to the influence stereotypes have on the gender leadership gap in the superintendency. The researcher utilized a Likert scale for all quantitative data. The Likert scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree), to 2 (Disagree), to 3 (Neutral), to 4 (Agree), to 5 (Strongly Agree). The researcher asked participants to rate *Item 21: I have experienced discrimination at work based on my gender.* Overall, 75.1% (*n*=103) of the Missouri superintendents polled reported they had not experienced gender discrimination at work. Specifically, 14.5% (*n*=20) reported they had experienced gender discrimination, while 10.2% (*n*=14) rated Item 21 as neutral.

Interestingly, 41.8% (*n=18*) of female superintendents and 3.2% (*n=3*) of male superintendents maintained they have experienced gender discrimination at their places of employment. Thus, there was a wide discrepancy between the two genders' experiences with gender discrimination. Flora (2017) and Hill et al. (2016) found gender stereotypes have dominated all facets of the workplace. Positive and negative gender stereotypes have impeded women's leadership progress (Hill et al., 2016). Gender role violation and the cycle of illegitimacy have promoted gender stereotypes and discriminatory behavior against female leaders (Khazan, 2014). A significant number of female participants reported they had experienced workplace gender discrimination. The perceived discrimination experienced by the participating female Missouri superintendents in the workplace may have occurred due to various gender stereotypes.

The primary investigator asked participants to rate *Item 22: I have experienced discrimination at work based on my personal appearance.* Approximately, 84% (*n=116*) of the Missouri superintendents surveyed disagreed and 10% (*n=14*) agreed with Item 22. Only 5.1% (*n=7*) of the research participants gave Item 22 a neutral rating. Precisely, 90.1% (*n=82*) of the male superintendents and 74.4% (*n=32*) of the female superintendents divulged they had not experienced discrimination at their places of employment based on their personal appearances. Most noteworthy, however, was a higher percentage of female participants (18.6%; *n=8*) than male participants (5.4%; *n=5*) disclosed they have experienced discrimination at work based on their personal appearance. Researchers have studied the effects of stereotypes and discriminatory practices toward female leaders' personal appearances (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008; Flora, 2017). Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* asked female

school superintendents if they had experienced discrimination based on their personal appearances. The findings from the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* were very similar to this study's findings (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Precisely, 18.6% of the participating Missouri female superintendents and 18.7% of the Ohio female superintendents surveyed reported they had experienced discrimination based on their personal appearances (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Additionally, a review of the literature found explanations about how stereotypes have promoted discriminatory practices (Flora, 2017; Hill et al., 2016). Hill et al. (2016) found stereotypes have influenced people's perceptions of leaders based upon gender. Flora (2017) discussed how stereotypes affected people's perceptions of female leaders' personal appearance. Often, female leaders were judged on their personal appearance, such as the way they dressed (Flora, 2017). Flora (2017) mentioned female leaders who dress in masculine attire have been perceived as being too manly. On the other hand, female leaders who wore clothes deemed as too feminine have been considered professionally incompetent (Flora, 2017). Hill et al. (2016) wrote gender stereotypes affected how people viewed others and themselves. Since a higher percentage of female participants reported experiencing discrimination based on their appearance, gender stereotypes may have played a role in their perceptions and experiences.

Research participants responded to *Item 29: It is easier for men to become superintendents than women.* Over half (51.8%; *n*=70) of the Missouri school superintendents agreed with Item 29. Thirty (22.2%) Missouri school superintendents polled did not believe it was easier for men to become superintendents than women. Approximately, 24% (*n*=33) of the research participants rated Item 29 as neutral.

Although the majority of the research participants agreed with Item 29, gender data analysis uncovered a wider gap. A higher percentage of women (74.4%; *n=32*) than men (41.5%; *n=37*) agreed it was easier for men to become superintendents than women. Furthermore, 2.3% (*n=1*) of female superintendents and 32.5% (*n=29*) of the male superintendents disagreed with Item 29. Vial et al. (2016) reported male leaders were accepted more than female leaders. According to Vial et al. (2016), the lack of fit theory and cycle of illegitimacy helped explain why workers or employers may have been averse to female leaders. Consequently, theories on gender stereotypes and biases may help explain why over half of the participating Missouri superintendents believed it was easier for men to become superintendents than women. Similarly, The Rockefeller Foundation (2017) reported 83% of Americans believed it was easier for men to obtain top leadership positions than women. The Rockefeller Foundation's (2017) report findings were similar to this study's findings in that most of the research participants believed it was easier for men to move up to leadership positions than women.

The Missouri superintendents who participated in this study responded to *Item 31: Female superintendents are held to higher standards than male superintendents.* A little more than half (51.1%; *n=69*) of the Missouri superintendents polled disagreed with Item 31; 29.6% (*n=40*) agreed with Item 31. Twenty-nine (21.4%) research participants provided Item 31 with a neutral rating. Gender data analysis revealed 53.4% (*n=23*) of the female participants believed female superintendents were held to higher standards than their male counterparts. Only 17.9% (*n=16*) of the male participants agreed. On the other end of the spectrum, 23.2% (*n=10*) of the female participants and 60.6% (*n=54*) of the male participants did not believe female superintendents were held to higher

standards than male superintendents. A much higher percentage of female participants than male participants perceived female superintendents to be held to higher standards than their male counterparts. The Pew Research Center's (2015b) *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* asked its participants to respond to a similar survey item. The Pew Research Center (2015b) found 52% of female Americans and 33% of male Americans believed, within the workplace setting, women had to prove themselves and were held to higher standards more often than men were. The *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* participants perceived this as being a major barrier to women seeking top leadership roles. When the findings from Item 31 were compared to the Pew Research Center (2015b) findings, the percentage of female participants who believed women were held to higher standards then men in leadership positions were nearly exact. However, a higher percentage of male participants in the Pew Research Center's (2015b) survey than the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* believed women in leadership positions were held to higher standards.

The researcher asked participants to respond to *Item 32: Women do not make as effective superintendents as men do.* The majority (86.6%; *n*=117) of the Missouri superintendents surveyed disagreed with Item 32. The data disaggregated, in regard to gender, demonstrated interesting results. Intriguingly, 100% (*n*=43) of the female participants and 79.7% (*n*=71) of the male participants disagreed with Item 32. This meant 7.8% (*n*=7) of the male superintendents surveyed believed women did not make as effective superintendents as men. Out of the seven male participants who believed women did not make effective superintendents as men did, five (57.1%) of the male superintendents were from the Southwest region of Missouri, two (28.5%) were from

South Central region of the state, and one (14.2%) was from the West Central region of

Missouri. Approximately, 12% (*n*=11) of the male superintendents rated Item 32 as

neutral. Thus, for the male participants who believed women did not make effective

superintendents as men did, the majority reportedly belonged to the Southwest region of

the state of Missouri. The findings from Item 32 were similar to Item 16a from the Pew

Research Center's (2015b) *Gender and Leadership Online Survey*. Item 16a asked

respondents to share whether they believed women did not make good managers.

Respondents were to share whether they believed this was a major reason women were

not achieving top executive leadership positions (Pew Research Center, 2015b).

Specifically, 9% of the male participants and 5% of the female participants of the Pew

Research Center's (2015b) study cited Item 16a as a major reason why women were not

in top executive leadership positions. Approximately, 8% of the participating Missouri

male superintendents from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*

held similar beliefs about female superintendents.

Research participants responded to *Item 33: Women are not emotionally strong

enough for the superintendency.* Most (88.8%; *n*=120) of the research participants

disagreed with Item 33. Only 5.1% (*n*=7) agreed and 5.9% (*n*=8) rated Item 33 as

neutral. Gender data analysis presented different data. Exactly 100% (*n*=43) of the

female participants and 83.1% (*n*=74) of the male participants disagreed with Item 33.

No female participants agreed with Item 33. However, 7.8% (*n*=7) of the male

participants believed women were not emotionally strong enough for the school

superintendency. Out of the seven male participants who believed women were not

emotionally strong enough for the superintendency, three (42.8%) of the male

superintendents were from the Southwest region of Missouri, three (42.8%) were from

the Northwest region of Missouri, and one (14.2%) was from the Southcentral region of

Missouri. Another 8.9% (*n*=8) of the male participants rated Item 33 as neutral. Hence,

for the male participants who believed women were not emotionally strong enough for

the superintendency, the majority reportedly belonged to two Missouri regions—the

Southwest and Northwest regions. Interestingly, Item 16c of the Pew Research Center's

(2015b) *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* asked a similar question pertaining to

women in business. Item 16a asked participants whether they believed the idea that

women were not tough enough for business was a major reason women were not in top

executive leadership positions (Pew Research Center, 2015b). Approximately, 8% of the

Pew Research Center's male participants and 8% of the participating Missouri male

superintendents from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*

believed women were not, in various ways, strong enough for top leadership positions.

The researcher asked participants to rate *Item 34: School boards are not ready to

hire a female superintendent.* The majority (57.7%; *n*=78) of the Missouri

superintendents polled reportedly disagreed with Item 34. On the other side, 16.2%

(*n*=22) agreed with Item 34. The gender data analysis demonstrated a higher percentage

of (20.9%; *n*=9) female participants than (13.4%; *n*=12) male participants believed local

school boards were not ready to hire a female as school superintendent. However, 60.4%

(*n*=26) of female superintendents and 56.1% (*n*=50) of male superintendents disagreed

with Item 34. The findings indicated most participants believed school boards were

ready to hire female superintendents. However, gender-disaggregated data suggested a

higher percentage of female participants than male participants believed school boards

were not ready to hire female superintendents. The researcher noticed similarities from the AASA's 2000 study school superintendents (Glass, 2000). The AASA's study divulged female superintendents believed school board members were reluctant to hire females in the superintendency position (Glass, 2000).

Research participants responded to *Item 36: Female superintendents experience discrimination from school board members more than male superintendents.* Most (41.1%; *n*=56) of the Missouri superintendents surveyed rated Item 36 as neutral. Next, 39.7% (*n*=54) disagreed with Item 39. Approximately, 19% (*n*=26) believed women superintendents do experience discrimination from local school board members more often than male superintendents. A higher percentage of (27.9%; *n*=12) female participants than (14.4%; *n*=13) male participants believed female superintendents experience discrimination from school board members more than their male counterparts did. Interestingly, a higher percentage of (41.8%; *n*=18) female participants than (38.8%; *n*=35) male participants did not believe female superintendents experience discrimination from school board members more than male superintendents. However, a higher percentage of (46.6%; *n*=42) male participants than (30.2%; *n*=13) female participants rated Item 36 as neutral. A review of the literature disclosed gender stereotypes and biases have affected school boards' selection and hiring processes (Holland, 2011; Superville, 2016; Webb, 2016). Additionally, Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* asked respondents if they believed the hiring and promotional practices of local school board members were gender stereotyping and discriminatory barriers for women superintendents. A comparison of the data from Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey and the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* illustrated

similar findings. Exactly, 27.6% of the Ohio women superintendents surveyed and 27.9% of the participating Missouri female superintendents believed female superintendents have experienced discrimination of varying forms from school board members (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008).

The Missouri superintendents who participated in this study responded to *Item 37: Female superintendents experienced discrimination from their peers more than male superintendents.* Most (43.2%; *n*=58) Missouri superintendents polled reportedly disagreed with Item 37. Whereas, 22.3% (*n*=30) of the research participants believed female superintendents experienced discrimination from their peers more often than male superintendents. Precisely, 33.8% (*n*=46) of the Missouri superintendents rated Item 37 as neutral. Gender-disaggregated data demonstrated a higher percentage of (39.5%; *n*=17) female participants than (13.6%; *n*=12) male participants believed women superintendents experienced discrimination from their peers more than their male counterparts did. On the other end of the spectrum, a higher percentage of (45.4%; *n*=40) male participants than (39.5%; *n*=17) female participants did not believe women superintendents faced discrimination from their peers more than men superintendents did. A larger portion of (40.9%; *n*=36) male participants than (20.9%; *n*=9) female participants rated Item 37 as neutral. Researchers have maintained gender stereotypes and biases have affected school boards' hiring and selection processes (Holland, 2011; Superville, 2016; Webb, 2016). Connell et al. (2015) found local school boards to be led by men who preserved the good ole boy system, which has kept women from obtaining the superintendency. In turn, the proverbial good ole boy system among school board members has promoted men within the top ranks of the superintendency (Connell et al.,

2015). The promotion of men within the ranks of the superintendency may have increased the likelihood that some of the men who have been promoted would share in the good ole boy sentiments. Thus, some male superintendents may have, consciously or unconsciously, partook in discriminatory behaviors against their female peers. Whether or not discriminatory behavior occurred, approximately, 40% of the participating female Missouri superintendents believed women experienced discrimination from their peers more than their male counterparts did.

The primary investigator asked participants to rate *Item 38: Female superintendents experience discrimination from community members more than their male counterparts.* The majority (41.4%; *n*=56) of the Missouri school superintendents rated Item 38 as neutral. Approximately, 30% (*n*=40) disagreed and 28% (*n*=38) agreed with Item 38. The analysis of gender data revealed more (44.1%; *n*=19) female participants than (20.2%; *n*=18) male participants believed women superintendents experienced discrimination from community members more often than men superintendents experienced. Also, a higher percentage of (32.5%; *n*=14) female participants than (29.2%; *n*=26) male participants did not believe female superintendents experienced discrimination from community members more than male superintendents. More (50.5%; *n*=45) male participants than (23.2%; *n*=10) female participants rated Item 38 as neutral. Researchers reported gender stereotypes have dominated the workplace (Flora, 2017; Hill et al., 2016). In turn, gender stereotypes and biases have significantly affected women vying for top leadership positions (Flora, 2017; Grover, 2015; Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Khazan, 2014). Unfortunately, gender stereotypes and biases have led to discriminatory behavior (Flora,

2017; Grover, 2015; Hill et al., 2016). According to the Pew Research Center's (2015b)

Gender and Leadership Online Survey, 65% of female Americans and 48% of male

Americans believed women have experienced societal discrimination in varying forms.

However, when compared to data analysis from Item 38 of this study, a smaller

percentage of participating female and male Missouri superintendents believed female

superintendents experienced discrimination from community members more than male

superintendents.

Research participants responded to *Item 39: Male superintendents are seen as*

more qualified to become school superintendents by the staff and community. Most

(36.7%; *n*=50) Missouri superintendents surveyed reportedly disagreed with Item 39.

Exactly 33.8% (*n*=46) of the research participants rated Item 39 as neutral. A smaller

percentage of the research participants, 29.4% (*n*=40), agreed with Item 39.

Disaggregated gender data illustrated a higher percentage of (34.8%; *n*=15) female

participants than (26.6%; *n*=24) male participants believed male superintendents were

viewed as more qualified to become school superintendents than female superintendents.

On the other hand, a higher percentage of (36.6%; *n*=33) male participants than (34.8%;

n=15) female participants did not believe male superintendents were viewed as more

qualified to become school superintendents than their female counterparts. In addition, a

higher percentage of (36.6%; *n*=33) male participants than (30.2%; *n*=13) female

participants provided a neutral rating for Item 39. Item 39 was similar to an item in the

Ohio Women Superintendents Survey (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Askren-Edgehouse's

(2008) survey asked respondents whether they believed men were viewed by community

members and staff as being more qualified for leadership. Half of the Ohio women

superintendents surveyed believed community members and staff viewed male superintendents as more qualified to for leadership positions (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Whereas, 34.8% of the participating female Missouri superintendents believed male superintendents were viewed as more qualified to become school superintendents by the staff and community. Thus, a higher percentage of Ohio female superintendents than Missouri female superintendents surveyed believed community and staff members viewed males as being more qualified to lead school districts (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008).

Qualitative findings. The primary investigator developed four open-ended questions to gather qualitative data for the study. Question 27 in Part IV (Personal Experience as Superintendent), Question 43 in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency), and Questions 44 and 45 in Part VI (Open-Ended Questions) were used to gather qualitative data to ascertain research participants' perceptions of the influence stereotypes have on the gender leadership gap in the superintendency. The researcher asked participants to respond to Question 27 by providing additional comments regarding their personal experience as a superintendent and/or to clarify any of the statements mentioned in Part IV. Twenty-seven participants, which included 14 males, 12 females, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant, responded to Question 27. Out of the 27 participants who responded to Question 27, eight participants (three males, four females, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant) provided input on their experiences with stereotypes. Half (50%; $n=2$) of the female participants reported they had not experienced gender discrimination in their workplaces. The other 50% ($n=2$) of the female participants stated they had experienced some form of gender discrimination during their careers as superintendents. All three (100%) male participants divulged they

had experienced age discrimination or discrimination based on their personal appearance. However, no male participants reported experiencing gender discrimination. Thus, gender discrimination was only reported by female superintendents.

Research participants were given the opportunity to respond to Question 43, which provided them with the opportunity to give additional comments about their perceptions regarding the obstacles to the female superintendency. Thirty participants, which included 12 females and 18 males, responded to Question 43. Out of the 30 participants who responded, 22 participants (13 males and nine females) furnished comments pertaining to the impact stereotypes had in the superintendency position. Exactly 46.1% (n=6) of the male participants disclosed they had not witnessed, or were not aware of, gender discrimination against female superintendents. However, 15.3% (n=2) of the male participants reported they believed women have had difficulty obtaining leadership positions due to the existence of gender discrimination against females. The remainder (38.4%; n=5) of the male superintendents did not provide a definitive answer pertaining to gender discrimination. However, they stated they had worked with great female administrators or there needed to be more women superintendents. Of the nine female participants who responded to Question 43, 11.1% (n=1) reportedly had not experienced gender discrimination, while another 11.1% (n=1) had no opinion and chose to remain neutral on the subject matter of discrimination. The majority (77.7%; n=7) of the female participants disclosed they had personally experienced gender discrimination or they believed certain stereotypes and practices developed into discriminatory practices against female superintendents. Of the 77.7% of

female participants who experienced gender discrimination, 22.2% (*n*=2) believed it was

improving.

Question 44 asked research participants if they believed the gender leadership gap

existed in the school superintendency. If so, respondents were asked to explain their

responses. Exactly 117 research participants responded to Question 44. However, (23%)

27 participants, which included 18 males and nine females, provided explanations for the

gender leadership gap which elaborated on issues related to stereotypes. The majority

(72.2%; *n*=13) of the male participants who responded believed the gender leadership gap

existed and was tied to traditional gender stereotypes that had impeded women's

leadership progress. Specifically, 27.7% (*n*=5) of the male superintendents mentioned

negative stereotypes of women by male school board members as a primary reason for

the gender leadership disparity within public education. Nearly, 39% (*n*=7) of the male

participants cited old gender stereotypes, such as men were better leaders, as the main

reason the gender leadership imbalance existed among school superintendents.

Interestingly, one (5.5%) male respondent mentioned negative stereotypes of female

school administrators by female teachers as problematic for women striving to obtain

leadership positions. Over one-fourth (27.7%; *n*=5) of the male superintendents who

mentioned issues related to stereotypes did not believe the gender leadership gap existed.

Specifically, 16.6% (*n*=3) of the male participants did not view gender stereotypes or

discriminatory practices as obstacles for women seeking the superintendency. All

(100%; *n*=9) of the female superintendents who mentioned stereotypes in Question 44

believed stereotypes and discriminatory behavior were responsible for the gender

leadership gap. Precisely, 44.4% (*n*=4) of the female superintendents addressed the

gender stereotypes held by local school board members. Over half (55.5%; n=5) of the female participants reported traditional gender stereotypes, such as men were more decisive and mentally stronger, as being the primary stereotypes which have made obtaining the superintendency more difficult for women.

Question 45 was created to have participants provide solutions to the gender leadership gap. Out of the 89 participants who responded to Question 45, 14 (five males, eight females, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant) provided solutions which addressed issues related to stereotypes. Most (60%; n=3) of the male participants' solutions to the gender leadership gap were somehow to change the stereotypes and perceptions of local school board members. However, 40% (n=2) of the male superintendents believed time was needed to change the stereotypical perceptions of others. One-fourth (25%; n=2) of the female superintendents believed change in stereotypes needed to occur with local school boards. Some (37.5%; n=3) of the female participants maintained it would take significant societal change for any progress to occur in order to reduce traditional stereotypes. Another 25% (n=2) of the female superintendents believed having more women administrators would change perceptions—essentially eliminating stereotypes. Exactly 12.5% (n=1) of the female participants reported women should not use any aspect of gender, biases, or stereotypes as an excuse for not obtaining a leadership position. The one 'No Gender Identified' participant suggested getting rid of stereotypes by learning to be open-minded.

The qualitative data pertaining to the Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the impact of stereotypes in the gender leadership gap provided three common themes. The three common themes of stereotypes were: a) traditional gender stereotypes,

b) gender stereotypes held by local school board members, and c) female teachers'

negative stereotypes about female leaders. Most (81.4%; *n*=22) of the participants who

discussed stereotypes and discriminatory practices believed some, if not all, of the three

themes were impediments for women aspiring to the superintendency. Interestingly, out

of 137 Missouri superintendents who participated in the study, only female participants

divulged having experienced gender discrimination.

The gender-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data unveiled some of the

most intriguing findings. Though most of the 91 participating Missouri male

superintendents' responses to the survey items showed they were open and accepting to

women in superintendency positions, a small portion of male participants shared very

strong negative beliefs about women in school leadership. The majority of the males

who disclosed they believed women were not as effective as male superintendents,

women were not emotionally strong enough for the superintendency, the school

superintendency is a place for males, and the gender leadership gap is as it should be

were from the Southwest region of the state of Missouri. Interestingly, the qualitative

data analysis revealed most of the women who reported they had personally experienced

discrimination from their male peers were also from the Southwest region of Missouri.

These revelations suggested a portion of the male superintendents from the Southwest

region of Missouri held negative gender stereotypes about female superintendents. In

turn, some of the female superintendents from the Southwest region have perceived some

of their peers' behaviors as discriminatory.

Variable c: Biases. Research has pointed to gender and implicit biases, such as

the second-generational gender bias, as the explanation for the under-representation of

women in top leadership positions, including the school superintendency (Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al, 2013; Kelsey et al., 2014). Hill et al. (2016) found implicit biases have occurred when individuals have consciously refused judgments based on stereotypes, but, simultaneously, unconsciously have made judgments based on stereotypes. Ibarra et al. (2013) explained implicit biases, such as second-generational gender bias, has unintentionally advanced men over women by strengthening the ideology, values, organizational practices, and traditions, which have supported male advancement. Consequently, gender biases and implicit biases have continued to widen the gender leadership gap (Flora, 2017; Grover, 2015; Hershcovis & Weinhardt, 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Vial et al., 2016). The researcher used four items in Part IV (Personal Experience as Superintendent), three items in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency), and two items in Part VI (Open-Ended Questions) of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* to collect the research participants' attitudes, opinions, and beliefs regarding the influence of biases in the gender leadership gap. The researcher utilized a mixed-methods approach to answer Research Question Two.

Quantitative findings. The researcher used Items 23, 24, and 25 in Part IV (Personal Experience as Superintendent) and Items 30 and 35 in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency) to gather quantitative data to determine participants' perceptions of the impact biases have on the gender leadership gap in the superintendency. The researcher utilized a Likert scale for all quantitative data. The Likert scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree), to 2 (Disagree), to 3 (Neutral), to 4 (Agree), to 5 (Strongly Agree). The researcher asked participants to rate *Item 23: I have*

had adequate opportunities for professional networking. The bulk (90.5%; *n*=124) of

Missouri superintendents polled agreed with Item 23. Only 5.1% (*n*=7) of the research

participants stated they had not received adequate opportunities for professional

networking. Another 5.1% (*n*=7) rated Item 23 as neutral. After reviewing the gender

data pertaining to Item 23, the researcher discovered a higher percentage of (93.4%;

n=60) male participants than (81.3%; *n*=35) female participants felt they had adequate

opportunities for professional networking. Additionally, a slightly higher percentage of

(5.4%; *n*=5) male participants than (4.6%; *n*=2) female participants did not believe they

had sufficient opportunities for professional networking. Interestingly, a higher

percentage of (17%; *n*=6) female participants than (1%; *n*=1) male participants provided

a neutral rating for Item 23. Researchers pointed to a lack of networking opportunities

and mentors as major barriers to women seeking superintendency positions (Connell et

al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014). One item in the *Ohio Women Superintendents*

Survey asked respondents whether they had experienced a lack of professional

networking or mentoring (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Exactly 21% of the Ohio women

superintendents surveyed reported they had experienced a lack of professional

networking or mentoring (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). When the data was compared from

the *Ohio Women Superintendents Survey* and the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and*

Leadership Survey, only 4.6% of the participating Missouri female superintendents

believed they had not had adequate opportunities for professional networking (Askren-

Edgehouse, 2008). However, 17% of the female Missouri superintendents surveyed rated

Item 23 as neutral. Whereas, there was no "Neutral" option was available for the Ohio

women superintendents (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008). Consequently, a larger percentage of

Ohio female superintendents than Missouri female superintendents surveyed believed they lacked professional networking opportunities (Askren-Edgehouse, 2008).

The primary investigator asked participants to rate *Item 24: Before becoming a superintendent, I preferred working for men in supervising roles.* Most (55.8%; *n*=76) of the Missouri superintendents surveyed provided a neutral rating for Item 24. Approximately, 36% disagreed with Item 24, while 14% (*n*=19) agreed. Intriguingly, before becoming superintendents themselves, more (36.2%; *n*=33) male participants than (16.6%; *n*=7) female participants reportedly did not prefer working for men in supervising roles. Furthermore, a slightly higher percentage of (14.2%; *n*=6) female participants than (13.1%; *n*=12) male participants disclosed, before becoming superintendents, they preferred working for men in supervising roles. Most notably, the majority of (69%; *n*=29) female participants and (50.5%; *n*=46) male participants gave Item 24 a neutral rating. According to Flora (2017), leadership stereotypes have restricted women's ascent up the leadership career ladder. Sadly, women have dealt with gender stereotypes and discrimination by denigrating one another (Flora, 2017). The Pew Research Center (2014) reported 35% of women favored working for male bosses than female bosses. Interestingly, a smaller percentage (14.2%) of the participating female Missouri superintendents reported they preferred working for male supervisors, before becoming superintendents themselves.

Research participants responded to *Item 25: Before becoming a superintendent, I preferred working for women in supervising roles.* The majority (61%; *n*=83) of the Missouri superintendents polled rated Item 25 as neutral. Precisely, 30.8% (*n*=42) of the research participants disagreed with Item 25. Only 5.1% (*n*=7) of the research

participants agreed with Item 25. Gender data analysis unveiled a higher percentage of (74.1%; *n*=30) female participants than (57.1%; *n*=52) male participants rated Item 25 as neutral. Gender data also revealed a higher percentage of (37.3%; *n*=34) male participants than (21.4%; *n*=9) female participants did not prefer working for women in supervising roles. Lastly, before becoming superintendents, a higher percentage of (7.1%; *n*=3) female participants than (3.2%; *n*=3) male participants preferred working for women in supervising roles. Leadership stereotypes have been major obstacles to women aspiring to obtain leadership positions (Flora, 2017). The Pew Research Center (2014) divulged 23% of women favored working for female supervisors. However, only 7.1% of the participating female Missouri superintendents from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* shared similar sentiments.

The Missouri superintendents who participated in this study responded to *Item 30: Fewer women have the administrative experience required for the superintendency.* The majority (59.7%; *n*=80) of the Missouri superintendents surveyed disagreed with Item 30. Exactly 19.4% (*n*=26) of the research participants agreed with Item 30. However, 20.8% (*n*=28) of the Missouri superintendents polled rated Item 30 as neutral. Data analysis of the gender-disaggregated data showed more (20.4%; *n*=18) male participants than (16.2%; *n*=7) female participants believed less women have the administrative experience needed for the school superintendency. However, the majority of (62.5%; *n*=55) male and (55.8%; *n*=24) female participants believed women had the administrative experience required for the superintendency. Finally, a higher percentage of (27.9%; *n*=12) female participants than (17%; *n*=15) male participants rated Item 30 as neutral. The AASA's 2000 study identified a lack of credentials as a major hindrance to women seeking to

obtain superintendency positions (Glass, 2000). Glass (2000) and Ireland (2014) found women have not been given the necessary opportunities in school leadership positions that generally led to the school superintendency. The AASA revealed the majority of the school superintendents in America had come from the secondary level (Glass, 2000). This put women working at the elementary level at a disadvantage in aspiring to the superintendency, because most elementary teachers have been women (Glass, 2000; Ireland, 2014).

The researcher asked participants to respond to *Item 35: Male superintendents have better access to personal and professional networks than their female counterparts do.* Most (55.5%; *n*=75) of the Missouri superintendents surveyed did not believe male superintendents had better access to personal and professional networks than female superintendents. Precisely, 27.4% (*n*=37) of the research participants believed male superintendents had greater access to professional and personal networking systems than their female counterparts did. For Item 35, 17% (*n*=23) of the research participants provided a neutral rating. Gender data showed a much higher percentage of (41.8%; *n*=18) female participants than (20.2%; *n*=18) male participants believed male superintendents had better access to personal and professional networks than female superintendents. Conversely, a higher percentage of (59.5%; *n*=53) male participants than (46.5%; *n*=20) female participants did not believe male superintendents had greater access to personal and professional networks than their female counterparts did. Lastly, more (20.2%; *n*=18) male participants than (11.6%; *n*=5) female participants gave Item 35 a neutral rating. Connell et al. (2015) and Copeland and Calhoun (2014) found a lack of mentors and networking opportunities have been problematic for women striving to

obtain superintendency positions. According to Connell et al. (2015), the shortage of

available mentors and role models correlated to females' abilities to professionally

network. Item 35 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* was

similar to Item 16d of the Pew Research Center's (2015b) *Gender and Leadership Online

Survey*. Item 16d of the Pew Research Center's (2015b) survey asked respondents about

whether women have access to similar types of personal networking and connections men

have. Specifically, 23% of American women and 17% of American men polled

identified gender inequities within the personal networking and connection opportunities

as being a major barrier to women in leadership positions (Pew Research Center, 2015b).

However, when the researcher compared the data from Pew Research Center's (2015b)

survey and the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*, differences were

discovered. Precisely, 41.8% of the participating female Missouri superintendents and

20.2% of the participating male Missouri superintendents believed males had better

access to professional and personal networks then female superintendents had. Thus, a

higher percentage of the respondents from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and

Leadership Survey* than the Pew Research Center's (2015b) survey respondents believed

women lacked adequate professional networking opportunities than males.

> *Qualitative findings.* The researcher created four open-ended questions to gather

qualitative data for the study. Question 27 in Part IV (Personal Experience as

Superintendent), Question 43 in Part V (Obstacles to Female Superintendency), and

Questions 44 and 45 in Part VI (Open-Ended Questions) were used to gather qualitative

data to ascertain research participants' perceptions of the impact biases had on the gender

leadership gap in public education. The researcher asked participants to respond to

Question 27 by providing additional comments regarding their personal experience as a

superintendent and/or to clarify any of the statements mentioned in Part IV. Twenty-

seven participants, which included 14 males, 12 females, and one 'No Gender Identified'

participant, responded to Question 27. Out of the 27 participants who responded to

Question 27, 10 participants (seven males and three females) provided input on their

experiences with or opinions on gender biases. All (100%; $n=7$) male participants

clarified they had male and female supervisors before becoming superintendents.

Specifically, 85.7% ($n=6$) of the male participants stated they had no gender preference

for supervisors. Of the female participants, 66.6% ($n=2$) reported they had men and

women supervisors before becoming superintendents. None of the female participants

reported having a preference for either a male or female supervisor. One (33.3%) female

participant discussed having multiple opportunities to expand her professional network.

Overall, the majority (60%; $n=6$) of the participants specifically disclosed they had no

gender bias when asked if they preferred a female or male supervisor. The other 40%

($n=4$) did not specify whether they did or did not have a preference.

Research participants were given the opportunity to respond to Question 43,

which gave them the opportunity to provide additional comments about their opinions

regarding the barriers to females being selected for school superintendency positions.

Thirty participants responded to Question 43. However, only five research participants

(one male and four females) provided explanations for the gender leadership imbalance

that focused on gender or implicit biases. The male participant reported there was

professional support and networking available for women superintendents. Three-fourths

(75%; $n=3$) of the female participants divulged there were gender inequities in the

professional networking system. Although the female participants expressed they believed it was getting better, half (50%; *n*=2) of the female participants discussed implicit biases as being an issue, which has unconsciously hindered women's progression to the superintendency.

Question 44 asked research participants if they believed the gender leadership gap existed in the school superintendency. Respondents were asked to elaborate upon their answers. Although, 117 research participants responded to Question 44, only (15.3%) 18 participants (12 males and six females) furnished explanations citing gender and implicit biases as the biggest problems for women aspiring to the school superintendency. All of those 18 research participants who elaborated believed in the existence of the gender leadership disparity. Exactly 33.3% (*n*=4) of the male participants addressed career path/positioning gender differences among superintendents. Primarily, they stated female school administrators have been elementary principals, thus, making the move from elementary principal to superintendent much harder for females. A quarter (25%; *n*=3) of the male participants discussed gender bias as the main obstacle for women working toward the superintendency. Another 25% (*n*=3) of males reported cultural traditions and societal norms as a major barrier for female school administrators. Specifically, 16.6% (*n*=2) of the male participants cited the "good ole boy" system as the primary reason the gender leadership gap existed in public education. Of the female participants, 33.3% (*n*=2) maintained it was gender differences in career paths/positioning as the main reason for the gender leadership gap among school superintendents.   Half (50%; *n*=3) of the female participants listed inadequate personal and professional networking opportunities as a major hindrance for female school administrators. Finally, 16.6% (*n*=1) of female

participants asserted gender bias was a significant barrier for women seeking the school superintendency.

Question 45 was created to have participants provide solutions to the gender leadership gap. Out of the 89 participants who responded to Question 45, (17.9%) 16 participants (eight males, seven females, and one 'No Gender Identified' participant) provided solutions which addressed issues related to gender and implicit biases. Specifically, 37.5% ($n=3$) of the male participants addressed the career path/positioning gender difference among school administrators. Another 37.5% ($n=3$) of the male superintendents mentioned biases in their responses. Approximately, 12.5% ($n=1$) of the male participants who mentioned biases maintained they did not feel gender bias was an issue for female school administrators. Additionally, 31.2% ($n=5$) of male and female participants recommended the initiation of mentorship programs for female educational administrators. However, a higher percentage (42.8%; $n=3$) of female participants than (25%; $n=2$) male participants advised school districts to develop mentorships for female school leaders. Precisely, 28.5% ($n=2$) of female superintendents polled provided responses, which further addressed issues with implicit gender biases. Exactly 14.2% ($n=1$) of those responses mentioned problems with the "good ole boy" system, while the other 14.2% ($n=1$) made recommendations, such as "blind interviewing" to decrease gender bias.

The qualitative data pertaining to the Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the impact of biases in the gender leadership gap provided three common themes. The three common themes of biases were: a) gender differences in professional and personal networking among school administrators, b) gender differences in career

paths/positioning of educational administrators, and c) traditional gender bias due to societal norms. Male and female participants addressed the issue of gender differences in career paths/positioning of school administrators. Research on the second-generational gender bias has illustrated numerous organizational practices and employment customs have been devised to better fit men's lives (Grover, 2015; Ibarra et al, 2013; Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016). Examples of institutional practices and customs unknowingly supporting second-generational gender bias have been career positioning, networking, and mentorship customs (Grover, 2015; Ibarra et al., 2013).

Educational researchers discovered poor professional networking systems and a lack of mentors have been barriers for females striving to obtain superintendency positions (Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014). Research participants of both genders reported gender inequities in the professional networking system. However, more female participants expressed it was more of an issue than male participants expressed. Those who discussed the traditional "good ole boy" networking system felt it helped men and hindered women when vying for the superintendency. Some participants recommended districts install mentorship programs for female leaders to lessen the gender leadership gap in public education.

The AASA discovered the majority of school superintendents have begun their careers in the secondary level (Glass, 2000). Glass (2000) and Ireland (2014) noted this has put women at a disadvantage, because most elementary teachers have been women. Thus, more men have received the secondary principalship, which put them in line for the superintendency (Glass, 2000; Ireland, 2014). Male and female participants in the study discussed this sentiment often. Consequently, participants believed common career paths

of many female administrators often put them at a disadvantage when aspiring to the superintendency. Societal norms and traditions have encouraged gender inequities by maintaining gender biases and stereotypes (Eaton & Rose, 2013; Ibarra et al., 2013; Meyers & Twenge, 2013; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Organizational barriers, structural barriers, and gender biases have been cultural barriers for women striving to obtain top leadership positions (Glass, 2000; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Kelsey et al., 2014). Consequently, explicit and implicit gender biases have created glass ceiling barriers, such as local school boards reluctant to hire women for superintendent positions (Glass, 2000; Ireland, 2014).

Additional Findings. National data from 2015 on the number of school superintendents reported women made up 27% of America's superintendents (Rosenberg, 2017). Data retrieved from MoDESE's (2017b) website revealed women composed 23.8% of the state of Missouri's school superintendents. When comparing the number of women who achieved superintendency positions, unfortunately, school districts in the state of Missouri have fallen behind the national average (MoDESE, 2017b; Rosenberg, 2017). The researcher discovered additional research findings when analyzing the qualitative data. Questions 44 and 45 of the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* provided additional findings, which were not related to any of the variables (gender roles, stereotypes, and biases) of Research Question Two. The researcher determined these findings added important information to help researchers understand the gender leadership gap. Thus, the researcher believed it was important to mention the additional findings related to Questions 44 and 45.

Question 44: Do you believe the gender leadership gap, the disproportion of women in top leadership positions, exists in the school superintendency? If yes, why do you believe it exists? Precisely, 117 Missouri school superintendents surveyed—78 male participants, 36 female participants, and three 'No Gender Identified' participants—responded to Question 44. Approximately, 71% (n=83) of the research participants stated they believed the gender leadership gap among school superintendents existed. Gender data analysis showed 64.1% (n=50) of male participants and 88.8% (n=32) of female participants believed in the existence of the gender leadership gap. Furthermore, 15.3% (n=18) of the male participants and 22.2% (n=8) of the female participants reportedly have witnessed an increase in the number of female superintendents within the last few years. Thus, they disclosed they believed the gender leadership gap was closing.

Nearly a quarter (24.7%; n=29) of the research participants divulged they did not believe the gender leadership gap existed. Exactly 32% (n=25) of male participants and 11.1% (n=4) of female participants shared they did not believe in the existence of the gender leadership gap among school superintendents. Exactly 3.4% (n=4) of the Missouri superintendents who responded to Question 44 did not provide a definitive answer to whether they believed the gender leadership gap existed. Aside from the explanations given by research participants which touched upon issues related to gender roles, stereotypes, and biases, the most common response given by researcher participants dealt with the smaller number of female applicants. Approximately, 11% (n=13) of the research participants—14.1% (n=11) of the male participants and 5.5% (n=2) of the female participants—believed the gender leadership gap existed, because of fewer women applying for the position.

Question 45: How might school districts achieve gender parity in the role of superintendent? Please explain possible solutions to minimizing the gender leadership gap among school superintendents. Exactly 89 Missouri school superintendents surveyed, which included 57 male participants, 30 female participants, and two 'No Gender Identified' participants, responded to Question 45. Approximately, 18% (*n*=16) of the research participants—19.2% (*n*=11) of male participants and 16.6% (*n*=5) of female participants—stated they believed gender was not, or should not, be an issue. A solution recommended by the research participants, which did not relate to gender roles, stereotypes, or biases, dealt with encouragement. Precisely, 14.6% (*n*=13) of the Missouri superintendents polled—19.2% (*n*=11) of the male participants and 6.6% (*n*=2) of the female participants—suggested current school superintendents and other educational leaders should encourage more female teachers to go into administration.

Conclusions

Research Question One. What demographic variables show the greatest impact on gender leadership?

Though nearly all the demographic data retrieved from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* had some impact on gender leadership, the following eight demographic variables showed the greatest impact: a) marital statuses, b) number of children, c) number of years as a classroom teacher, d) number of years as a superintendent, e) mobility of superintendents' careers, f) gender of superintendents' mentors, g) number of students in districts, and h) number of female school board members. Thus, the researcher made the following conclusions based on data from eight demographic variables provided by the research participants:

■ Fewer female superintendents were married than male superintendents.

■ More male superintendents had larger families—three or more children—than female superintendents.

■ A higher percentage of female superintendents spent more years—eight years or more—in the classroom than male superintendents.

■ More female superintendents were hired by local school boards within recent years—seven years or less—as compared to previous years.

■ More male superintendents relocated for new positions than female superintendents.

■ Most superintendents had male mentors who assisted them on their path to the superintendency.

■ Most of the female superintendents were in charge of school districts with a student enrollment of 1,000 pupils or less.

■ Most superintendents' local school boards consisted of a majority—four or more—of male board members.

Research Question Two. What are Missouri superintendents' perceptions regarding the variables impacting the gender leadership gap in public education?

    a. Gender roles

    b. Stereotypes

    c. Biases

Variable a: Gender roles. The quantitative and qualitative data analysis indicated a portion of the Missouri superintendents surveyed perceived gender roles as having an impact on the gender leadership gap in public education. Family obligations and

considerations were the most cited gender role issues as being obstacles for women

seeking the superintendency. These sentiments mirrored the AASA's 2000 and 2008

studies of school superintendents who identified family sacrifices as a major disincentive

for female educational leaders (Glass, 2000; as cited in Kelsey et al., 2014). Klatt's

(2014) case study revealed family considerations, such as spousal issues and having

school-age children, as barriers to female superintendents. Examples of family

obligations and considerations provided by the participants were childrearing

considerations and most females' inabilities to relocate for new job prospects. Gender-

disaggregated data analysis demonstrated there were differences between the male and

female superintendents' perceptions pertaining to some aspects of family obligations and

considerations. A higher percentage of female superintendents than male superintendents

reported they did not have the abilities to relocate for new positions. Furthermore, more

female participants than male participants viewed family responsibilities and obligations

as a hindrance for female superintendents. Findings from this study also mimicked

findings from Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) study. Nearly the same percentage of female

participants from Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) study and the participating female

Missouri superintendents from this study reported they felt anxiety about their careers'

effect on their families.

　　　　Participants also identified traditional gender roles as being obstacles for females

seeking roles as educational administrators. Examples of traditional gender roles,

provided by the research participants, were men as breadwinners and women as

caretakers and nurturers of families. Gender data analysis revealed only female

superintendents discussed traditional gender norms for masculine and feminine behaviors as being problematic for women superintendents.

Finally, traditional masculine gender roles and their relationships to successful leadership characteristics was another gender role issue superintendents perceived as being hindrances for women seeking the superintendency (Bailey, 2014). Examples of traditional masculine gender roles were assertiveness, decisiveness, ambitiousness, and aggressiveness (Bailey, 2014; Hill et al., 2016). Examples of traditional feminine gender roles were emotionality, sensitivity, people-oriented, and nurturing (Kassin et al., 2014). Research has shown most traditional models of successive leadership mimicked traditional masculine gender roles (Hill et al., 2016). Most Missouri superintendents surveyed believed their communities expected them to be assertive, decisive, and ambitious—all traditional characteristics of successful leadership (Hill et al., 2016). However, gender data analysis detected gender differences in their perceptions based on gender. Most male participants did not believe society viewed male superintendents as being more skilled in budgeting and finance. However, the opposite was true for most female participants. More female superintendents believed society looked upon male superintendents as being more skilled in budgeting and finance than females. Furthermore, a higher percentage of female participants than male participants believed society perceived male superintendents as more decisive and assertive than female superintendents. More female participants than male participants perceived society viewed female superintendents as being more sensitive and people-oriented than male superintendents. Thus, more female superintendents perceived society associated successful leadership characteristics with traditional masculine gender roles than

feminine gender roles. Overall, more female Missouri superintendents perceived gender roles to be an obstacle for women striving to obtain the school superintendency.

Variable b: Stereotypes. The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected demonstrated a portion of the Missouri superintendents surveyed perceived stereotypes as having an influence on the gender leadership gap in public education. Some Missouri superintendents perceived traditional stereotypes and discriminatory behavior and practices as major barriers to women aspiring to the school superintendency. Over half of the Missouri superintendents believed it was easier for men to become superintendents than women. This finding was similar to the Rockefeller Foundation's (2017) report that disclosed the majority of Americans surveyed believed it was easier for men to move up the leadership ranks.

Gender data analysis from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* showed widespread discrepancies between the perceptions of male and female superintendents. Over half of the female participants who responded perceived female superintendents were held to higher standards than male superintendents. The opposite was true for the male superintendents—over half of the male participants did not believe female superintendents were held to higher standards. Furthermore, a higher percentage of female participants than male participants believed male superintendents were viewed as more qualified to become school superintendents than female superintendents. All participating female superintendents believed women superintendents were just as effective superintendents as men were. However, not all male superintendents agreed with this sentiment. Also, all female participants believed women were emotionally strong enough to handle the school superintendency. Again, not all male superintendents

surveyed agreed with this idea. The female and male superintendents' personal experiences with varying forms of discrimination were reportedly quite different. More female superintendents reported having experienced gender discrimination at work. Additionally, fewer male superintendents divulged having experienced discrimination at work based on personal appearance.

Some participating Missouri superintendents believed traditional gender stereotypes, held by various segments of society, have adversely affected women working to obtain school superintendency positions. Researchers reported stereotypes have led to discriminatory behavior and practices (Flora, 2017; Grover, 2015; Hill et al., 2016). Within this study, a few male and female superintendents mentioned they personally had witnessed stereotypical thoughts and discriminatory behavior against women from both genders. The majority of the Missouri superintendents surveyed did not perceive discrimination from societal groups as an impediment to women aiming for the superintendency. However, disaggregated gender analysis displayed major gender differences in the perceptions of discrimination. More females than males perceived stereotypes and discrimination practices as major barriers for women school administrators. A greater percentage of female Missouri superintendents reportedly believed women superintendents experienced discrimination from community members, school board members, and peers more often than men superintendents experienced discrimination. Overall, more female Missouri superintendents perceived stereotypes as an obstacle for women striving to obtain the school superintendency.

Data from other research studies uncovered similar findings. When this study's findings were compared with the findings from Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) *Ohio Women*

Superintendents Survey, similarities were discovered. The same percentage of participating female Missouri superintendents from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* and the female Ohio superintendents from Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey reported they had experienced discrimination based on their personal appearances. Furthermore, the same percentage of Ohio female superintendents surveyed by Askren-Edgehouse (2008) and the participating Missouri female superintendents divulged they had experienced discrimination from school board members in varying forms. The Pew Research Center's (2015b) *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* also yielded similar results. Nearly the same percentage of female Americans participating in the Pew Research Center's (2015b) survey as the participating Missouri female superintendents in the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* believed women in leadership positions were held to higher standards than men. Participants in both studies were asked whether they believed women made as effective managers/superintendents as men did (Pew Research Center, 2015b). Nearly the same percentage of male participants from both studies reported they believed women did not make as effective leaders as men did (Pew Research Center, 2015b). Additionally, both surveys included similar items, which asked respondents to share whether they believed women were (emotionally) strong enough for leadership positions (Pew Research Center, 2015b). Nearly the same percentage of male participants from both studies believed women were not strong enough for business or school leadership positions (Pew Research Center, 2015b).

Finally, the gender-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data uncovered some of the most intriguing findings about perceived stereotypes and discrimination

among the participating Missouri school superintendents. The majority of the males who shared stereotypical beliefs about female superintendents were reportedly from the Southwest region of the state of Missouri. Additionally, the qualitative data analysis revealed most of the women who personally experienced discrimination among peers reported they were from the Southwest region of Missouri.

Variable c: Biases. The quantitative and qualitative data analysis demonstrated some Missouri superintendents perceived gender biases and implicit biases as major obstacles for women seeking school superintendencies, thus, strengthening the gender leadership gap. Research participants' responses indicated support for the presence of second-generational gender bias. The researcher found evidence within the disaggregated gender data. When comparing the male versus the female superintendents' perceptions pertaining to biases within professional networking opportunities, significant differences were revealed. Most of the Missouri superintendents surveyed believed they had received sufficient opportunities for professional networking. However, gender data divulged more male superintendents felt they had obtained adequate opportunities for professional networking. Furthermore, a higher percentage of women believed male superintendents had greater access to personal and professional networks. Thus, more female superintendents believed gender inequities existed with professional networking systems and opportunities. Glass's 2007 study also found a lack of mentors and professional networking opportunities have been obstacles for women vying for school superintendency positions (as cited in Connell et al., 2015; Copeland & Calhoun, 2014). When other studies' findings about personal and professional networking opportunities were compared to this study's findings, the researcher discovered differences. For

example, after reviewing Askren-Edgehouse's (2008) survey, the researcher determined a larger percentage of Ohio female superintendents than Missouri female superintendents surveyed believed they lacked professional networking opportunities. Furthermore, a higher percentage of the respondents from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* than the Pew Research Center's (2015b) survey respondents believed women lacked adequate professional networking opportunities than males.

Career paths/positioning was another second-generational gender bias factor, which was perceived to be an issue strengthening the gender leadership gap among school superintendents. Male and female participants addressed the issue of gender differences in career paths/positioning of school administrators. The participants' responses explained most elementary principals were females and most secondary principals were males. Most believed school boards preferred secondary experience when seeking superintendents. The responses suggested this caused more school board members to select males for the top educational leadership positions, thus, putting women at a disadvantage. Findings from other studies also have mentioned career path/positioning as being a liability for female school administrators. Career paths were one of the AASA's explanations for the existence of the gender leadership gap among school superintendents (Glass, 2000; Ireland, 2014). Glass (2000) and Ireland (2014) found women have not been given the needed opportunities in school leadership positions that generally led to the school superintendency.

Some Missouri superintendents perceived traditional gender biases perpetuated by societal norms as having adverse effects on women working towards superintendency positions. A review of the literature revealed gender biases have: a) perpetuated the good

ole boy system, b) affected school boards' hiring and selection processes and decisions, and c) caused female superintendents to be scrutinized more closely than male superintendents (Connell et al., 2015; Holland, 2011; Superville, 2016). Educational researchers discovered explicit and implicit gender biases have existed at the institutional level (Connell et al., 2015). Common responses within this study indicated the presence of "good ole boy" systems among select groups of male superintendents and male school board members. However, when discussing the preference of male versus female supervisors, most Missouri superintendents reportedly did not have a preference. Of the research participants who stated a preference, a higher percentage of female participants reported they preferred working for male supervisors prior to becoming superintendents themselves. This information was compared to the Pew Research Center's (2015b) study. The Pew Research Center (2015b) reported a higher percentage of American women surveyed than the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey's* participating female superintendents disclosed they preferred male supervisors. On the other end of the spectrum, a higher percentage of participating Missouri female superintendents than male superintendents responded they preferred to work for female supervisors prior to becoming school superintendents, themselves. When this study's data was compared to the Pew Research Center's (2015b) findings, a higher percentage of the Pew Research Center's female participants preferred working for female supervisors than the participating female Missouri superintendents. Overall, representation of both genders from the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* perceived biases to be a hindrance to women seeking the superintendency.

Additional Conclusions. The researcher provided three additional conclusions not relevant to gender roles, stereotypes, and biases within Research Question Two. A review of the literature and data analysis provided the researcher with the information needed to form the three additional conclusions. First, the percentage of female superintendents in Missouri, which was 23.8%, has fallen behind the national percentage of 27% of female superintendents (MoDESE, 2017b; Rosenberg, 2017). Thus, the Missouri gender leadership gap was more significant than the national gender leadership gap among school superintendents. Second, most of the Missouri superintendents surveyed believed the gender leadership gap existed among the school superintendency. However, a higher percentage of female superintendents believed in the existence of the gender leadership imbalance than male superintendents. Third, many of the Missouri superintendents surveyed who believed in the existence of the gender leadership gap believed it was closing and remained hopeful it would improve over time.

Implications for Practice

Research has supported the existence of the gender leadership gap within all facets of the American workforce, such as public education (Hill et al., 2016). The purpose of this study was to further examine the gender leadership gap phenomenon by focusing on Missouri's school superintendencies. Based upon the findings in this research, Missouri's gender leadership gap among school superintendents was slightly larger than the national average. Furthermore, the findings from this study revealed some Missouri school superintendents perceived traditional gender roles, stereotypes, and biases as variables, which have impacted the gender leadership gap. Moreover, more female than male Missouri superintendents perceived gender roles, stereotypes, and

biases as having more of an impact on the gender leadership disparity within superintendency positions. The gender role issues perceived to have the biggest impact on the gender leadership gap were family considerations and traditional gender roles and their impact on successful leadership characteristics. The findings of this study added useful information to the local existence of information pertaining to Missouri's gender leadership gap in public education. The first implication of practice was, in the future, other researchers will be able to access the study's findings and compare them to other state and national studies about the gender leadership imbalance in leadership positions.

Another implication of practice following this study was to contribute to the conversation in regards to the steps local school districts and state and national educational organizations can take to improve the gender leadership gap within public education. For example, current school leaders should begin identifying talented female teachers for leadership aspirations early on in their careers. Often women have begun their ascent up the educational leadership career ladder much later than men (Finnan et al., 2015). By identifying and creating a pool of talented, potential female leaders early on, women may choose to start their educational careers earlier, thus, having the necessary qualifications to compete with male applicants. Another way school districts could improve the gender leadership gap would be to provide educational leadership programs. Copeland and Calhoun (2014) discovered there was a lack of mentors and role models for females seeking the superintendency. Leadership training programs have helped aspiring female leaders receive the necessary training and mentorship needed to learn how to perform their duties effectively (Hill et al., 2016). Additionally, training and mentorship programs would provide women with the confidence needed to become

successful school administrators. Also, Ibarra et al. (2013) found leadership training and

mentorship programs would expand women's professional networking systems earlier on.

Establishing leadership training and mentorship programs would provide additional

advantages for women seeking leadership roles.

Another implication to practice would be for state and national organizations to

implement diversity and implicit bias training to help with the gender leadership

dilemma. Hill et al. (2016) recommended evidence-based diversity and implicit bias

training for organizations, such as state school board organizations and school

administrator organizations, to assist in combating stereotypes and implicit biases, such

as the second-generational gender bias. Hill et al. (2016) explained studies on implicit

biases have shown that people were not always consciously able to control their actions.

Ibarra et al. (2013) maintained most people were not aware of their implicit biases—for

most women, they had not discovered they had been victims of implicit bias. Lastly, Hill

et al. (2016) suggested having organizational leaders review and develop better human

resource materials. Leaders in school districts who reviewed current human resource

materials and researched and adopted evidence-based human resource policies and

programs would help minimize biases, particularly in the hiring and selection processes

(Hill et al., 2016). Within this study, some of the Missouri superintendents argued parity

should not be the end goal; rather, school districts should hire the best person for the job.

However, if school leaders are to find the best person for the job, according to Hill et al.

(2016), school leaders must do the following: a) understand everyone has biases, b)

determine what our personal biases and stereotypes are, and c) research practical ideas on

how to avoid the shortcuts in thought processes that can lead to unsubstantiated

judgments.

Recommendations for Future Research

After a review of the literature and the research data analysis were conducted,

there were several recommendations for future research. First, a survey of the

perceptions of other female school administrators, such as assistant principals, principals,

and assistant superintendents, about the obstacles women incurred on the way to the

female superintendency would provide a more thorough understanding of the gender

leadership gap in public education. Female superintendents' perceptions regarding the

gender leadership gap may vary from those who have not succeeded in capturing

superintendency positions. Another topic for future research would address female

school board members. After reviewing the Missouri superintendents' district

demographic data, the researcher discovered most of the participants' local school boards

had a majority of male board members (see Table 18). Interestingly, 12.4% of the

research participants reportedly led school districts whose local school boards had no

female board members. Therefore, conducting a study to determine the number of

Missouri female school board members to compare and to contrast the findings to other

states' female school board members' demographics would be helpful in understanding

the full scope of the gender leadership gap in public education. Also, a review of the

literature has shown minority women were less likely to obtain top leadership positions,

such as the school superintendency (Hill et al., 2016). Data analysis from the study

divulged only three (2.2%) of the 136 superintendents who responded to Item 3 (see

Table 4) were minority women. Among the female Missouri school superintendents

(*n*=43) surveyed, minority women made up 6.9% of the participating female Missouri superintendents. Therefore, the researcher recommended studying only minority female superintendents' perceptions regarding the gender leadership gap and then comparing the data to other comparable studies to discover similarities and differences.

During qualitative data analysis, some of the research participants suggested areas for future research. They believed these research topics would help educational researchers gain a better understanding of the gender leadership imbalance among school superintendents. Two male superintendents from the Kansas City region of the state of Missouri suggested investigators study the number of women who applied for superintendency positions in the last three years and compare those numbers to the male applicants. This research would provide an understanding of how many women were aspiring to become school superintendents. Thus, if the percentage of women applicants was found to be higher than the actual number of female school superintendencies, then that may suggest greater implications, such as biases and discrimination. Lastly, a male superintendent from the Southwestern region recommended researching the gender breakdown of Missouri's administration from the school building levels. Collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data on Missouri's school building administrators would help researchers ascertain how many males and female administrators there were and what their career positions had been. Thus, if more males had high school administration backgrounds and more females had elementary backgrounds, then the data could be compared to current school superintendents. If more male superintendents had high school administration backgrounds, then this finding could suggest the hiring and selection processes leaned toward men.

Summary

The gender leadership gap, or the under-representation of women in top leadership positions, has continued to be an issue within all facets of America's workforce (Hill et al., 2016). Since the early 2000s, the number of women in top executive leadership positions has remained stagnant (Sandberg, 2013). Within the educational realm, the gender leadership imbalance has become increasingly evident among the school superintendency (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014). In 2015, only 27% of the nation's school superintendents were women (Rosenberg, 2017). Though this number has increased since 2000, female school superintendents have continued to be under-represented in school districts across the country. Education, a primarily female establishment, has been dominated by men (Copeland & Calhoun, 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Holland, 2011; Kelsey et al., 2014; Rosenberg, 2017; Superville, 2016).

An in-depth review of the literature and the data collected from the responses by 137 (24.4%) Missouri school superintendents has shed some light on the gender leadership gap dilemma within public education. Researchers have identified several barriers to women seeking leadership positions, including school superintendents (Hill et al., 2016). Issues related to traditional westernized gender roles, stereotypes, and biases have been identified as major obstacles for female leaders and women aspiring to leadership positions (Glass, 2000; Grover, 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2013; Kelsey et al., 2014). The researcher e-mailed the online *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey* to all 2017-2018 Missouri school superintendents to attempt the following: a) to determine what demographic variables of the Missouri superintendents show the greatest impact on gender and leadership and b) to collect the Missouri

superintendents' perceptions regarding the impact that gender roles, stereotypes, and biases have had on the gender leadership gap in public education.

Based on the participants' responses, the researcher surmised the marital statuses, number of children, number of years as classroom teachers, number of years as superintendents, mobility of superintendents' careers, genders of superintendents' mentors, number of students in districts, and number of female school board members were the demographic variables showing the greatest impact on gender and leadership. The responses of the research participants also showed some Missouri superintendents perceived gender roles, stereotypes, and biases being obstacles to the female superintendency. After the researcher analyzed the data of the participants' genders, it was apparent more female superintendents than male superintendents believed gender roles, stereotypes, and biases adversely affected the gender leadership imbalance within the school superintendency. The majority of the Missouri superintendents surveyed believed the gender leadership gap existed. However, most superintendents who chose to participate expressed they believed the disparity in the leadership gap was closing when it came to selection of school district superintendents. Thus, although research has provided evidence of the existence of the gender leadership imbalance in Missouri, many Missouri superintendents expressed hopefulness that the imbalance in opportunities for men and women would soon be rectified.

References

A&E Networks. (2010). *American women in World War II*. Retrieved from

http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/american-women-in-world-war-ii

Angier, N. (2013, November 25). The changing American family. *The New York Times.*

Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Askren-Edgehouse, M. A. (2008). *Characteristics and career path barriers of women*

superintendents in Ohio (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from OhioLINK.

(Accession No. bqsu1218138547)

Bailey, S. (2014, July). Who makes a better leader: A man or a woman? *Forbes.*

Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/sebastianbailey/2014/07/23/who-

makes-a-better-leader-a-man-or-a-woman/#599e67751260

Bennhold, K. (2016, October 5). 'Glass cliff', not just ceiling, often impedes women

rising in politics. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com

Bergeron, R. (2015). 'The seventies': Feminism makes waves. *CNN*. Retrieved from

http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/22/living/the-seventies-feminism-womens-

lib/index.html

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2013). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and*

leadership (5th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, A. (2014, August 7). *Perceptions about women bosses improve, but gap remains.*

Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-

tank/2014/08/07/perceptions-about-women-leaders-improve-but-gap-remains/

Cauchon, D. (2013, March 24). An American role-reversal: Women the new

breadwinners. *USA Today*. Retrieved from https://www.usatoday.com

Chauhan, Y. (2013, August). L.S. Vygotsky: Soviet psychologist. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/biography/L-S-Vygotsky

Ciccarelli, S. K., & White, N. J. (2015). *Psychology* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Connell, P. H., Cobia, F. J., & Hodge, P. H. (2015, September). Women's journey to the school superintendency. *Alabama Journal of Educational Leadership, 2*, 37-63.

Cook, A., & Glass, C. (2013). Glass cliffs and organizational saviors barriers to minority leadership in work organizations? *Social Problems, 60*(2), 168-187.

Cook, G. (2015). AASA's origins. *School Administrator, 72*(2), 16-23.

Coontz, S. (2013, February 13). Why gender equality stalled. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Cooper, M. (2015, September 22). Why women are often put in charge of failing companies. *PBS News Hour*. Retrieved from https://www.pbs.org/newshour/ economy/making-sense/women-often-put-charge-failing-companies

Copeland, S. M., & Calhoun, D. W. (2014). Perceptions of mentoring: Examining the experiences of women superintendents. *NCPEA International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 9*(2), 28-46.

Davis, K. (2016, July 28). How Americans' views on gender roles are hurting the economy and holding us back. *Fast Company*. Retrieved from https://www.fastcompany.com/3061253/whats-holding-the-us-back-from-achieving-gender-equality

Dishman, L. (2016, May 13). Americans don't realize how big the gender leadership gap really is. *Fast Company*. Retrieved from https://www.fastcompany.com/3059851/ americans-dont-realize-how-big-the-gender-leadership-gap-really-is

Eaton, A. A., & Rose, S. M. (2013). The application of biological, evolutionary, and sociocultural frameworks to issues of gender in introductory psychology textbooks. *Sex Roles, 69*(9-10), 536-542.

Eisenberg, B., & Ruthsdotter, M. (1997). History of the Women's Right Movement. *National Women's History Project*. Retrieved from http://www.nwhp.org/ resources/womens-rights-movement/history-of-the-womens-rights-movement/#

Finnan, L. A., McCord, R. S., Stream, C. C., Mattocks, T. C., Petersen, G. J., & Ellerson, N. M. (2015, December). *Study of the American superintendent: 2015 mid-decade update*. Retrieved from the AASA, The School Superintendents Association website: http://www.aasa.org

Flora, C. (2017). View from the top. *Psychology Today*, 62-71, 82-83.

Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2015). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (9th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

Glass, T. E. (2000). Where are all the women superintendents? *School Administrator, 57*(6), 28-32.

Grover, V. K. (2015). Second-generation gender bias: Invisible barriers holding women back in organizations. *International Journal of Applied Research, 1*(4), 1-4.

Gupton, S. L. (2009). Women in educational leadership in the U.S.: Reflections of a 50-year veteran. *Forum on Public Policy, 2009*(2), 1-20. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ870094.pdf

Haines, E. L., Deaux, K., & Lofaro, N. (2016). The times they are a-changing…or are

    they not? A comparison of gender stereotypes, 1983-2014. *Psychology of Women*

    Quarterly, 40(3), 353-363.

Hausmann, R., Tyson, L. D., Bekhouche, Y., & Zahidi, S. (2014). *The global gender gap*

    report 2014. Retrieved from the World Economic Forum website:

    http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR14/GGGR_CompleteReport_2014.pdf

Hershcovis, S. M., & Weinhardt, J. M. (2015, June 1). Women in leadership: Walking

    the gender tightrope. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from

    https://www.theglobeandmail.com

Hill, A. (2016, July 18). 'Glass cliffs' and the female leaders who are set up to fail.

    Financial Times. Retrieved from https://www.ft.com

Hill, C., Miller, K., Benson, K., & Handley, G. (2016). *Barriers and bias: The status of*

    women in leadership (AAUW Report 091-16). Retrieved from Utah Valley

    University website: https://www.uvu.edu/uwlp/docs/aauwbarriersandbias.pdf

Holland, E. (2011, January 11). Gender gap is narrowing in the ranks of school chiefs.

    St. Louis Post Dispatch. Retrieved from http://www.stltoday.com

Hymowitz, K. (2013). Think again: Working women. *Foreign Policy*, (201), 59-64.

Ibarra, H., Ely, R. J., & Kolb, D. M. (2013). Women rising: The unseen barriers. *Harvard*

    Business Review, 91(9), 60-66.

Ibarra, H., & Petriglieri, J. L. (2015). *Impossible selves: Image strategies and identity*

    threat in professional women's career transitions. (INSEAD Working Paper No

    2016/12/OBH). Retrieved from

    https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2742061

Ireland, C. (2014). You go, girl: Shrinking gender gap paves way for female

    superintendents. *Journal of Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives in Education, 7*(2),

    36-40.

Johns, M. L. (2013, Winter). Breaking the glass ceiling: Structural, cultural, and

    organizational barriers preventing women from achieving senior and executive

    positions, *Perspectives in Health Information Management/American Health*

    Information Management Association, 10, 1e. Retrieved from

    https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3544145/

Kassin, S., Fein, S., & Markus, H. R. (2014). *Social psychology* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA:

    Wadsworth.

Kelsey, C., Allen, K., Coke, K., & Ballard, G. (2014). Lean in and lift up: Female

    superintendents share their career path choices. *Journal of Case Studies in*

    Education, 7, 1-11.

Khazan, O. (2014, May 2). Are people becoming more open to female leaders? *The*

    Atlantic. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/

    2014/05/the-myth-of-the-ineffective-female-leader/361559/

Klatt, R. (2014). Young superintendents with school-age children: Gendered

    expectations, effectiveness, and life quality in rural communities. *Journal of*

    School Leadership, 24(3), 452-481.

Latu, I. M., Mast, M. S., Lammers, J., & Bombari, D. (2013). Successful female leaders

    empower women's behavior in leadership tasks. *Journal of Experimental Social*

    Psychology, 49, 444-448.

Leopold, T. A., Ratchera, V., & Zahidi, S. (2016). *The global gender gap report 2016*.

    Retrieved from the World Economic Forum website:

    http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF_Global_Gender_Gap_Report_20

    16.pdf

Levin, C. (Producer/Director), & Pinto, M. (Associate Producer/Scriptwriter). (2004).

    Only a Teacher [DVD]. Available from Public Broadcasting System website:

    http://www.pbs.org/onlyateacher/purchase.html

Lindsey, L. L. (2015). *Gender roles: A sociological perspective* (6th ed.). Boston, MA:

    Pearson.

Lockwood, J. (2013, March 17). Immigrants continue to pursue American dream. *The

    Times-Tribune*. Retrieved from http://thetimes-tribune.com

Makagon, K. (2014, July 4). Steer clear of that glass cliff. *Forbes*. Retrieved from

    https://www.forbes.com/sites/womensmedia/2014/07/07/steer-clear-of-that-glass-

    cliff/#101925651467

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.).

    Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Meyers, D. G., & Twenge, J. M. (2013). *Social Psychology* (11th ed.). New York, NY:

    McGraw-Hill.

McLeod, S. A. (2014). Lev Vygotsky. *Simply Psychology*. Retrieved from

    https://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html

Missouri Association of School Administration. (2017). *Membership Application and Professional Dues Statement*. Retrieved from http://www.masaonline.org/vimages/shared/vnews/stories/47e26e47d23c9/Membership%20form%2017-18.pdf

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2013). *Superintendent evaluation: Missouri's educational evaluation system.* Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/00-SuptEvaluation-CompleteDoc.pdf

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2017a). *Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education glossary*. Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/sf-JGlossary.pdf

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2017b). *Missouri school district list*. Retrieved from https://mcds.dese.mo.gov/guidedinquiry/District%20and%20School%20Information/School%20District%20List.aspx

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2017c). *Missouri State Board of Education regulation six–department responsibilities*. Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/se-state-plan-regulation-vi-department-responsibilities-%202017.pdf

Myers, J. (2016). *The future of men: Masculinity in the 21st century*. San Francisco, CA: Inkshares, Inc.

Oelbaum, Y. S. (2016). *Understanding the glass cliff effects: Why are female leaders being pushed toward the edge* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from CUNY Academic Works. (Accession No. 1597)

Palmer, J. (2016, May 7). Gender gaps persist in teacher and superintendent ranks. *Oklahoma Watch*. Retrieved from http://oklahomawatch.org

Paustian-Underdahl, S. C., Walker, L. S., & Woehr, D. J. (2014). Gender and perceptions of leadership effectiveness: A meta-analysis of contextual moderators. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 99*(6), 1129-1145.

Pew Research Center. (2014). *Perceptions about women bosses improve, but gap remains.* Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/08/07/perceptions-about-women-leaders-improve-but-gap-remains/

Pew Research Center. (2015a). *Parenting in America: Outlook, worries, aspirations are strongly linked to financial situation*. Retrieved from http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/12/2015-12-17_parenting-in-america_FINAL.pdf

Pew Research Center. (2015b). *Women and leadership: Public says women are equally qualified, but barriers persist.* Retrieved from http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/01/2015-01-14_women-and-leadership.pdf

Reyes, E. A. (2013, December 13). 'Men are stuck' in gender roles, data suggest. *Los Angeles Times.* Retrieved from http://www.latimes.com

Rockefeller Foundation. (2016). *Women in leadership: Why it matters.* Retrieved from https://assets.rockefellerfoundation.org/app/uploads/20160512082818/Women-in-Leadership-Why-It-Matters.pdf

Rockefeller Foundation. (2017). *Women in leadership: Tackling corporate culture from the top*. Retrieved from https://assets.rockefellerfoundation.org/app/uploads/20170728121141/Women-in-Leadership-Tackling-Corporate-Culture-from-the-Top.pdf

Rosegrant, S. (2014, October 20). The new American family: How and why we've changed. *University of Michigan News*. Retrieved from http://ns.umich.edu/new/

Rosenberg, M. (2017). Moving women up the district ladder. *School Administrator*, *74*(6), 32-37.

Reuben, E., Sapienza, P., & Zingales, L. (2014). How stereotypes impair women's careers in science. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 111*(12), 4403-4408.

Sandberg, S. K. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Schieman, S., Schafer, M. H., & McIvor, M. (2013). The rewards of authority in the workplace: Do gender and age matter? *Sociological Perspectives, 56*(1), 75-96.

Schulte, B. (2014, September 14). Unlike in the 1950s, there is no 'typical' U.S. family today. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com

Silverman, R. E. (2015). Gender bias at work turns up in feedback. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from https://www.wsj.com/articles/gender-bias-at-work-turns-up-in-feedback-1443600759

Sociocultural approach. (2018). *Psychologist World.* Retrieved from https://www.psychologistworld.com/cognitive/learning/sociocultural-approach-vygotsky-zone-proximal-development#references

Sparks, S. D. (2014, August). Women's voices lacking on school boards. *Education Week*, *34*(02), 1, 12.

Superville, D. R. (2016, November 16). Few women run the nation's school districts. Why? *Education Week, 36*(13). Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/ articles/2016/11/16/few-women-run-the-nations-school-districts.html

Toossi, M., & Morisi, T. L. (2017, July). *Women in the workforce before, during, and after the Great Recession*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2017/women-in-the-workforce-before-during-and-after-the-great-recession/pdf/women-in-the-workforce-before-during-and-after-the-great-recession.pdf

Trinidad, C., & Normore, A. H. (2005). Leadership and gender: A dangerous liaison? *Leadership & Organization Developmental Journal, 26*(7), 574-590.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics. (2016). *Digest of Education Statistics*. (NCES Report 2016-014). Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/index.asp

U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission. (1995). *Good for business: Making full use of the nation's human capital*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/key_workplace/116/

Valsiner, J., & Rosa, A. (2007). *The Cambridge handbook of sociocultural psychology*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Vial, A. C., Napier, J. L., & Brescoll, V. L. (2016). A bed of thorns: Female leaders and the self-reinforcing cycle of illegitimacy. *The Leadership Quarterly, 27*(2016), 400-414. Retrieved from http://mlkrook.org/pdf/Vial_etal_2016.pdf

Warner, J. (2014, March 1). Women's leadership: What's true, what's false, and why it

matters. *Center for American Progress*. Retrieved from

https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2014/03/07/85467/wom

ens-leadership/

Warner, J. & Corley, D. (2017, May 21). The women's leadership gap: Women's

leadership by the numbers. *Center for American Progress*. Retrieved from

https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2017/05/21/432758/wo

mens-leadership-gap/

Webb, S. (2016, October 22). One in five school districts are now led by women.

Houston Chronicle. Retrieved from http://www.houstonchronicle.com

Weir, K. (2017). The men America left behind. *Monitor on Psychology, 48*(2), 34-39.

Weisberg, A., & Galinsky, E. (2014). Family matters: The business case for investing in

the transition to parenthood. *Families and Work Institute.* Retrieved from

http://familiesandwork.org/downloads/Family-Matters.pdf

Woolfolk, A. (2016). *Educational psychology: Cognitive development* (13th ed.).

Boston, MA: Pearson.

Appendix A

Gwendolyn Fleming

From: Michael Leary <no-reply@irbnet.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 9:47 AM
To: Jodi Elder; Gwendolyn Fleming
Subject: IRBNet Board Document Published

Please note that Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has published the following Board Document on IRBNet:

Project Title: [1198318-1] Missouri Superintendents' Perceptions of the Variables Impacting the Gender Leadership Gap in Public Education Principal Investigator: Gwendolyn Fleming

Submission Type: New Project
Date Submitted: February 13, 2018

Document Type: Approval Letter
Document Description: Approval Letter
Publish Date: February 20, 2018

Should you have any questions you may contact Michael Leary at mleary@lindenwood.edu.

Thank you,
The IRBNet Support Team

www.irbnet.org

Appendix B

Dear Missouri School Superintendent:

My name is Gwendolyn Fleming, and I am a doctoral candidate for Lindenwood University. I am in my final stage of the Doctoral Program for Educational Administration. I am writing you to ask you to participate in the research study for my dissertation titled, *Missouri Superintendents' Perceptions Regarding the Variables Impacting the Gender Leadership Gap in Public Education*. The topic of my research is the gender leadership gap, or the disproportionate number of men in leadership roles versus women, in the role of superintendent. I hope you will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete the *Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey*. You can take the survey by clicking on the following link: https://goo.gl/forms/5c3VlYEazvqug22G2

The survey will provide you with the opportunity to participate in important research and will only take a few minutes of your time. Please note you can review the Informed Consent Form once you click on the link to the online survey. Please review the copy of Informed Consent before you take the survey. You can agree to participate in the study by clicking the link at the bottom of the Informed Consent Form. By clicking on the link below the Informed Consent Form, you are providing informed consent and agreeing to participate in the study. Your anonymity will be protected during this research process. Your name and school district will **not** be included in research findings. Please respond to the survey by March 7, 2018, to be included in this research.

Approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the study or participation at ███████████████████ Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn M. Fleming
Doctoral Candidate – Lindenwood University

Appendix C

LINDENWOOD
Survey Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a survey conducted by Gwendolyn M. Fleming and Dr. Jodi Elder at Lindenwood University. We are doing this study to investigate Missouri school superintendents' perceptions of the variables influencing the gender leadership gap in public education. The survey will request demographic information, questions pertaining to your personal experience as superintendent, and questions about the obstacles to female superintendency. It will take about 10-15 minutes to complete this survey. Your participation is voluntary.

You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time by simply not completing the survey or closing the browser window.

There are no risks from participating in this project. We will not collect any information that may identify you. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

- Gwendolyn M. Fleming at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

- Dr. Jodi Elder at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu.

By clicking the link below, I confirm that I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be required to do, and the risks involved. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time by closing the survey browser. My consent also indicates that I am at least 18 years of age.

 You can withdraw from this study at any time by simply closing the browser window. Please feel free to print a copy of this information sheet.

Lindenwood IRB Consent Forms
Date Last Revised: 10/11/2017
Version: 2.1

Appendix D

Missouri Superintendent Gender and Leadership Survey

Directions: Please read questions pertaining to Parts I, II, and III. For each question, select the response which most closely matches your personal and professional experiences.

Part I: Personal Demographics

1.　　Gender: _____ Male　　　_____Female

2.　　Age:
　　　○　　Younger than 30 years
　　　○　　30 – 40 years
　　　○　　41 – 50 years
　　　○　　51 – 60 years
　　　○　　Older than 60 years
　　　○　　Chooses not to answer

3.　　Ethnicity:
　　　○　　Native American or Alaskan Native
　　　○　　Asian
　　　○　　Black or African American
　　　○　　Hispanic or Latino
　　　○　　White (non-Hispanic)
　　　○　　Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
　　　○　　Other
　　　○　　Chooses not to identify

4.　　Marital Status:
　　　○　　Single
　　　○　　Married
　　　○　　Divorced
　　　○　　Widowed
　　　○　　Domestic Partnership
　　　○　　Chooses not to answer

5.　　Children:
　　　○　　None
　　　○　　1 child
　　　○　　2 children
　　　○　　3 – 5 children
　　　○　　6 or more children
　　　○　　Chooses not to answer

6.   Please list the ages of all your children in your household during your first year as a superintendent.

_____

_____

_____

Part II: Professional Demographics

7.   How many years were you a classroom teacher?

_____ years

8.   Counting this year, how many years have you been a superintendent?

_____ years

9.   Have you been with the same district as a superintendent?
○   Yes
○   No

10.   Your age during your first year as a superintendent:
○   Younger than 30 years
○   30 – 40 years
○   41 – 50 years
○   51 – 60 years
○   Older than 60 years

11.   Highest Degree Earned:
○   Master's Degree
○   Specialist Degree
○   Doctoral Degree

12.   Before becoming a superintendent or during the first year(s) of your superintendency, did you have a mentor who helped you prepare for your role as superintendent?
○   Yes
○   No   (Skip to Question # 14)

13.   What was the gender of your mentor?
○   Male
○   Female

Part III: District & School Board Demographics:

14.   Based upon Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA), identify what region your school district is located in:
    ○   Northwest (1)   ○   Southeast (6)
    ○   Kansas City (2)   ○   St. Louis (7)
    ○   West Central (3)   ○   Northeast (8)
    ○   Southwest (4)   ○   Chooses not to identify
    ○   South Central (5)

15.   Type of District:
    ○   Public
    ○   Private
    ○   Charter

16.   Number of students in district:
    ○   200 or less
    ○   200 – 1,000
    ○   1,000 – 5,000
    ○   5000 – 10,000
    ○   10,000 +

17.   Current number of female school board members:
    ○   0
    ○   1
    ○   2 – 3
    ○   4 – 7

Part IV: Personal Experience as Superintendent

Directions: The following items in Part IV are to help the researcher gain insight into your personal experience as a school superintendent. Please be sure to be honest and open in your responses. Please carefully read and rate each of the following items below by marking it either (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, or (5) Strongly Agree.

"Strongly Disagree"	"Disagree"	"Neutral"	"Agree"	"Strongly Agree"
1	2	3	4	5

18.   I have experienced anxiety about the effect my career has on my family.

    ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

19.   I lack sufficient family support.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

20.   I do not have the ability to relocate for a new position.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

21.   I have experienced discrimination at work based on my gender.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

22.   I have experienced discrimination at work based on my personal appearance.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

23.   I have had adequate opportunities for professional networking.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

24.   Before becoming a superintendent, I preferred working for men in supervising
roles.
         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

25.   Before becoming a superintendent, I preferred working for women in supervising
roles.
         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

26.   The community expects me to be assertive, decisive, and ambitious.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

27. Please use this space to provide additional comments regarding your personal
experience as a superintendent and/or to clarify any of the statements mentioned in Part
IV.
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Part V: Obstacles to Female Superintendency

Directions: The following items in Part V are to help the researcher gain insight into the barriers and obstacles to the female superintendency. For each of the items, select the response which most closely matches your beliefs, experiences, and/or attitudes. Please be sure to be honest and open in your responses. Carefully read and rate each of the following items below by marking it either (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, or (5) Strongly Agree.

"Strongly Disagree"	**"Disagree"**	**"Neutral"**	**"Agree"**	**"Strongly Agree"**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

28.   Women's family responsibilities are an obstacle for females seeking the superintendency.

○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

29.   It is easier for men to become superintendents than women.

○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

30.   Fewer women have the administrative experience required for the superintendency.

○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

31.   Female superintendents are held to higher standards than male superintendents.

○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

32.   Women do not make as effective superintendents as men do.

○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

33.   Women are not emotionally strong enough for the superintendency.

○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

34.   School boards are not ready to hire a female superintendent.

○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

35.   Male superintendents have better access to personal and professional networks than their female counterparts do.

○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

36.   Female superintendents experience discrimination from school board members more than male superintendents.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

37.   Female superintendents experience discrimination from their peers more than male superintendents.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

38.   Female superintendents experience discrimination from community members more than their male counterparts.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

39.   Male superintendents are seen as more qualified to become school superintendents by the staff and community.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

40.   Male superintendents are viewed as having better skills in finance and budgeting.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

41.   Male superintendents are viewed as being more assertive and decisive than female superintendents.

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

42.   Female superintendents are viewed as being more sensitive and people-oriented than their male counterparts

         ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5

43.   Please use this space to provide additional comments about your personal experience and/or opinions regarding the barriers to the female superintendency in Part V.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Part VI: Open-Ended Questions

Directions: Please provide comments regarding your personal experiences and/or opinions pertaining to the gender leadership gap and possible solutions to achieve gender parity.

44.   Do you believe the gender leadership gap, the disproportion of women in top leadership positions, exists in the school superintendency? If yes, why do you believe it exists?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

45.   How might school districts achieve gender parity in the role of superintendent? Please explain possible solutions to minimizing the gender leadership gap among school superintendents.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix E

Gwendolyn Fleming

From:	Askren-Edgehouse, Melissa A < ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉
Sent:	Tuesday, December 12, 2017 1:25 PM
To:	Gwendolyn Fleming
Subject:	Re: Doctoral Candidate Seeking Permission to Use & Modify Survey Instrument

Hi Gwendolyn,

Absolutely. I'm happy to help. Please feel free to use my survey, and I would love to see a copy of your dissertation/results when you're finished. If you need any assistance or would like to speak, please feel free to reach out anytime (my cell is below).

Best of luck as you collect data and write!
Melissa

Dr. Melissa Askren Edgehouse
Associate Professor & Chair
CAEP Coordinator
Department of Education
University of Mount Union

▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉

Cell: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉

From: Gwendolyn Fleming < ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ >
Date: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 at 9:47 AM
To: "Askren-Edgehouse, Melissa A" < ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ >
Subject: Doctoral Candidate Seeking Permission to Use & Modify Survey Instrument

Gwendolyn M. Fleming
Lindenwood University
Doctoral Educational Administration Program

Dear Dr. Askren-Edgehouse:
I am a doctoral student from Lindenwood University writing my dissertation titled, Missouri Superintendents' Perceptions Regarding the Variables Impacting the Gender Leadership Gap, under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Jodi Elder, who can be reached at

▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ .

I would like to have your permission to use a modified version of a segment of your Ohio Women Superintendents Survey instrument found at (https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws_etd/document/get/bgsu1218138547/Inline). I would modify a portion of the survey to make it relevant to Missouri school superintendents. I would like your permission to modify your survey under the following conditions:

- I will use the survey only for my research study.
- I will cite your study and survey (Ohio Women Superintendents Survey) when discussing my modified survey instrument.
- If requested, I will send a copy of my completed research study to your attention upon completion of the study.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn Fleming
Lindenwood University Doctoral Candidate

Appendix F

From: Pew Research Center <info@pewresearch.org>
Sent: Monday, January 8, 2018 9:45 AM
To: Gwendolyn Fleming
Subject: RE: Doctoral Candidate Seeking Permission to Use & Modify Survey Instrument -
                   Attention Kim Parker

Hi Gwendolyn,

We just spoke on the phone. Here is the link to our use policy page: http://www.pewresearch.org/about/use-policy/.

This specific portion that pertains to questionnaire use reads as follows:

Questionnaires: Pew Research Center questions may be used freely without advance, express permission. If you are comparing your results to ours, cite those findings, as detailed above (please also consider possible contextual differences when doing this). If you are replicating questions without directly comparing your results to ours, a citation is not required (but is welcome).

Please let us know if you have any further questions. And again, apologies for the delay in our response.

Kind regards,

Haley Nolan

Pew Research Center

From: Gwendolyn Fleming [mailto: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮]
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 9:43 AM
To: Pew Research Center
Subject: Doctoral Candidate Seeking Permission to Use & Modify Survey Instrument - Attention Kim Parker

Gwendolyn M. Fleming

Lindenwood University

Doctoral Educational Administration Program

Dear Ms. Kim Parker:

I am a doctoral student from Lindenwood University writing my dissertation titled, Missouri Superintendents' Perceptions Regarding the Variables Impacting the Gender Leadership Gap, under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Jodi Elder, who can be reached at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

I would like to have Pew Research Center's and/or the author's permission to use a modified version of a segment of the Pew Research *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* instrument found at (http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/01/14/women-and-leadership/). I would modify a portion of the survey

to make it relevant to Missouri school superintendents. I would like the author's and/or the Pew Research Center's permission to modify Pew Research's survey under the following conditions:

- I will use the survey only for my research study.

- I will cite Pew Research Center's *Gender and Leadership Online Survey* when discussing my modified survey instrument.

- If requested, I will send a copy of my completed research study to your attention upon completion of the study.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn Fleming

Lindenwood University Doctoral Candidate