

Perceptions of Females in Virginia Regarding the Personal and Professional Factors Impacting  
Their Career Paths to the Superintendency

Agnella Katrise Perera

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State  
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

In

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Carol S. Cash, Chair

Travis W. Twiford

Walter D. Mallory

Ted S. Price

May 6, 2014

Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: female superintendents, career anchors, personal factors, professional factors,  
leadership

# **Perceptions of Females in Virginia Regarding the Personal and Professional Factors Impacting Their Career Paths to the Superintendency**

Agnella Katrise Perera

## **Abstract**

Females currently represent the largest number of teachers in the United States but yet they represent the smallest number of superintendents (Miller, 2009). While female students and educators are increasing, few of them have attained the superintendency positions within school divisions (Hopkins, 2012). This phenomenon was examined in the Commonwealth of Virginia through a mixed methods study, which provided an understanding of the career development experiences of female superintendents in public K-12 school divisions. The researcher utilized Schein's career anchor theory (1990), which examined the personal and professional values and dimensions that influence career choices. Results of the study found that attaining the superintendency among female leaders has not been primarily influenced by career anchors, but rather by their own commitment and dedication to public service. While the main barrier for females to achieve the superintendent's position was related to familial roles, their coping mechanisms of these include emulating the abilities of males or employing the nurturing qualities of females. The study recommends that school boards should design and implement policies that provide an enabling working environment for rising female leaders. Further, educational leadership organizations may explore establishing affinity groups to improve networking among education professionals with diverse genders and cultures.

## **Dedication**

It gives me immense pleasure to dedicate this dissertation to those that I have been afforded an opportunity to “stand on their shoulders” as I reached for greater heights. I dedicate this dissertation, first and foremost, to my loving husband of twenty-three years, Rajiv, and our amazing twin daughters, Ramani Lakmali Enoka and Avanti Kirana Lakshini, for their unwavering love, emotional support, unlimited patience, and who dealt with my absence throughout the composition of this research project and throughout my career.

A special feeling of gratitude and dedication of this dissertation is extended to both my maternal-grandmother, Mable LeDay Carrier-Armelin, and paternal-grandmother, Elaine LeMelle Lee-Palms, who both had an influential hand in rearing me and whom exhibited strong female leadership qualities throughout their lives. Lastly, but not least, the dedication of this dissertation work also goes to my mother, Elaine Carrier-Robinson, and to my father, A. Kenneth Lee, for loving me unconditionally and reassuring me that I could anything as long as I kept learning.

## **Acknowledgment**

First and foremost, I would like to thank the female superintendents in Virginia that volunteered their most precious commodity – their time - to assist me with this research project. Their willingness to provide candid feedback made the completion of this research project possible and a pleasurable experience.

A special thanks to Dr. Carol Cash, my committee chair, and my editor, Dr. Jodie Brinkmann, for their countless hours of reading, reviewing, encouragement, and most of all their patience throughout the entire research process. Thank you Dr. Ted Price, Dr. Walt Mallory, and Dr. Travis Twiford for graciously agreeing to serve on my committee and providing valuable feedback.

I would also like to thank my colleagues, but most importantly, my students at Walker Upper Elementary School, Harry F. Byrd Middle School, Short Pump Middle School, John Rolfe Middle School, Elko Middle School, and in Houston Independent School District for encouraging and inspiring me to keep learning. Most recently and importantly, I would like to thank Isle of Wight County Schools and the School Board Members for affording me valuable time to conduct my research and to attend classes. I will be forever grateful.

Finally, I would like to thank all my teachers and coaches at Sulphur High School in Sulphur, Louisiana, the professors and coaches at The University of Louisiana-Monroe, the professors at Mary Baldwin College, the professors at Virginia Commonwealth University, and the professors at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for the many learning experiences that have guided my life and career.

## Table of Contents

<b>CHAPTER 1 THE PROBLEM .....</b>	<b>1</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	1
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM .....	2
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY .....	2
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	3
SIGNIFICANCE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY.....	3
RESEARCH QUESTIONS/GUIDING QUESTIONS .....	4
<i>Research Question 1.</i> .....	4
<i>Research Question 2.</i> .....	4
<i>Research Question 3</i> .....	4
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	4
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....	5
DEFINITION OF TERMS .....	6
LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS .....	7
CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	7
ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY .....	8
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>9</b>
OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
ORGANIZATION OF LITERATURE .....	10
SEARCH PROCESS OF LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
IMPORTANCE OF THE SUPERINTENDENCY .....	11
GENDER DISPARITIES IN SUPERINTENDENCY .....	12
BENEFITS OF GENDER-BALANCED SUPERINTENDENT POSITION .....	15
BARRIERS FOR FEMALES IN OBTAINING SUPERINTENDENCY .....	16
CHALLENGES FOR FEMALES AND SUPERINTENDENTS .....	18
MOTIVATIONS, CHARACTERISTICS, AND EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS .....	20
CAREER ANCHOR THEORY.....	21
CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	23

<b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>24</b>
RESEARCH DESIGN .....	24
TARGET POPULATION, SAMPLES, AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE.....	25
INSTRUMENTATION .....	26
DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES .....	27
<i>Quantitative Portion</i> .....	27
<i>Qualitative Portion.</i> .....	27
DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES .....	29
<i>Quantitative Portion.</i> .....	29
<i>Qualitative Portion.</i> .....	30
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	31
LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN.....	32
SUMMARY .....	32
<b>CHAPTER 4 RESULTS OF THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>33</b>
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	33
REPORTED DATA/FINDINGS .....	34
<i>Research Question 1.</i> .....	36
<i>Research Question 2.</i> .....	37
<i>Research Question 2.</i> .....	86
<i>Research Question 3.</i> .....	91
SUMMARY OF RESULTS.....	97
<i>Research Question 1.</i> .....	97
<i>Research Question 2.</i> .....	98
<i>Research Question 3.</i> .....	98
<b>CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>99</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	99
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	100
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE .....	104
SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES.....	105

REFLECTIONS.....	106
CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	107
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>APPENDIX A INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL .....</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>APPENDIX B  COLLECTED DATA FROM SCHEIN’S COI SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE.....</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>APPENDIX C INITIAL INVITE EMAIL WITH LINK TO DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY &amp; QUESTION .....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>APPENDIX D FEMALE SUPERINTENDENT SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW INVITE LETTERS &amp; PERMISSION FORM.....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>APPENDIX E INTERVIEW PROTOCOL TEMPLATE/WORKSHEET .....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>APPENDIX F LETTER WRITTEN TO WILEY &amp; SONS REQUESTING USE OF ONLINE SURVEY .....</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>APPENDIX G CAREER ANCHORS SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY EMAIL &amp; SAMPLE QUESTION INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>APPENDIX H WILEY &amp; SON ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS AND THEIR LABELS .....</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>APPENDIX I CAREER ANCHOR CONSTRUCTS .....</b>	<b>152</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1 <i>Item and Scale Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for Anchor Scales</i> ....	37
Table 2 <i>Interview Question #1: What Made you Pursue the Superintendency?</i> .....	38
Table 3 <i>Interview Question #2: Are there Barriers that Exist in Obtaining the Superintendency for Females? If so, what are they?</i> .....	41
Table 4 <i>Interview Question #3: Do Females Create Personal Career Anchors? If so, what are they?</i> .....	44
Table 5 <i>Interview Question #4: Do you Believe Female Superintendents have to Overcome Personal Challenges? If so, what are they?</i> .....	47
Table 6 <i>Interview Question #5. In Virginia, do Female Superintendents Face Barriers in Obtaining the Position? If so, why or why not?</i> .....	51
Table 7 <i>Interview Question #6: Do Personal Career Anchors Influence Female Superintendents? If so, How?</i> .....	56
Table 8 <i>Interview Question #7: Do you Believe Female Superintendents have to Overcome Professional Challenges? If so, what are they?</i> .....	61
Table 9 <i>Interview Question #8: What Factors Affect your Optimal Performance as a Female Superintendent?</i> .....	64
Table 10 <i>Interview Question #9: What Factors Constitute Problems to you in your Current Position and what Factors may Influence Female Superintendent's Job Turnover?</i> .....	67
Table 11 <i>Interview Question #10: What Factors do you Consider as Liabilities and/or Assets to you as a Female Superintendent?</i> .....	70
Table 12 <i>Interview Question #11: With Most Teachers in the United States Being Female, what Needs to be Changed, in your Opinion, to have Female Serving as Superintendents in at Least 50% of the School Districts in this Country?</i> .....	73
Table 13 <i>Interview Question #12: Describe the Level of Influence you have on your School Board and the Level of Influence your School Board has on you?</i> .....	76



Table 14 <i>Interview Question #13: Describe the Level of Influence you have on Teachers and the Level of Influence Teachers have on you?</i> .....	79
Table 15 <i>Interview Question #14: Describe the Level of Influence you have on Administrators and the Level of Influence Administrators have on you?</i> .....	84
Table 16 <i>Thematic Category 1: Factors that Influence Leaders to Pursue Superintendency</i> .....	88
Table 17 <i>Thematic Category # 2: Leadership Practices of Women in Leadership Position</i> .....	89
Table 18 <i>Thematic Category 3: Influence of Personal Career Anchors on Leadership</i> .....	90
Table 19 <i>Thematic Category 4: Perceived Personal Barriers to Superintendency</i> .....	92
Table 20 <i>Thematic Category 5: Coping Strategies to Address Liabilities</i> .....	93
Table 21 <i>Thematic Category 6: Issues of Female to Superintendency in Virginia</i> .....	95
Table 22 <i>Thematic Category 7: Factors Affecting Turnover</i> .....	97

## Chapter 1

### The Problem

#### Introduction

Females currently represent the largest number of teachers in the United States but yet they represent the smallest number of superintendents (Miller, 2009). According to Miller (2009), this position of power has been influenced by patriarchy. If females are to break through the specific barriers hindering them from becoming superintendents, it is important to understand how they view the superintendent's position. It is also important to consider the particular experiences that females have with successfully overcoming these barrier (Miller, 2009). According to Skria (2000), the position of superintendent is socially constructed as masculine even though the educator workforce from which superintendents are drawn upon is 25% male and 75% female.

In recent years, females have been documented to having achieved significant achievements as students, graduates, educators, and school leaders despite dealing with various challenges to attain leadership positions (Dominici, Fried & Zeger, 2009; Jayakumar, Howard, Allen & Han, 2009). However, this does not mean females and males are equally represented in the superintendent positions in Virginia's K-12 public school divisions. Females continue to be underrepresented compared to the males in these positions (Henry & Glenn, 2008). According to Lane-Washington and Wilson-Jones (2010), females face different challenges in acquiring leadership positions in the field of education. Several scholars have discussed some of these challenges and have revealed that the majority of females in the education field lack social and organizational support, trust, access to information, formal and informal networks and career advice. Moreover, some females feel isolated in their divisions (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, 2003; Collins, 2009; Myers & Turner, 2004). A majority of females have also encountered negative stereotypes with regard to their academic and professional ability, and experience problems with their longevity, tenure, promotion and salary (Myers & Turner, 2004). Those striving towards advancement and positions in K-12 public school systems are often marginalized, suppressed and excluded (Carter-Black, 2008; Henry & Glenn, 2009; Jayakumar, 2009). According to Dean, Bracken and Allen (2009), a reason for this is female's unique need to balance between her personal and professional lives. Bell and Nkomo (2001) asserted that females striving for

leadership positions are affected by reciprocity in dealing with personal, family, and community values that they are pursuing, aside from the patriarchal nature of leadership positions.

Specifically, Bell and Nkomo (2001) noted that a crucial barrier experienced by females is access to informal and social networks in their organizations compared to males. According to McKinsey-Mabry (2011), females face unique personal and professional challenges in the educational sector. However, this research study is going to focus specifically on females in the superintendency, and on this matter, the literature is limited (Patitu & Hinton, 2003). There is a scarcity of literature assessing the plight of females pursuing the superintendency and the challenges they face in balancing their personal and professional lives (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, school divisions have dealt with complex challenges such as having an increasingly diverse student population, high turnover rates of superintendents, as well as waves of retirements in the academic sector (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; McKinsey-Mabry et al, 2011); while simultaneously facing unprecedented fiscal challenges and ever-increasing mandates for increased student achievement. In order to meet these challenges, it is imperative that educational leaders find ways to address the need for diverse leadership growth (Aronson, 2009). School divisions have thus begun to focus attention on the recruitment and retention of females for key division level leadership positions, such as the superintendent's position (Young, 2011; Myers & Turner, 2004).

### **Overview of the Study**

To address the gaps illustrated in the literature review, this research study sought to identify and examine the personal and professional factors that impact the careers of females in superintendent positions in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. This research study utilized a mixed methods methodology, thus seeking to give a voice to females who have attained this honorable leadership position. This research shed light on potential barriers of exposing barriers and informs future leaders of initiatives to bring greater gender equity to the superintendency ranks in Virginia public K-12 school divisions.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. Specifically, the researcher sought to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence females' career decisions related to the superintendency. This research study identified and determined what career anchors influence female superintendent in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. To understand the career anchors behind their progress towards the superintendency would shed insight into the self-concept and self-advocacy the female superintendent have developed around her career. To understand the career anchors would also provide insight into the professional and personal choices of female superintendents in Virginia. The study will contribute to policies toward improved gender access and equity in the superintendency.

## **Significance and Justification of the Study**

As schools and school divisions face challenges in meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse society, school leaders will need to find ways to address the opportunity for the leadership growth of females (Miller, 2010; Moses, 2009). If educational leaders are to successfully increase the pool of female administrators, it is vital to understand the skills, motives, and values that females consider important when making their career choices and how they perceive leadership positions in general. Examining the career path experiences of females in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and understanding how personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency can close the gap in the literature on the impact, significance, and intersection of personal and professional factors in career decision-making among female superintendents. The researcher hopes that the findings from this research study will impact future policies, programs, and professional practices by identifying the personal and professional factors that influence the career decisions of current female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. This research study provides perspective for females who work in education of the possible factors that may influence their career choices. To comprehend the factors that shape the career decisions of female superintendents, one would make the educational sector more able to improve gender equity and diversity. The researcher believes that the findings from this research study will ideally yield insight into effective practices for recruiting and retaining female superintendents as well as

ways for school divisions to develop a more inclusive organizational culture through succession planning.

### **Research Questions/Guiding Questions**

This research study focused on the career decisions of female superintendents employed in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The research was organized around the following key questions:

**Research Question 1.** What are the self-perceived career anchors of female superintendents in Virginia's public K-12 school divisions?

**Research Question 2.** To what extent did these career anchors influence their career path towards attaining the superintendency?

**Research Question 3.** What are the experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions as it relates to their career anchors and personal and professional factors impacting their decision making process?

The first research question will be answered using the quantitative method, while the second and third questions were answered using a qualitative methodology. The first question is subjective, making the quantitative method more appropriate. The last two questions are objective and explorative in nature, making the qualitative method more appropriate.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used for this research study was Schein's Career Anchor Theory. Schein's career anchor theory is a comprehensive way to understand how professional careers evolve, and how people recognize the values critical for them in their careers (Schein, 1990). Various research studies have used career development theories in assessing female career decisions and the decision-making process (Bimrose, 2001; Crozier, 1999; Custodio, 2000; Gottfredson, 1996; Quesenberry, 2007; Richie, Fassinger, Linn, & Johnson, 1997). This study is in the forefront because these theories did not assess the decision making process of females in superintendent positions.

The researcher specifically chose the Schein's Career Anchor Theory because it can be used to assess a wide range of career choices (Weber & Ladkin, 2011). Moreover, the theory can be instrumental for the current study because of its breadth and depth of applicability. It

encompasses traditional career values that individuals have and prioritize in their careers, such as security and stability, which impacts personal and professional career choices (Quesenberry, 2012). In addition, the theory can also be useful for discerning modern career values such as being dedicated and committed to service and balancing one's lifestyle against one's career choices (Quesenberry, 2012). This theory can provide deeper insights on career anchors shaping career decisions of females in various fields, and for this research study, stringent leadership position of superintendent.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Schein recognized five career anchors in 1975, which include managerial competence, technical competence, security/stability, entrepreneurial creativity, and autonomy/independence. Schein (1975; 1978) also suggested that additional anchors could be found such as the identity, service and variety anchors. De Long (1982) found three more categories, which include a service/dedication anchor, a pure challenge anchor, and a life style profile anchor. The service dedication anchor refers to how the individual perceived he or she is being respected and his or her social values. Interpersonal competence and helping can be considered as goals themselves rather than just the means to reach these goals (De Long, 1982). Schein consequently added these three career anchors: service/dedication to a cause (in relation to the service anchor identified by DeLong), challenge (related to the variety anchor of DeLong) and lifestyle (Schein, 1978, 1985, 1990, 1996). For the purpose of this research study and to develop a functional common vocabulary, the career anchors to be applied are (Margolis, 2008):

- **Technical/Functional Competence:** Primarily excited by the content of the work itself; prefers advancement only in his/her technical or functional area of competence; generally disdains and fears general management as too political.
- **General Managerial Competence:** Primarily excited by the opportunity to analyze and solve problems under conditions of incomplete information and uncertainty; likes harnessing people together to achieve common goals; stimulated (rather than exhausted) by crisis situations.
- **Autonomy/Independence:** Primarily motivated to seek work situations which are maximally free of organizational constraints; wants to set own schedule and own pace of work; is willing to trade-off opportunities for promotion to have more freedom.

- Security/Stability: Primarily motivated by job security and long-term attachment to one organization; willing to conform and to be fully socialized into an organization's values and norms; tends to dislike travel and relocation.
- Entrepreneurial Creativity: Primarily motivated by the need to build or create something that is entirely their own project; easily bored and likes to move from project to project; more interested in initiating new enterprises than in managing established ones.
- Service/Dedication to a Cause: Primarily motivated to improve the world in some fashion; wants to align work activities with personal values about helping society; more concerned with finding jobs, which meet their values than their skills.
- Pure Challenge: Primarily motivated to overcome major obstacles, solve almost unsolvable problems, or to win out over extremely tough opponents; define their careers in terms of daily combat or competition in which winning is everything; very single-minded and intolerant of those without comparable aspirations.
- Lifestyle: Primarily motivated to balance career with lifestyle; highly concerned with such issues as paternity/maternity leaves, day-care options, etc.; looks for organizations that have strong pro-family values and programs (p. 24-25).

The Career Anchor Theory by Schein (1990) provided that professionals often start their careers in their young adulthood, and go through a process of exploration before achieving their positions. While exploring, individuals discover interests, values and motives critical for them. Exploring individuals also start recognizing their unique methods of balancing work, family and other personal commitments. Over time, the exploration period will lead to the development of career anchors. Through their life and professional experiences, individuals will discern and examine their fortes, their interests, and the values they want to have in life and in their work. Schein's work will be further interpreted in Chapter 2.

### **Definition of Terms**

- Career -“a lifelong process of work related activities that include both objective and subjective aspects.” (Bilimoria et al, 2005, p. 168).
- Career anchor -“a combination of perceived areas of competence, motives, and values that you would not give up; it represents your real self” (Schein, 1990, p.1).

- Division -name of local educational agency in Virginia, commonly known as a district elsewhere in the country. These two terms will be used interchangeably.
- Internal Career -internal career "involves a subjective sense of where one is going in one's work life" (Schein, 1996,p. 80).
- Superintendent/Superintendency -refers to the highest administrative position in a school division, and it is a position that entails leading a school division and enacting policies within the division that make programs effective and that enhance student achievement, according to the Virginia Department of Education (2012b).

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Although this research study provides support in bridging a gap in the literature and furthers the discussion regarding the challenges and successes of females working and leading in Virginia public K-12 school divisions, limitations and delimitations must be acknowledged. The researcher intentionally set delimitations on the scope of the study, choosing to exclusively focus on the geographical location of Virginia and the female superintendents presently employed in public K-12 school divisions during the 2013-2014 school year. Factors such as marital status and race will not be considered, nor will past employment in these posts. Additionally, Schein's career anchors serve as the theoretical lens through which behaviors and experiences will be examined. Limitations beyond the control of the researcher include the small number of female superintendents in Virginia, and the willingness of these individuals to speak frankly and transparently regarding the challenges of their roles.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 1 provides a framework for discussion of the problem that is addressed in this research study. The focus of this research study was to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 divisions and to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency. This research study focused on identifying and examining the career anchors that contribute to the decisions of female superintendents who presently hold the top leadership position in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. A mixed methods research design was utilized to address the research questions posed for this research study. The results of this research study



addresses the need to understand the challenges faced in a diverse society in order to successfully increase the candidate pool of female superintendents. It is critical to investigate what skillsets, experiences, personal charges, and values are considered when females pursue top education leadership positions such as the superintendency in Virginia public K-12 school divisions.

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 focuses on defining the problem related to the underrepresentation of females in superintendent roles in Virginia, and provides an overview of the theoretical framework for which this phenomenon will be examined. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature relevant to this research study, while establishing a chain of logic justifying further inquiry. Topics include:

- The importance of the superintendency
- Benefits of a gender-balanced organization
- Present assessment of the proportion of female superintendents
- Barriers for females in obtaining the superintendency
- Career pathways of superintendents
- Challenges facing females in the workplace and challenges facing superintendents
- Motivations, characteristics, and experiences of female superintendents
- Schein's career anchor theory as framework for understanding this phenomenon

Chapter 3 details the methodology utilized to investigate the research questions, and Chapters 4 and 5 includes themes, findings, conclusions, implications for practice, and avenues for future research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Overview of Literature Review**

Although females are increasingly visible in K-12 public education leadership positions, such as principals and central office administrators, as career educators, and as graduate students, more males still hold the superintendency at the state and national level (McKinsey-Mabry, 2011). Derrington and Sharratt (2009b) conducted a study in 1993 and replicated the study in 2009 to determine the barriers faced by females towards the superintendent's position. In the 1993 study, they sent 200 female members of the Washington Association of School Administrators, who aspired to hold or already held a superintendent position, questionnaires and found that the top barriers they encountered in reaching the superintendency were sex discrimination and stereotyping. They replicated the study 14 years later and found important shifts with regard to perceptions about barriers to this position. This time, the most significant barriers to top leadership positions were self-imposed barriers. These barriers were categorized as self-imposed because they were the participants' own choices not to pursue the superintendent positions because of familial duties and responsibilities, as well as their desire not to relocate their families because of their career ambitions. Motherhood also presented the largest obstacle to females striving to attain leadership positions (Derrington & Sharatt, 2009b).

According to Brunner and Grogan (2007), the number of female superintendents has increased since the 1970s. In fact, female superintendents represented only 2% of the nations superintendents in the 1970s (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). From 1970 to 2010, the number of females in superintendent positions increased to 24.1%, which is the highest ever reported (Kowalski et al., 2011). Despite this breakthrough, at the current rate, it will take more than two decades before the number of female superintendents will become proportionate to the number of male superintendents (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009b). Derrington and Sharratt (2009b) reported that in a span of six years from 2006 to 2012, the number of female principals flourished while the number of males declined, which may indicate future moves toward improved gender access and equity. A study in South Carolina concluded that while females comprise the majority of the positions in the educational sector, superintendents in the state are 30% female and 70% male (Styles, 2011). Styles (2011) also noted that there is a pool of highly

qualified females with significant educational experiences and insights, advanced degrees and coursework as well as a remarkable level of motivation that may be presently underutilized because they are not holding leadership positions commensurate to their credentials.

As schools and school divisions across Virginia face challenges in meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse society, frequent superintendent turnover, and the impending wave of academic retirements, school boards will need to find ways to improve the number of opportunities for females to attain leadership positions (Miller, 2010; and Moses, 2009). If school board members in Virginia are to increase the pool of female superintendents and best utilize the most inclusive hiring practices to ensure the strongest applicant pool, it is vital to understand the skills, motives, and values that females consider necessary when making their career choices about becoming superintendents.

### **Organization of Literature**

The purpose of this research study is to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. Specifically, the researcher seeks to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence females' career decisions related to the superintendency. This research study will identify and determine what career anchors influence female superintendent in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. To serve as background as to why a gap exists between the number of male superintendents and female superintendents, a section discussing the studies assessing the importance of the superintendent's position will be discussed, followed by studies regarding the benefits of a gender-balanced organization. These sections serve as the foundation for why the current topic is important. The researcher will then review studies that assess the proportion of female superintendents, the barriers for females in obtaining the superintendency, the career pathways of superintendents, the challenges for females serving as superintendents and motivations, characteristics and experiences of female superintendents. This review will reveal the research gap that the current study will address, or the lack of studies assessing the personal and professional factors affecting the career paths of female superintendents in Virginia. This clearly establishes the need for this timely research study. The literature review will also discuss the Schein's Career Anchor Theory, which serves as the theoretical lens for the research study.

### **Search Process of Literature Review**

To understand the factors related to the career decisions of female superintendents, the researcher consulted a range of research from the online library at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Google Scholar search engine. The official website for the Virginia Department of Education was also heavily consulted. Relevant studies and literature, which pertained to the research questions, were gathered through four electronic databases: ERIC (Ovid), ERIC (FirstSearch), Dissertation Abstracts Online, and WilsonWeb. Successful searches included combinations of the following key words: female, women, administrator, school administration, leadership practices, women superintendency, female superintendents, women leadership, and superintendent. Resulting sources included articles in professional and scholarly journals, dissertations, and primary documents from VDOE.

To further refine the search, the researcher focused on sources that addressed females currently in the academe positions, females in superintendency, barriers to female superintendency, career development of and career pathways for female superintendents, theoretical orientation, importance of the superintendency, career anchor theory, and career orientations inventory. Limited studies were conducted on female superintendents; therefore, the researcher will utilize Schein's Career Anchor Theory as a foundation to the theoretical framework, since he is a well-known scholar in the area of career development.

### **Importance of the Superintendency**

Superintendents ensure the safety and organization within the school division (VDOE, 2009). He or she strives to provide a safe and positive environment for the students as well as the staff and in the process, design procedures that would display the school division's expectations, working relationships, and strategies. The superintendent also manages human, material, and financial resources effectively to ensure student achievement aligns with legal mandates (VDOE, 2009). Overall, the superintendent plays a critical role in the attainment of school, community, and division goals (VDOE, 2009).

Even though nearly 80 million baby boomers comprise half of the current workforce across all sectors of the economy, less than half that many workers are in line to take their place (Teegarden, 2004). This shows that leadership succession planning is important and critical to the stability of school districts. Cascio (2003) contends the cost of replacing a worker who

leaves varies from 1.5 to 2.5 times the annual salary for that job. The cost of replacing workers include administration functions for termination, possible legal fees, separation pay, accrued vacations time, vacancy costs including temporary help, advertising, and administrative functions for a new hire (Karsan, 2007). High employee turnover rates are expensive, and the magnitude of such numbers implies that the ability to maintain employees has an obvious effect on financial resources (Costen, Salazar, & Antun, 2006). An early study by Jess (1990) also found that the higher the rate of superintendent turnover, the lower the staff morale and continuity of programs. Higher turnover levels also compromise organizational effectiveness (Metzger, 1997).

Entering the second decade of the 21st Century, educational institutions evidently face various new challenges, one of which is the frequency of superintendent succession. Barker (2012) asserts that the importance of school leadership is underestimated most of the time. According to this researcher, a school leader's longevity has serious effects on the conditions for school improvement (Barker, 2012). Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) claimed that superintendent succession could be a disruptive event because it will lead to remarkable changes in the communication schemes practiced by the districts, which will alter decision-making mechanisms of the school, as well as hinder the normal flow of school activities.

Many school districts are experiencing shortages when it comes to superintendent applications in recent years (Long, 2010). According to Glass and Franceschini (2007), in a study funded by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), around 10,000 to 11,000 superintendents positions across the country would be turning over in the next five to ten years. The researchers also cited the report provided by Market Data Retrieval and found that during the 2006 school year; nearly 17% of superintendent turnover rate was recorded (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Among the superintendents who completed the survey, 80% claimed that the school districts do not have in place programs, such as succession plans, that can identify individuals who want to be in this position (Glass & Franceschini, 2007).

### **Gender Disparities in Superintendency**

Taking a historical perspective, the number of female superintendents has always been a concern and did not increase remarkably when comparing the current situation and the situation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1909, Ella Flagg Young became the first female superintendent of

the Chicago Public Schools. Young perceived that in the future, more females than males would hold executive positions in educational systems because education was a woman's natural occupation and that females would become unsatisfied with secondary roles (Blount, 1998). Young's achievement was labeled as the emergence of what Hansot and Tyack have called the "golden age" for female school administrators. From 1919 until 1950, females held 10% of all superintendent positions across the nation (Blount, 1999), even reaching 25% in some localities west of the Mississippi river. According to Blount, teaching has become feminized while administration has become masculinized around 1990. Because of the 19th Amendment, females gained the right to vote and the female's movement progressed. As a result, females began entering positions that were considered traditionally male dominant, such as lawyers, doctors and most importantly for this research study, school administrators. This did not go unchallenged however. They met several barriers and their progress towards the superintendency has been intermittent. By 1930, 11% of superintendent positions were acquired by females (Blount, 1998). Interestingly, by 1950, numbers dropped drastically for females in leadership roles. Females have been discouraged from pursuing the superintendent's position because it was viewed as a man's job (Blount, 1998). The numbers over the years however, fluctuated based on unpredictable factors beyond female's control such as males returning from war and filling in these superintendency positions. By 1980, only around 1% of these positions were held by females.

Kim and Brunner (2009) conducted a study to assess the distinctions and commonalities between female and male career pathways and mobility patterns related to the superintendency. The researchers identified and analyzed the career movements of four distinct groups: male superintendents, female superintendents, female central office administrators wishing to become superintendents, and female central office administrators not wishing to become superintendents. The researchers drew four pathways for each group by calculating frequencies and percentages in relation to the survey responses detailing respective professional experiences. The researchers found that career pathways for females in educational administration differ from males, as males were promoted vertically until they became superintendents, while female superintendents traveled through staff roles, making their career path more horizontal in nature.

Styles' (2011) research found that female superintendents in South Carolina, first became a teacher, then a principal, and then worked in central office, while Dabney-Lieras (2008) found

that most males were actively recruited into the principalship after being successful coaches, and into the superintendent position. Walder's research (2000) found that female superintendents started out as elementary teachers, as social studies, science, math or English teachers. However, he found that the reason why females were most often absent in the top school leadership roles was more grounded in sports. Walder (2000) claimed that males became superintendents more because of their coaching experience and the network associations they earned through such coaching experiences. An earlier study by Holliman (1996) stated that these coaching positions allowed males to share common experiences, jargon, and team leadership styles, assisting them to advance more rapidly into leadership positions like the superintendency. Males were also more often represented in the athletic director ranks compared to their female counterparts. Horn (1998) asserted that the coaching experience of males gave them leadership experiences and network opportunities that females missed out on, limiting female access to the superintendent's position. They went from being coaches, to secondary principals to superintendents. The high school principalship has become recognized as the "gateway" to the Superintendency. According to Chan, Pool, & Strickland (2001), 71% of all superintendents have been high school principals, wherein 80% of all principal positions in high schools nationwide are held by males (Sanchez & Thorton, 2010). In addition, Dabney-Lieras (2008) claimed that males were also actively recruited into teaching when coaching became a popular option; coaching often came with the promise that they will be promoted into principals and then ultimately, to the superintendent positions in a short span of time.

Female superintendents on the other hand, came from positions that did not give them the opportunity to earn the same experience and networks integral for the superintendent position after serving as teachers. Instead of becoming high school principals, they become central office personnel or curriculum and resource directors (Sanchez & Thorton, 2010). Differences in their career paths may signal males and females have varying educational priorities (Brunner & Grogan, 2007; Glass, 2001; Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Kowalski et al., 2011).

In examining state-level data, similar patterns emerge in Texas and South Carolina. According to the Texas PK-16 Public Education Information Resource (TPEIR, 2011), females outnumbered males in most positions except for those positions in the athletic departments, and then for the positions of assistant and deputy superintendents. The top leadership positions of the school divisions are predominantly males (TPEIR, 2011) while 77% of the teaching population is

female (SBEC, 2011). In Texas, females represented around 60% of all principals and assistant principals (TPEIR, 2011). Females also represented the majority of teachers, campus administrators, and central office personnel, and yet less than 25% of superintendents were females in 2010 (Kowalski, Ellersen, McCord, Peterson, & Young, 2011). In addition, females were recipients of 46% of Texas superintendent certifications between 2006–2010, and less than half of this percentage became superintendents (SBEC, 2011; TPEIR, 2011).

### **Benefits of Gender-Balanced Superintendent Position**

According to Blanchard (2009), the academic qualifications of female leaders should be valued in school districts. With the rise of educational leadership as a distinct profession, female teachers became the work force or followers, and male administrators became the managers (Keller, 1999). According to Brunner (2001), reducing gender bias in the hiring process can lead to a broader “talent pool” of leaders from which to choose. This provides broader thinking and much needed diversity in leadership styles. Currently, the proportion of females in leadership roles declines as position and rank increase (Dean, Bracken, & Allen, 2009). More specifically, in the position of superintendent of K-12 school divisions, females are quite underrepresented. In Virginia for example, less than a third of all school division superintendents are female (Virginia Department of Education, 2012b). During the Fall 2013 conference for the Women Education Leaders in Virginia (WELV) organization, the Executive Director Emerita, Margaret VanDeman-Blackmon (2013), reported the Virginia female superintendency percentage at 28% or female superintendents leading only 38 of the 134 Virginia K-12 public school divisions.

Females have strong skill sets that make them equally suited for the superintendent position as do their males counterparts (Barbie, 2004; Halloran, 2007). Males have traditionally used “transactional” leadership, and females have used “transformational” leadership (Barbie, 2005; Halloran, 2007). These two leadership styles can shape the educational field better for sustained growth and development. Females may be better suited for the position because being characterized as transformational leaders; they adhere to “principles such as caring, nurturance, compassion, empathy, intuition, listening, interdependence, and inspiration which are essential to the central player in the web-like structure of leadership” (Barbie, 2004, p. 42). Additional skills noted for leadership success are listening, collaborating and resolving conflicts.



According to Dabney-Lieras (2008), all the participants in her study confirmed that barriers to the superintendent's position could be eliminated through extensive experience, advanced degrees, as well as the winning combination of both professional and personal networks.

### **Barriers for Females in Obtaining Superintendency**

Today, Sampson and Davenport (2010) reported that females have come to penetrate various high-level positions in the fields of business and government, and yet they are still underrepresented based on the total workforce when it comes to the superintendent's position in school districts. Brunner and Grogan (2007) also emphasized the same, reporting that only 18% of the nation's school districts are headed by females. One reason provided by literature is that "feminine leadership traits, such as collaboration, alternative use of power, and people-and process-oriented skills, are too 'soft' for leadership; females displaying forceful, traditional male traits are too flawed as females to be leaders" (Miller, 2009, p. 222).

Various studies have assessed the barriers, both personal and professional, faced by aspiring female superintendent's (Blanchard, 2009; Eagly, 2007; Glass, 2001). Among the possible personal barriers, studies have cited family responsibilities and duties, the inability to relocate geographically, as well as low self-efficacy levels (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009b; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; VanTuyle & Watkins, 2009). When it comes to professional barriers, aspiring female superintendent's claimed they faced limited opportunities for advancements to these top leadership positions because of the nature of the social system, citing the problems of sex-role stereotyping, insufficient mentorship and other discriminatory factors affecting the selection process (Peters, 2008). The females in Turner's (2003) study felt overall that there were a lack of formal and informal networks, mentors, role models and confidants, forcing them to face obstacles alone in exclusion, and without guidance or support.

Blanchard (2009) assessed the factors that female senior leaders perceived to be affecting their career progression and the factors that successful female leaders perceived to have shaped their promotion to leadership positions. In addition, the researcher also investigated the barriers that current-successful female senior leaders perceived they face when they were in the midst of ascension to leadership positions. Blanchard (2009) found 16 themes based on the responses of the participants, which include: "academic preparation, motivation, drive, personality, career

experiences, professional memberships, career conflicts, life goal conflicts, self-esteem issues, fear of failure, the impact of language, sponsors, mentors, gatekeepers, and family support, and spousal support.” According to the participants, lack of self-esteem and internalization of oppression of females in society contributed strongly as barriers to females ascension to superintendency. The most important external barrier that the researcher examined was the hiring practices of the school boards and search firms, which serve as the gatekeepers to the role of the superintendency (Blanchard, 2009).

Coronel, Moreno and Carrasco (2010) assessed the perceived barriers and how they shaped the professional and personal lives of female instructional leaders in pre-primary and primary schools. The researchers found that female administrators faced several perceived barriers, such as the lack of support from governing educational authorities, limited preparation programs and training, and insufficient equity-based support policies protecting the educational administrators who are both mothers and administrators at the same time. The study found that there was a role conflict and specific features of the organizational work culture, especially management culture, which was deemed to be strongly masculine. There appeared to be a limited appreciation of administrative work in relation to teaching, which was deemed feminine. These were some of the factors that contributed to the delay of being promoted to the superintendency (Coronel, et al, 2010).

Van Tuyle & Watkins’ (2009) survey of 39 female superintendents in public K-12 districts in Illinois revealed that female superintendents considered familial responsibilities, gender discrimination, promotion opportunities and lack of self-confidence as significant barriers. The participants claimed that they had experienced barriers related to gender discrimination and familial responsibilities. These barriers however, did not cause the participants to want to leave their present positions.

While many females became discouraged to seek advancement as the top leader of the school district, some females still attempt to seek this position notwithstanding these barriers (Kim & Brunner, 2009). However, the career pathways of male and female superintendent aspirants may differ.

## **Challenges for Females and Superintendents**

The first challenge is female presence in the workforce has increased significantly over the last five decades, doubling workforce participation (Jones, 2000). Despite higher labor force participation rates, various studies highlight the discriminatory practices that females face in the workplace, such as stereotyping, recruitment biases, promotion biases, as well as gaps in training and salaries compared to their male counterparts (Jones, 2000). In particular, there are evident gender disparities in the salaries received by males and females in the workplace (Small, Gelfand, Babcock & Gettman, 2007).

The second challenge is negotiating. Small and his colleagues (2007) conducted an experiment where the participants were engaged in a word game after being told that they would be given compensation for their participation. Although it was not stated that compensation was negotiable, the males negotiated for their compensation more than the females, even though the males and females all performed the same tasks. A follow up study by Small and his colleagues (2007) revealed that a majority of females would not negotiate their salaries even when explicitly told that they could do so, and of those who did, the females negotiated at a rate that was significantly less than that negotiated by the male participants (Small et al, 2007). Bowles, Babcock, and Lai (2007) also assert that gender differences during the beginning stages of negotiations may lead to an unforeseen consequence of disparate treatment of male and female employees when they enter negotiations. Females have more to lose when they negotiate, as the social cost of negotiating is greater for females than males, and they can be perceived as aggressive and lose their status when they negotiate (Small et al, 2007). While females earn an image of being too aggressive or demanding, negotiating among males is condoned, and males receive benefits from negotiating (Small et al, 2007).

The third challenge is job satisfaction. Since there is limited research on the experiences of superintendents, the available research on job satisfaction in education is more broadly focused on the experiences of faculty. Research studies such as those by Eklund (2009) and Hill (2009) suggest that just one factor does not influence faculty satisfaction. A host of factors shape the level of satisfaction that faculty experience with their posts such as work overload, lack of support, and lack of collegiality (Hill, 2009; Magnuson, Norem & Lonneman-Doroff, 2009). Workplace politics play a role in workplace satisfaction, and there was a significant correlation between workplace politics and workload (Magnuson, et al, 2009). According to Sabharwal and

Corley (2009), factors that influence faculty satisfaction can be categorized as intrinsic and extrinsic. The study found that female faculty members' satisfaction is shaped mostly by intrinsic factors such as the possibilities of career advancement and the existence of intellectual challenges. On the other hand, male faculty members' satisfaction is mostly shaped by extrinsic factors such as the amount of compensation, as well as the existence and sufficiency of benefits.

The fourth challenge identified is stress. According to Stricherz (2001), most school professionals claim that because of insufficient time, and increased workload, stress levels are at an all-time high. In a study by Bjork and Lindle (2001), a survey of 2,262 school superintendents, revealed that the majority of participants indicated the same amount of stress now as in 1992. The study also revealed that 51 percent of superintendents in the study indicated they felt "very great" or "considerably" stress in their positions (Bjork & Lindle, 2001). According to Bjork and Lindle (2001), various types of stress can also help administrators' use their internal drive to reach and surpass goals.

Turbulent times in the schools can be a major cause of stress for superintendents (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The root causes of stress are often out of an administrator's control such as new federal mandates, budget constraints, new curriculum standards, educating an increasingly diverse student population, taking on the responsibilities that were once held by the community and the students' families, and facing the possibility of termination if the school does not achieve up to par and to expectations (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2001).

According to Padalino (2009), stress in the school leadership position seems to be very real; however, it does not seem to curb the enthusiasm these administrators have for their jobs. In 2000, 56 percent of school administrators felt "considerable" fulfillment and 34 percent felt "moderate" fulfillment in their current position according to Pierce. This is down five percent from 1992, but still quite high considering the stress level in this type of position. According to a ten-year study of school leaders in 2000 by Pierce, many school leaders feel that the job is worth the stress and would do it over again if given the chance. Fifty-two percent of school leaders stated they "certainly" would take the job again, while thirty-three percent said they "probably" would. Thirteen percent of those questioned would "probably not" and only two percent stated they certainly "would not" (Pierce, 2000).

## **Motivations, Characteristics, and Experiences of Female Superintendents**

Murphy (2009) developed the Female Superintendency Aspiration Model from a national investigation of 23 females of varying ages, race, marital status, and occupations with the commonality of aspiring to the superintendency. Based on the model, the researchers revealed that females who aspire to be superintendents are impacted by three factors: 1) the influence of a mentor or role model; 2) possessing an inherent drive to seek out challenging and competitive opportunities; and 3) enrollment in a doctoral program highlighting superintendency credentials (Murphy, 2009). In addition, these factors are enhanced by various personal factors that push the females to have a strong sense of self-efficacy in dealing with barriers to the superintendency such as a females relationship with her parents, her mother's influence, specific personality characteristics such as being goal-driven and being passionate, as well as networking opportunities provided by her university programming (Murphy, 2009).

Lane-Washington and Wilson-Jones (2010) also emphasized the role of mentors and role models for helping female superintendents in American public schools to overcome barriers and to give advice on career advancement. These mentors and role models included parents, teachers, college professors, administrators, or peers of the female whose opinion and views they respect. The female superintendents interviewed in the study found the presence of peer supporters important, as they were often encouraged to take leadership courses and apply for particular positions because of them. In a study of females in leadership positions across a range of educational institutions, Bowles (1999) affirmed the importance of mentors and positive role models, citing them as the primary factors that influenced the career decisions of participants. In a study of female superintendents in South Carolina, participants indicated that being approachable in the workplace and being responsive to parents can help them advance their career opportunities (Styles, 2011).

In explaining their reasoning for looking for new positions elsewhere, female superintendents in Illinois cited the desire to pursue opportunities that offered better salaries and better professional experiences. When asked for reasons why they stay in their current superintendency, the participants cited satisfaction with their present employment situation, familial obligations, and peer support (Van Tuyle & Watkins, 2009).

## **Career Anchor Theory**

Edgar Schein (1978) is the proponent behind the Career Anchor Theory which will serve as the foundation for this research study on the experiences of female superintendents in Virginia. Various career development theories have emerged to explain the rationale behind individuals' career plans and why individuals make the career decisions they do. According to Pietrofesa and Splete, "Career development is an ongoing process that occurs over the life span and includes home, school and community experiences related to an individual's self-concept and its implementation in a life style as one lives life and makes a living" (1975, p. 4). Moreover, self-awareness, career-awareness, career educational preparation, and work experience can all shape one's career development, too (Pietrofesa & Splete 1975).

For Schein, the word career can be categorized as internal and external opportunities. The term external career refers to the opportunities and barriers surrounding the path toward a specific position within an organization. External career includes the career paths and stages that an individual has to pass to acquire a position (Schein, 1990). On the other hand, internal career refers to the individual's self-concept when it comes to their work or career. Under the Career Anchor Theory, Schein emphasizes more the internal career. The proponent recognized three separate factors of a person's self-concept; when combined, these factors would comprise a career anchor. Schein recognized the three factors as the self-perceived talents and abilities, self-perceived motives and needs, and self-perceived attitudes and values. (Schein, 1978). The theory highlights "an evolving self-concept of what one is good at, what one's needs and motives are, and what values govern one's work-related choices" (Schein, 1996, p. 125). Career anchors, which describe an individual's skills, motives, and values, are the internal considerations that support an individual's career decisions. Riordan and Louw-Potgieter (2011) utilized career psychology variables they generated from the literature to study the career success of academic females in South Africa. Specifically, the researchers assessed the effects of work centrality, moderated by care giving, the motivation, career anchors and self-efficacy on female career success. The researchers found that in the Final Path Model, the seven variables of work centrality; the motivational factors of self-efficacy, motivational expectations, and motivational valence; and three career anchors of autonomy, entrepreneurial creativity, and service/dedication to a cause remain relevant to career successes of academic females in South Africa (Riordan & Louw-Potgieter, 2011). The researchers further examined the Final Path Model and assessed for

differences according to race, career stage, and career progress. They found that career progress is the only significant participant classification criterion. This study showed that Career Anchor Theory can be useful for assessing career success of females.

Nowak and Bonner (2013) also used Schein's Career Anchor Theory to comprehend the career motivations, values and objectives of female healthcare professionals residing in Western Australia. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire while on paid maternity leave. The questions allowed the participants to reflect on returning to work full-time, changing jobs or careers, working part-time or total career discontinuity to take care of family needs. Schein's Career Anchor of 'Lifestyle' assisted the researcher's exploration of the 388 participants' involvement and career orientations. The researchers, through this theory, found that even though the females experienced difficulties in balancing their personal career and educational goals with their family life, especially after their children were born, a majority of the females still had strong commitments towards their careers. As a result, most of the females have thought of self-initiatives or sought out the help from their employers to balance work and family priorities. Herrbach and Mignonac (2012) also used the Career Anchor Theory in their study assessing the relationship between perceived gender discrimination, subjective career success, and career anchors among 300 female employees serving a large French company. They found that perceived gender discrimination is negatively correlated to subjective career success. Researchers discovered that some career anchors can moderate this relationship, such as the managerial, technical, and lifestyle career anchors. Moreover, these career anchors can also aggravate or lessen the effects of perceived gender discrimination. Their study showed that career anchors can influence how a work environment is perceived and interpreted, and this can also influence how employees make career choices. The study suggests that organizations should be more aware of not only what the females' experiences are in the workplace, but also what they want to achieve or aspire to, given that they have to balance their work life and home life. Given this, and the purpose of the current study, this researcher perceives the Schein's (1978) Career Anchor Theory is the best model for assessing the experiences of female superintendents in Virginia.

## Chapter Summary

The purpose of this research study is to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency. The superintendent performs the essential function of imposing different measures to gather, analyze, and use data for decision making in the school divisions. In the process, the superintendent organizes and strategizes a plan based on data from various resources and implements the programs that would best enhance teaching and student learning. He or she would also assess the effectiveness of instructional programs. In addition, the superintendent is the one who allocates the fiscal and other resources of the school division effectively (VDOE, 2000).

Previous literature substantiates the presence of personal and professional, often institutional barriers, towards females seeking a superintendency. Mentors and role models were reported as a common positive force in overcoming such barriers. Aspiring female superintendents must evaluate and make decisions in light of their personal and professional goals, obligations, and responsibilities. Based on the review of the literature and purpose of this research study, the researcher determined that Schein's Career Anchor Theory provides an appropriate lens through which to explore the career choices and pathways of the study participants. This study will review and analyze the personal and professional barriers in setting a course for females pursuing the superintendency.

In an effort to address this gap in the research, this study identified and examined the personal and professional factors influencing female superintendents in Virginia by drawing upon Schein's Career Anchor Theory (1990). Career Anchor Theory focuses on the internal career of individuals, and offers a means to understanding career motivation. Career anchors are the specific elements in a person's self-concept that a person cannot give up even in light of difficult choices (Schein, 1990). The anchors provide insight into the self-concept or self-image an individual develops around his or her career, which becomes a guiding force when making career decisions (Schein, 1990). These internal factors that influence career decisions often differ based on the desires, experiences, interests, and needs of an individual.



### **Chapter 3**

#### **Research Methodology**

This chapter will outline the methodological procedure the researcher applied to answer the guiding research questions and to complete this mixed methods study. As described earlier, the purpose of this research study was to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. Specifically, the researcher sought to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence females' career decisions related to the superintendency. This research study identified and determined what career anchors influence female superintendent in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. This study focused on identifying and examining the career anchors that contribute to the career decisions of female superintendents who presently hold the top administrative posts in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. Understanding the personal and professional choices of females in these positions is critical for identifying and removing barriers to improved gender access and equity in these roles for the future.

In particular, this research study identified and examined the factors that impact the career decisions of females who work in superintendent positions in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The research was organized around the following key questions:

**Research Question 1.** What are the self-perceived career anchors of female superintendent's in Virginia's public K-12 school divisions?

**Research Question 2.** To what extent did these career anchors influence their career path towards attaining the superintendency?

**Research Question 3.** What are the experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions as it relates to their career anchors and personal and professional factors impacting their decision making process?

#### **Research Design**

A mixed methods research design was employed to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence career decisions related to the superintendency of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. As a result of the more sophisticated and demanding research questions mixed methods designs are increasingly used to

thoroughly investigate the topic (Burke-Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By using a mixed methods design, the researcher expected a better understanding of the questions can be developed compared to just using a quantitative method or using a qualitative method alone. The current research links two data sets together wherein one data set built upon the other. This procedure made sure that the interview section has a relationship with the quantitative research section (Creswell, 2009).

The personal and professional factors, which influence the career decisions of female superintendents, will be the phenomenon to be considered in this study. The focus of this study is on how female superintendents interpret their experiences and how they provide meaning to the personal and professional decisions they have made in order to achieve their positions. The primary learning objective is to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participants' perceptions and not that of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, a mixed methods design was deemed as the most appropriate design method to address the research questions posed in this study.

### **Target Population, Samples, and Sampling Procedure**

The purpose of this research study is to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. Specifically, the researcher sought to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence females career decisions related to the superintendency. This research study identified and determined what career anchors influence female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The researcher used random sampling to gather the participants. The researcher included 19 (50%) of the 38 randomly selected Virginia female superintendents in the qualitative research and the same participants in the quantitative research included in the study. According to Gorman and Clayton, (1997) and Creswell (1998), it is necessary to gather at least 15 to 25 participants in order to provide thematic saturation. For the current research study, the target population was current 2013-2014 female superintendents in Virginia.

The participant sample was identified from the panel consisting of the researcher and leadership experts that willingly agreed to engage in the research study through a random sampling process. The leadership panel used in the study composed of three members recruited from the pool of Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) & Women Education

Leadership in Virginia (WELV). This recruitment technique ensures that female leaders represent each region. Using the leadership panel, the researcher contacted all 38 female superintendents in Virginia. Out of this number, 26 responded while only 20 were identified and selected to be interviewed. Although 20 were identified to be interviewed and to participate in the online survey, 19 were interviewed due to the time constraints and availability of schedule for both participant and the researcher.

With this method, each person included in the population had the same chance of being chosen for the sample. Simple random sampling is the most appropriate method since the population to be sampled is relatively uniform or homogeneous. The use of random sampling techniques is appropriate with larger surveys and with the use of quantitative data that involves a cross-section of the population, which is representative of the more commonly shared characteristics (Denscombe, 2010).

### **Instrumentation**

The researcher utilized semi-structured interview protocol and an online questionnaire as the main instruments in conducting research. For the quantitative research, an online survey questionnaire was used. This survey questionnaire first determined what the career anchors were and to what extent these factors influenced their superintendency. The researcher obtained permission from the publisher of Edward Schein's online Career Anchor Self-Assessment questionnaire. The web-based survey included 34 items chosen to represent the career anchors under Schein's model.

According to Horrigan (2001), an online survey collection can allow the researcher to access as many participants as possible, especially those who are previously inaccessible. This will also allow the researcher to gain access to participants sharing specific interests. An online survey questionnaire is also much easier and faster to use compared to traditional physical questionnaires. Traditional physical questionnaires also run the risk of inaccurate data entry. Moreover, an online survey questionnaire can save the researcher time and effort to reach many individuals with the same characteristics and interests (Garmon, 1996). According to Ilieva et al. (2002), an online survey is also less costly, which can reduce travel and equipment costs for the researcher.

An issue with the online survey method is the problem of self-selection bias (Thompson et al., 2003). There are people who are going to be more willing and likely than others to respond to an online survey. This potentially could lead to systematic bias as well (Wright, 2005). The literature indicates that this is a disadvantage common to all social research studies. After a critical analysis of the pros and cons of utilizing a survey, the researcher decided this was the most appropriate way to collect the data.

For the qualitative aspect of the study, semi-structured interviews were carried out to understand the nuances and themes regarding the career boundaries, career barriers and type of career anchors that the female superintendents face. The questions were exploratory in nature. To fully understand the experiences of the participants, a qualitative method is more appropriate.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

**Quantitative Portion.** The researcher employed an online survey design. First, IRB approval was obtained (Appendix A). Participants were recruited using Survey Monkey, which allowed for administration of surveys to the general population or to specific groups of individuals. The researchers sent the participants' information via survey link embedded in the email with a description of the study, the estimated time to complete the survey, and an informed consent signature document. After they completed the demographic survey and formally accepted as a participant, subjects received another link that guided them to complete the survey on career anchors affecting their superintendency. Responses to the survey were recorded, exported in a spreadsheet, and then transferred into SPSS for in-depth analysis. According to Creswell (2009), using a survey is an effective method for collecting data for explanatory, descriptive, evaluative and explanatory research (Creswell, 2009).

Prior to beginning this research, approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech was obtained. Then, before the start of the data collection process, the participants were asked if they agreed to participate in the study. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study as well as the procedures that followed. All participants were asked to read and electronically sign an informed consent to participate.

**Qualitative Portion.** A semi-structured interview was utilized in order to gather the responses of the purposed sampled participants. Interview questions were developed in order to gather information on the factors that influenced the personal and professional decisions of

female superintendents. Succeeding questions focused on addressing the research questions designed for this study. The succeeding questions will be used to guide the responses of participants towards the focus of this study. Semi-structured questions were employed during the interview to allow participants to express and share her experiences. The use of semi-structured questions does not restrict the answers of the respondent (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). The use of semi-structured questions in in-depth interviewing allows the individuals being interviewed to basically shape their own interviews (Horrocks & King, 2010). The discussion was structured to allow for free expression by the participants regarding personal feelings and experiences on the particular case so that they could give their own owns and provide better explanation of their opinions. A topic guide was used to ensure that all of the research questions were addressed during the interview. Through the use of a semi-structured interview, it can be ensured that the responses can be analyzed to address the research questions posed for this study. Interviews can be very lengthy; therefore, the use of semi-structured questions can help focus the responses of participants towards a structured content analysis to promote generalization of the findings (Cassell & Symon, 2004). It also provides the researcher the option to probe further through follow up questions. “The qualitative research interview is ideally suited for examining topics in which different levels of meaning need to be explored” (2004, p. 21).

Interview questions were developed with the assistance of expert independent consultants that consisted of two former Virginia superintendents. These independent consultants advised the researcher on the proposed questions and whether they measure what is being researched. To assure trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and clarity, a field test of the interview questions was conducted using three independent expert consultants who have experience on the proposed topic. Three former female superintendents from Virginia, who will not be included in my sample population, carried out the field test. The field test ensured the content validity of the instrument and that questions are appropriate in seeking answers to the research questions (Leedy & Ormond, 2001). Likewise, the field test assessed for flaws, limitations, or other weakness within the interview design in order to make necessary revisions prior to implementation of the study.

Internal validity determines if the researcher measured outcomes accurately, as determined by the test design. Tafarodi and Ho (2006) indicated that validity in a qualitative study involves appropriateness of the interpretation of the results. External validity includes

transferability of the result of the study. Leedy and Ormond (2001) stated that real-life backgrounds and studies that produce in-depth information might provide strategies that can produce research documents for future studies.

The dependability of this study was achieved by determining a link between the current findings and past research findings (Thomas, 2006). The transferability of the results of the study was ensured by descriptively outlining the demographic information of the participants involved in the study. The generalizability of the results is only applicable to leaders in school districts that share similar characteristics of the population used in the study.

Permission from the participants to audiotape the interview was obtained via electronic communication and requested again verbally prior to beginning the interview. The interview took place in a time and place that is convenient for the participants. Upon agreement, the interviewer started with questions that were more focused and then guided the initial responses into more general open-ended questions, which will allow the participants to share their stories or experiences. The researcher used a written topic guide to ensure that all questions were covered. The interview allowed the researcher to gain understanding of the experience from the point of view of the study participants. The primary strategy of interviewing is to capture the deep meaning of experience in the participants' own words (Gillis & Jackson, 2002; Patton, 2002; Polit & Beck, 2004).

Interviews are used in qualitative research to obtain the story behind the participants' experiences (Patton, 2002). The interviewer typically wants the participants to discuss topics as freely and naturally as possible. Creating a more natural setting may allow the participant to view the encounter as a conversation rather than an interview (Patton, 2002; Vogt, 2007). According to Kvale (1996), research interviews should be similar to conversations of everyday life. During the interview, the interviewer will be able to probe in greater depth for stronger explanations of the participants' experience.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

**Quantitative Portion.** To determine which anchors characterize the participants, the researcher will employ two methods. The first is through rank anchoring, which means the researcher will order the anchors by scale mean. The second method is through rank ordering of the anchors to the number of respondents for whom this was considered the highest scoring

anchor. This data analysis included descriptive statistics of means and standard deviation to summarize the central tendency of the data of the variables obtained from the survey responses. The analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical tool.

**Qualitative Portion.** The researcher used the Moustakas' Van Kaam (1994) data gathering and analysis method. The semi-structured interview questions for this research study was based from the guiding research questions designed for this study. The interviews were conducted face-to-face where responses of the participants are recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy and verifiability. The data from the transcribed interviews were analyzed using NVivo©9.0 qualitative software. The use of the software assisted the researcher in identifying significant elements, manifested themes, and explore any emergent attributes in terms of the factors that influence the decision making process of female superintendents. The purpose of the content analysis is to provide common elements from the responses of participants to identify themes and emerging issues. This provided a means to generalize the responses in order to address the research questions posed for the study.

Moustakas (1994) identified a modification of the Van Kaam (1959) method of analysis, which was employed for this study. There are seven steps followed in the Van Kaam method in order to analyze the responses of participants (Moustakas, p. 120-122). The first step is to list the responses and to identify preliminary grouping. The second step is to reduce and eliminate extraneous data, which are not related to the research questions being addressed in the study. The third step is to cluster the invariant constituents identified in the study. This step involves creating themes to describe the experiences shared by participants. The fourth step is the final identification and verification against the complete record of the research participant to ensure explicit relevancy and compatibility. The fifth step is to construct individualized textural descriptions of the invariant themes through using verbatim transcripts of participant responses. The sixth step is to construct for each co-researcher an individual structural description of the experience based upon individual textural description and imaginative variation. Finally, the seventh step is to construct a textural-structured description of the meaning and the essence of themes identified in the analysis.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Protecting human subjects through research ethics and regulations is important not only for the benefit of the participant but also to ensure that the information gathered in the study is reliable and valid (Shaw, 2008). The application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) included a well-developed research protocol outlining methodology, participant protocols, data collection procedures, analysis methodology, and any other ethical considerations. This protection can be accomplished by the researcher designing their study to minimize potential harm, reviewing research prior to initiation to ensure it meets the criteria for protection and monitoring of how the approved research is conducted. Applying the Belmont principles to a study is an appropriate start for the researcher. In addition, the researcher must put the participants' rights, welfare, and safety about all personal and scientific concerns. Additional consideration in research ethics include obtaining informed consent and advising the participants that withdrawal from the study is at their discretion (Shaw, 2008). These principles cannot ensure ethical research but can contribute to an understanding of ethical responsibility in research involving human subjects. Relevant IRB and ethical issues for this proposed research study included maintaining participants' confidentiality, safety, and protection of human rights.

Participation in this study was voluntary. A cover letter was sent to each potential participant explaining the purpose of the study. Each participant was informed that the focus of the study was to understand the experiences and factors that influenced their personal and professional decisions in pursuing their current position as a female superintendent. Consent was obtained prior to starting the interview to ensure that all participants agreed to the procedures identified in the study. There were no costs or foreseeable risks to the participants associated with the study. There was no payment or other form of incentive offered to interview participants. The participants were able to withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind, could refuse to answer any questions that she does not want to answer and still remain in the study. The participants had the right to ask questions at any time, could ask that the tape recorder be turned off, and could review and/or edit the transcripts.

Assigning an alphanumeric code to each participant protected anonymity of the participants. The interviews took place in person or via SKYPE at the convenience of the participant, and at a place of her choice. All interview data were transcribed and that all participants' information is concealed using pseudonyms. These data are then compiled onto a



coding summary form. Confidentiality of the participants was protected by locking the audiotapes and transcribed data in a secured file cabinet the office of the researcher. All data will be destroyed following a successful final defense. Only the researcher, peer-debriefer, proofreader, and transcriber, who were all required to sign a confidentiality agreement, had access to the data. Information was released as part of a doctoral dissertation and the results were published.

It is possible that the data will be used for secondary analysis in future research. In this case, the general rule of this study was that any publication generated from the secondary analysis could not identify statements made by participants. As a female superintendent, the researcher voluntarily elected a peer-debriefer, which helped avoid bias by imposing caution to be objective and to prevent imposed interpretations of the data.

### **Limitations of the Research Design**

The most commonly cited limitation of qualitative research is the possibility that the findings cannot be generalized to the larger population beyond the individuals being studied (Duffy & Chenail, 2008; Gillis & Jackson, 2002; Polit & Beck, 2004). For this reason, the following are several potential limitations to the study: participants were selected through random sampling and the sample size may end up being too small to be representative of the population. Therefore, the results of the study were only generalizable based on the represented population of the sampled participants. The findings of this study are not to be generalized to a greater range of the population. Instead, the expansion of this research study to cover a wider population could be considered for future studies.

### **Summary**

In summary, this chapter provides a detailed description of the methodology used in the present study. A mixed methods design was used to gather data regarding the career anchors influencing female superintendents in Virginia K-12 public school divisions. This study gives the participants a voice in sharing barriers and experiences in terms of personal and professional decisions they have made to achieve the superintendency. The sampling method was discussed along with methodology for data collection and analysis. The chapter concluded with a description of methodological limitations and ethical considerations.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results of the Study**

#### **Introduction and Background**

The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence career decisions related to the superintendency of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. This mixed methods design integrated both qualitative and quantitative procedures to more comprehensively investigate the research questions for this study. This study sought to understand the phenomenon of career path decision-making by female superintendents; hence, interpreting their experiences and how they provide meaning to their personal and professional decision-making process regarding achievement of their current positions. Through in-depth analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher was able to document participants' experiences, and not those of the researcher currently serving as a superintendent. It was critical for the researcher to examine the career anchors that contribute to the professional decisions of female superintendents who presently hold the top administrative posts in Virginia public K-12 school divisions in order to remove the barriers to improve gender access and equity to these roles for the future.

A semi-structured interview protocol and questionnaires were used as the main instruments to collect data for the qualitative portion of the mixed methods design for this study. An online survey questionnaire constructed from Edward Schein's online Career Anchor Self-Assessment questionnaire (Schein, 2006) was utilized to collect data for the quantitative portion of the study. This chapter addresses the research questions from the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data collected through the interviews and surveys. In the reporting of the data and the findings, the researcher included supporting vignettes, and direct quotes to support the data. To help the reader comprehend the presented data the researcher included vignettes and quotes which are coded with the letter "P" according to their participant number, the letter "T" for the transcription page number, and "L" for the line number (example – P2, TP34, L21 or P17, TP201-2, L56-61) throughout this chapter and chapter five.

## **Reported Data/Findings**

For the quantitative findings, the survey questionnaire used to collect data for the quantitative portion of this study was Edward Schein's online Career Anchor Self-Assessment questionnaire, which was translated into the SurveyMonkey platform for ease of administering the surveys. The survey questionnaire consisted of a total of 40 questions, which are used to define the constructs of eight career anchors, namely: autonomy, creativity, lifestyle integration, managerial competency, security, service, technical competency, and variety. Each question is a statement that would pertain to one of the eight career anchors and the responses for each are presented on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 meaning never, and 4 meaning always.

The survey questionnaires were administered throughout the month of January and February 2014 to 51 percent or 20 of the 38 female superintendents in Virginia's public K-12 school divisions selected for the study. While there were 20 participants in the online survey, only 19 participants that completed the semi-structured interview. The data collected can be seen in the Appendix B of this document. In the analysis of the data, the researcher utilized rank anchoring and ordering. Descriptive statistics of means and standard deviation were used to summarize the central tendency of the data of the variables obtained from the survey responses. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical tool was used to aid in the analysis of the data.

For the qualitative portions of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted throughout the month of January and February 2014 with 19 of the 38 female superintendents in Virginia's public K-12 school divisions. These interviews assisted the researcher in better understanding the nuances and themes regarding the career boundaries, career barriers and types of career anchors that female superintendents face in achieving this high ranking positions. For the analysis of the transcribed data, the researcher utilized Moustakas' (1994) Van Kaam data gathering and analysis method. These analysis methods include seven steps: (a) listing of responses and identifying preliminary groupings; (b) reducing and eliminating extraneous data; (c) clustering of invariant constituents identified in the study; (d) identifying and verifying against the complete record of the research participant; (e) constructing individualized textural descriptions of the invariant themes through using verbatim transcripts of participant responses; (f) constructing an individual structural description of the experience based upon individual textural description and imaginative variation; and (g) constructing a textural-structured

description of the meaning and the essence of themes identified in the analysis. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or via SKYPE, audio-recorded, and transcribed to ensure accuracy. The interviews were then transcribed for content analysis using NVivo©9.0 qualitative software to identify significant elements, manifested themes, and explore any emergent attributes in terms of the factors that influenced the decision-making process of female superintendents. The purpose of the content analysis was to provide common elements from the responses of participants to identify themes and emerging issues providing a means to generalize the responses in order to address the research questions posed for the study.

As a reminder, the conceptual framework utilized for this study is the following Career Anchors postulated by Margolis (2008) and Schein (1978):

- Technical/Functional Competence: Primarily excited by the content of the work itself; prefers advancement only in his/her technical or functional area of competence; generally disdains and fears general management as too political.
- General Managerial Competence: Primarily excited by the opportunity to analyze and solve problems under conditions of incomplete information and uncertainty; likes harnessing people together to achieve common goals; stimulated (rather than exhausted) by crisis situations.
- Autonomy/Independence: Primarily motivated to seek work situations, which are maximally free of organizational constraints; wants to set own schedule and own pace of work; is willing to trade-off opportunities for promotion to have more freedom.
- Security/Stability: Primarily motivated by job security and long-term attachment to one organization; willing to conform and to be fully socialized into an organization's values and norms; tends to dislike travel and relocation.
- Entrepreneurial Creativity: Primarily motivated by the need to build or create something that is entirely their own project; easily bored and likes to move from project to project; more interested in initiating new enterprises than in managing established ones.
- Service/Dedication to a Cause: Primarily motivated to improve the world in some fashion; wants to align work activities with personal values about helping society; more concerned with finding jobs, which meet their values than their skills.
- Pure Challenge: Primarily motivated to overcome major obstacles, solve almost unsolvable problems, or to win out over extremely tough opponents; define their careers

in terms of daily combat or competition in which winning is everything; very single-minded and intolerant of those without comparable aspirations.

- Lifestyle: Primarily motivated to balance career with lifestyle; highly concerned with such issues as paternity/maternity leaves, day-care options, etc.; looks for organizations that have strong pro-family values and programs (pp. 24-25).

These anchors will be further discussed and supported in the subsequent section that presents the overview of the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study based on chosen data collection, analysis techniques, and research question targeted to understand the phenomenon of career path decision-making by female superintendents. The participant data will then be summarized within the context of each research question and by interview question for the qualitative portion. A summary of the collected data analysis per research question concludes this chapter.

**Research Question 1.** What are the self-perceived career anchors of female superintendents in Virginia's public K-12 school divisions?

Descriptive statistics were calculated for each item. Scale scores were calculated for each anchor scale by averaging the items in each anchor scale yielding possible mean scores from one to four. Descriptive statistics and reliability statistics (Chronbach's alpha) were calculated for each scale. The highest two mean anchor scales were Services (Mean = 3.60, s.d. = 0.36) and Variety (Mean = 3.22, s.d. = 0.31). The lowest mean scale scores were Creativity (Mean = 2.42, s.d. = 0.60) and Technical Competence (Mean = 2.64, s.d. = 0.69). Reliabilities ranged from a high of 0.821 for Security to a low of .427 for Variety. It should be noted that three of the scale alphas fell below 0.700, the traditional cutoff for satisfactory reliability (Lehman, et al, p. 145). Reliability is sensitive to sample size so it might be more remarkable that the other five scales were above 0.700.

In summary, respondents rated Service, Lifestyle Integration, and Variety as the highest Career Anchors, Creativity as the lowest Career Anchor, and the remaining Career Anchors, Autonomy, Managerial Competence, Security, and Technical Competency as neither high nor low. Table 1 shows the result.

Table 1

*Item and Scale Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for Anchor Scales*

Item number Scale– Anchor	1		2		3		4		5		6		Scale n=20		Reliability
	$\mu$	$\sigma$	$\mu$	$\sigma$	$\mu$	$\sigma$	$\mu$	$\sigma$	$\mu$	$\sigma$	$\mu$	$\sigma$	$\mu$	$\sigma$	$\alpha$
Autonomy	2.65	.081	2.70	0.86	3.15	.67	2.60	.68	2.90	0.64			2.80	0.51	.718
Creativity	2.26	1.05	2.05	0.89	2.00	0.94	2.60	0.82	3.53	0.60	2.05	0.94	2.42	0.60	.773
Lifestyle Integration	3.47	0.60	2.79	0.89	2.45	0.94	3.00	0.79	3.10	0.64			3.00	0.56	.753
Managerial Competence	2.75	0.97	2.42	0.82	3.75	0.44	2.95	0.94					2.97	0.61	.725
Security	2.50	0.61	2.63	0.93	2.65	0.58	2.95	0.69	2.70	0.57			2.68	0.56	.821
Service	3.60	0.50	3.70	0.12	3.7	0.57	3.60	0.60	3.40	0.60			3.60	0.36	.608
Technical Competence	2.65	1.09	2.25	1.02	2.70	0.92	3.00	0.56					2.65	0.69	.675
Variety	.65	0.67	3.63	0.50	3.15	0.59	3.15	0.59	3.15	0.49			3.22	0.31	.427

**Research Question 2.** To what extent did these career anchors influence their career path towards attaining the superintendency?

In seeking answers to the second and third research questions, 14 interview questions were posed to 19 subjects participating in the study. Tables 6 through 19 report the emerging codes and the descriptions of these codes in relation to the interview questions. The codes and the associated definitions are relevant in identifying similar textural data that the researcher may encounter in reviewing other transcripts. Table 6 reports the codes generated from the interview question 1 that asked, what made you pursue the superintendency? Data show that the majority of the codes are related to familial roles and responsibilities of female (n=3), pursuit of career goals (n=4), motivation received from family and co-workers (n=3), dedication to service (n=4), and to pursue higher contribution in the education sector (n=5). Note that these responses are iterative as the participants articulated one or more responses in interview question 1.

Participant 17 (P17) believed that she could balance her time for work and family responsibilities. She stressed the importance of having a full caregiver who could assure that with her absence, her children were well taken care of. Participant 17 said:

I know I was fortunate I was able to get a babysitter who looked out for my children during the summer while I went to school full-time and I taught full-time during the year. I don't know maybe some way nationally funding for something other than scholarships but opportunities. And I don't know what it would look like but to help with that

childcare part while a teacher who you have seen potential in you could encourage to work towards a master's degree. (P17, TP12, L262-271).

Participant 16 (P16), on the other hand, related her experiences that her boss reminds her of her life goals. Her former boss consistently pursued and guided her path towards the superintendency. She narrated:

My superintendent at the time, reached out to me to let me know there was a vacancy opening up in another county. She asked me to come meet with her, I had no idea what the meeting was about and the rest is history. In her words she said, I believe this is a path you should strongly consider. I believe you can lead with energy and a defined focus for our children. I wish you would strongly consider applying and I will advocate for you and be a good reference, and there you go. (P16, TP3, L53-62)

Table 2

*Interview Question #1: What Made you Pursue the Superintendency?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 1	Completion of children in school, priorities done for family, happy, appointment, natural progression	I had my doctorate since the 80's, but I also have three children that were very active in school and they were athletes in college, so I felt like I needed to spend a lot of time with them... Then, I was an Assistant Deputy Superintendent and actually was very happy in that job. My Superintendent, her contract all of a sudden ended in May of the year she was fired. I became the superintendent. I didn't even apply for it... and then two months later I was named superintendent.	Prioritized familial roles and responsibilities
Participant 2	Natural progression, ambition	It just seemed to be a natural progression...as you go and do increasingly different things, more complex things...I had a hunger for more.	Career path to take leadership position
Participant 3	Valued greater cause, help people	I knew that I could make a difference as a principal, but I saw the superintendent as a greater cause. I could affect more people... I enjoy working as a team	Dedication to education and community service
Participant 4	Motivation, progression	... you know my boss was like one of my biggest cheerleaders and he was like how do you feel about this? He really pushed me and encouraged me.	Motivated to take career path
Participant 5	Optimal performance, cultural issues	I think optimal performance in this role is often how supporting the board is on how much you can get done. Sometimes it is difficult to do what you know you need to do. Also, finding cultural issues... Coming into a school division where you know the aspects of the division culturally they need to change but culturally it has been that way for twenty years...	Proving capabilities to others

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

*Interview Question #1: What Made you Pursue the Superintendency?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 6	Career goal	It was a long-term goal that I wanted ... in my career ... in education before I retired.	Career as a life goal
Participant 7	Making difference, help people, completion of familial role	I wanted the challenge of making a difference on a larger scale... Another reason I pursued the superintendency at this stage of my career, was because my children were adults.	Dedication to education and community service
Participant 8	Natural progression, encouragement	I can tell you that I did not start out with that as a goal in mind. It just evolved career wise ... beginning as a teacher and then moving into administration.	Motivated to take career path
Participant 9	Career goal, help people, help student of color	My pursuit of becoming a superintendent was very similar to my pursuit of being a teacher; To make a difference in the lives of students and to also continue along the path of being a role model for minorities, specifically young women ... young women of color.	Dedication to education and community service
Participant 10	Life mission, natural progression	I believe when I came into public education, I came into the profession as a career option as educating young people and being a part of the K12 system and I had determined from the beginning that I wanted to be a part of and make a difference in the profession in any way that I could by starting off as a teacher and moving on. I don't know that I conscientiously pursued the superintendency.	Motivated to take career path
Participant 11	Greater impact	After being a reading specialist in a large elementary school in Chesterfield County ... I was just energized by the opportunity to make a difference ...	Dedication to education and community service
Participant 12	Natural progression, enhance school performance	Initially, it was never my intent, but after years of serving in the school district from teaching to Assistant Superintendent ... when the opportunity presented itself I thought about it and said, well this was an opportunity for me to try and do some things that would enhance the educational system in the school division	Dedication to education and community service
Participant 13	Encouragement, earn leadership experience	Encouragement from my former superintendent and others...and there was a desire on my part to experience the next level of leadership.	Career path to take leadership position
Participant 14	Natural progression, encouragement	I would say as I moved up the ladder in education, I didn't decide to pursue the superintendency until I was in the position ... prior to its which for me was the Chief Academic Officer...	Career path to take leadership position
Participant 15	Natural progression, work performance	I moved up the ladder in education, I didn't decide to pursue the superintendency ...	Career path to take leadership position

(continued)



Table 2 (continued)

*Interview Question #1: What Made you Pursue the Superintendency?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 16	Natural progression, encouragement	My superintendent at the time reached out to me to let me know there was a vacancy opening up in another county. She asked me to come meet with her, I had no idea what the meeting was about and the rest is history. In her words she said, I believe this is a path you should strongly consider I believe you can lead with energy and a defined focus for our children...	Career path to take leadership position
Participant 17	Encouragement, leadership experience	I was encouraged to do so, I was the Assistant Superintendent and the superintendent that was leaving encouraged me to do it.	Career path to take leadership position
Participant 18	Make difference	As a teacher however I began to explore how can I make a difference in the lives of children ... and in the lives of people and help people to have a better quality of life	Dedication to education and community service
Participant 19	Career goal, desire to help	Whenever I have been in any position I am always looking ahead. I am very goal driven, goal oriented. Back when I was a principal that was something I decided I wanted to do. Why I don't know, challenge, having a greater impact on students and families...	Dedication to education and community service

Interview question 2 asked the participants the barriers that exist in obtaining the superintendency for females. Review of the participants transcripts indicate that only two of the female leaders (P10 and P19) viewed that barriers are part of every professional undertaking and that males and females struggled through their own career difficulties. However, the majority (19) of the participants suggested that females have unique career barriers when compared to males. Participant 15 highlights a unique career barrier for females by stating, “Even those boards that have females on them ... have to get past the fact that, oh we have never had a female superintendent before. How will our community react to that?” (TP4, L63-66).

Table 3 shows the barriers of superintendency as identified by the participants in this study. Data show that associated familial roles of women (n=6), male-dominated structure (n=5), stereotypes against women's capacity (n=5), and cultural biases to the leadership capability of men (n=3) were found to be the relevant barriers affecting women's rise to this position. Barriers to obtaining this higher-level position in the education sector included comments about the social structure that favors males in the leadership position, the stereotyping of female management capabilities, the strong network of males, and the limited professional exposure of females in management. Participant 13 states, “I think that the superintendency has largely been occupied by males and males of a certain generation. Historically, that has been the model, the box that

superintendents should fit into” (TP3-4, L59-62). Alike, participant 15 indicates, “We still have the good ole boy network out there, both in some portions of the education community but certainly in the communities as a whole” (TP4, L66-69).

Table 3

*Interview Question #2: Are there Barriers that Exist in Obtaining the Superintendency for Females? If so, what Are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 1	Perceived gender differences, familial responsibilities, motherly role	I think that a female is different than a male. I had children and not that my children couldn't take care of themselves, but I just felt that I wanted to be the mother first.	Perceived weaknesses of female
Participant 2	Male dominated workplace	... you know, those boys in high school will run all over you. Why don't you think more about going into curriculum and instruction... and back then, this was in the 80's, there were no female principals ...	Gender-bias structure
Participant 3	Cultural perception against female	... no female had ever been Superintendent in this school division. So yes, actually the barrier was just the culture in the school division. So, I decided I would try and obtain a superintendency and I looked for areas that I thought were open to a female being the leader. When the culture is such that the male had been in the leadership role ... for a long time and you don't think that changes is about to happen in the near future.	Gender-bias structure
Participant 4	Stereotyping of female, race, biases to males	I think the biggest barrier ... number one ... not just being female... being a black female. But over all, people are just use to males in leadership roles and they believe that males do the job best in leadership roles. And another thing, you know the general public they expect males to be leaders and not females.	Gender-bias structure
Participant 5	Familial roles, mother roles,	I think having a family, having a baby... I think that is why you have a lot of superintendents coming into the role when their children are older... Because it is incredibly demanding hours wise...	Perceived weaknesses of female
Participant 6	Stereotyping of female	I would think that some of the barriers are being female in a man's world. I can say this when I went for my interview I knew that I needed not to be emotional that I needed not to be someone to make them think oh, we better go with a male, because he will be calmer or less emotional or a faster thinker. So, I did go into that interview not wanting to stand out as a female but just as an educator ... that believes in what I do as an educator and believes in student achievement.	Gender-bias structure

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

*Interview Question #2: Are there Barriers that Exist in Obtaining the Superintendency for Females? If so, what are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 7	Familial roles, cultural biases on males	...one of them can be family responsibility. Often times, if you have two adults in a relationship, one of them has primary care of the children ... and the other thing is their societal views. Society typically sees females as caretakers and nurtures, and they think leaders are frequently male... or they see men, for whatever reason, as better to make decisions, lead a company, and lead a school division.	Perceived weaknesses of female
Participant 8	Stereotypes	...there are those people, depending on where you are; there are those that still have stereotypes. If you are assertive, competent, capable instead of being described as assertive, competent and capable you can easily be described as aggressive, controversial and difficult among other terms.	Gender-bias structure
Participant 9	Biases and stereotyping against female	Some of the barriers are their perception of a female superintendent in the capacity to lead. Some other barriers are the simple fact there aren't very many of us and some people in my opinion are just afraid to take the chance by doing something difference and having a different experience coming into a skill sets.	Gender-bias structure
Participant 10	Professional challenges	...encounter many situations but you don't see them as barriers because the challenge is in the profession. I have never contributed that to male or female gender or ethnicity or any other characteristic they were just challenges that needed to be overcome.	Capabilities of female
Participant 11	Exclusiveness of males, stereotyping of female's leadership capability	...but I still feel it has been difficult for some, because there are only a few male superintendents who include females in their luncheons, in their discussions, in their informal conversations in particular...	Strong network of males
Participant 12	Male-dominated structure	I think one of the primary one may still be that boards; constituents still see that position as a male position. I think that is the biggest barrier.	Strong network of males
Participant 13	Male-dominated structure, perceived limitations of female	I think that the superintendency has largely been occupied by males and by males of a certain generation. Historically, that has been the model, the box that superintendents should fit into. So, as a female superintendent, I am certainly not that and as an African American female I am definitely not that; ... the tradition that has been around...	Strong network of males

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

*Interview Question #2: Are there Barriers that Exist in Obtaining the Superintendency for Females? If so, what are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 14	Perceived limitations of female	Most of the time, when you look at females seeking a job as a superintendent, they look for people who have the post graduate degree. It just seemed like it was not an area that they perceived women had leadership skills, not that they couldn't do the job, just that women were not put in those positions.	Perceived weaknesses of female
Participant 15	Male-dominated structure	...school boards that are dominated by males. We still have the good ole boy network out there, both in some portions of the education community, but certainly within communities as a whole. So, I think that some communities may just not be supportive at this time of having the female superintendent.	Strong network of males
Participant 16	Perceived limitations of female	It is still a little difficult for a generation of people probably over sixty ... who fail to see that women in leadership positions, especially of this nature and this type of degree of commitment and the political scene that that pulls you in etc.	Perceived weaknesses of female
Participant 17	Male-dominated structure	I was not really looking at it for myself but I had noted that and I think it was the thinking of that day was that men were in the managerial positions and that of the level of superintendency and females were more in the teaching ranks.	Strong network of males
Participant 18	Gender and race stereotyping	Women are the lesser of the two genders... And for a female and especially for an African American female pursuing this, I believe your resume has to be steeped in a wealth of experiences. Whereas compared to male I don't think they have to work as hard. Even with negotiating salaries ... it's just different.	Gender-bias structure
Participant 19	Professional challenges	Well, first let me say I tend to not look at anything in the terms of a gender. I look at things in terms of person, not necessarily as male or female or any other descriptors.	Capabilities of female

Apart from the reported personal anchors of the participants, the semi-structured interview with the participants sought to collect data about additional career anchors. Thus, interview question #3 asked whether female superintendents create personal career anchors and what are these anchors. Note that when the researcher asked the participants concerning career anchors, a majority of them ask the technical definition of the term. A majority (18) of the participants indicated an answer of “yes” that, suggest that their personal anchors influence female career decisions. Consistent with the quantitative phase of this study, the participants in the semi-structured interviews reiterated the desire to extend service. This anchor has been the

primordial career anchor that pushes them to pursue a career on education. In particular, the anchors identified by these participants include: service and dedication (n=4), competency (n=3), career goals (n=6), and family security and stability (n=3). Note that these responses can be identified in two or more participants.

Participant 9 (TP 4, L77-80) said, “I believe for most female superintendents or at least myself that is one career anchor (service for a cause) that is very strong and in my perception of the work that I do.” From these codes, it can be noted that the superintendency is pursued because of the following motivations: life goals, desire to overcome gender stereotyping, desire to overcome professional challenges, and desire to have a supportive family structure. Participant 6 (P6) shared that while she did not intend to pursue the superintendency in her early career days, she admitted that the position is something to look forward to before she retires. She said:

It was a long-term goal that I wanted ... in my career... before I retired. I love what I am doing and I look at this like being a principal, but the principal of the schools. It’s something I have wanted to do and it’s a long-term goal that I have achieved (P6, TP3, L54-58).

Table 4 shows the relevant codes with descriptions that have emerged from the responses of each participant regarding females creating their own personal anchors. For instance, Participant 2 (P2) noted her desire to exercise competency on overcoming professional challenges. P2 noted, “It was testing myself, it was going forward, and really the other part was seeing problems and trying to figure out who were the right people to get around the table and watch the magic happen” (P2, TP6, L107-111). The codes were reviewed and provided with corresponding description as they emerged in the transcript.

Table 4

*Interview Question #3: Do Females Create Personal Career Anchors? If so, what are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 1	Service dedication	I mean depending on your personality; you know I looked at the service dedication cause.	Personal desire for service
Participant 2	No answer		

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

*Interview Question #3: Do Females Create Personal Career Anchors? If so, what are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 3	Exercise competency	I think we have to look towards what our skills are and make sure that we use those skills as career anchors to get the job done. You know I am looking at some of the research, the technical functional competency. Women can't be afraid to be excited about the work itself and the technical skills they bring to the table. Also, I think about the general managerial competency which is primarily being excited about the opportunity and sharing that excitement with others.	Desire to overcome professional challenges
Participant 4	Dedication	I have such a passion about kids ... I believe all of our children can learn. Yes, they are going to learn at different levels and different paces, but I believe they can all learn ... that is what's all about, the expectations for them, as well.	Personal desire for service
Participant 5	Career goals	I also think for me personally, in a female whether rightfully or wrongfully so, we have to be more prepared and more flexible than most of the men pursuing the same job... I always felt ... that I was extremely knowledgeable in the aspects of the organization before I stepped into this role... I had paid my dues.	Desire to achieve goals
Participant 6	No Answer		
Participant 7	Family aspirations	They often have family aspirations. I think that your family aspirations impact, in some manner your career aspirations, as you are trying to juggle competing priorities.	Supportive family structure
Participant 8	Career responsibilities	Women do divide their time, as do some men now; you only have so much to work with. You have family responsibilities, you have career responsibilities, you have community responsibilities and how you view those and what works with you and your family is dependent on many factors.	Desire to overcome professional challenges
Participant 9	Self-belief	...my perception of the work that I do.	Desire to overcome professional challenges
Participant 10	Longevity, security	For most of us no matter what level in a profession we are we want security, I believe that is certainly one of the areas that I considered, longevity and security.	Desire to achieve goals

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

*Interview Question #3: Do Females Create Personal Career Anchors? If so, what are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 11	Career goals	...but her encouragement and her belief that I can do anything I wanted and my father, before he passed away is definitely a very strong anchor for me. The other I would say is the devotional, I mean I spent thirty some years just being committed to starting out with at risk students helping them.	Desire to achieve goals
Participant 12	Dedication	I would say in my case, and in many cases for females ... it comes down to service and dedication cause; wanting to make a difference and to bring about changes.	Personal desire for service
Participant 13	Family aspirations	I just did not want to make those moves. I don't even know if I had that flexibility. So, stability is something that I think we, as a female superintendent I want to create for my family, as well as within my profession. So... my role ...my desire is to help people feel stable. So, yes I think we do...	Supportive family structure
Participant 14	Career goals	...being empowered to go beyond what is required. I was in every position... and I like the lifestyle, of course, that is another thing. I agree that we create our own personal anchors and then the challenge for me was, okay you have accomplished this mountain where is the next one.	Desire to achieve goals
Participant 15	Autonomy	I see as important to me are ...autonomy and not being micromanaged in a job. Fortunately, I never have been in any of my positions and the notion of service wasn't important.	Personal desire for service
Participant 16	Service dedication	...first and foremost is looking at the personal and professional level of service to our society.	Desire to achieve goals
Participant 17	Make a difference	Maybe differ from others but mine is more I want to make a difference. I think we all do create some, I believe we do and I don't know if it is just females or males as well.	Desire to achieve goals
Participant 18	Lifestyle	...lifestyle, as one of those anchors. I think females; again, we are back to the traditional of what a female role is ... even in your marriage or relationships or in the family... in the role of the superintendent you have to have some reversals and changes with that because of the lifestyle.	Personal desire for service
Participant 19	Security, stability, exercise competence	I guess there is some security stability that comes with education as a career; although, I don't think in the superintendency, perhaps some managerial competence...	Desire to achieve goals

Interview question #4 asked whether superintendents overcome their personal challenges. As reflected in interview question #3, overcoming personal challenges has been one of the personal anchors of female leaders. As such, all (19) participants believed that personal challenges have to be resolved by female leaders. A review of the codes reported in Table 5 shows that overcoming personal challenges require a balanced of career and family responsibilities ( $n=11$ ), knowledge and skills in dealing and controlling male authority ( $n=5$ ), and building competency through pursuing graduate studies and exposure to management ( $n=3$ ). Although Participant 2 agreed that female superintendent has to overcome personal challenges, she did not provide any challenges that are relevant for her. Participant 5 said that prior to her decisions to pursue a higher leadership position, she learned to manage a balanced personal and career life. Participant 5 shared, “Because I knew the professional commitment that I would make from my own personal work ethic, and it needed to be balanced with my family life, as well” (TP5, L96-99).

Participant 3 (P3) noted that any female who intends to a pursue leadership positions must learn to control and manage full power and authorities. She said:

So, I think that there is a mind set ... that being a strong female means that you are controlling. You want to be powerful, um; instead, if it were a guy in control or taking care of business it would be a good thing (P3, TP6, L113-117).

Participant 14 stated that females could learn these competencies when they push to enroll in postgraduate education. She said, “Most of the time, when you look at females seeking a job as a superintendent, they look for people who have the post graduate degree” (TP3, L57-59).

Table 5

*Interview Question #4: Do you Believe Female Superintendents have to Overcome Personal Challenges? If so, what are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 1	Balanced lifestyle	The personal challenges, to me would be having a family, having a balanced lifestyle, when you are a mother. I do think ... if you have children and you have a husband that it is a personal barrier or a personal challenge that you have to overcome.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities
Participant 2	No answer		

(continued)



Table 5 (continued)

*Interview Question #4: Do you Believe Female Superintendents have to Overcome Personal Challenges? If so, what are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 3	Taking control	...being a strong female means that you are controlling. You want to be powerful, um; instead of if it were a guy in control or taking care of business it would be a good thing... But why do we have to endure things like that? You know we don't have to put up with things like that.	Exercise control over males
Participant 4	Balanced lifestyle	One is I think just trying to balance it all...that is a very personal challenge. Just from a physical perspective and emotional perspective and a spiritual perspective...and a mental perspective yes, you know there are several challenges you have to overcome.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities
Participant 5	Taking control	I really don't think that is a male or female issue. I believe the superintendency has personal challenges. I don't think that is a gender issue as much as it is your personal and professional lives and I guess I could say politically and I guess that one aspect that could come up ...So that may be different and it's probably a personal challenge for females to face that men don't.	Exercise control over males
Participant 6	Familial role	I think there are challenges to deal with if they are a wife or mother. Right now, my husband is retired and we have had extraordinary things that have happened that were family based. I have long hours and I don't know personally how a female who is a mom, super wife and a superintendent can make it all happen because the job is so encompassing. With a man, he has a wife who takes care of the kids and he is earning the money, but when you're a female superintendent it is not so easy to shove aside...	Prioritization of family
Participant 7	Development of leadership skills	...develop skills that allow them to be effective...and not to be perceived as aggressive or catty. I think research shows that the same behaviors in men are admired. There is a lot to overcome and how do you artfully and skillfully use leadership skills without offending people's sensitivity, because whatever their preconceived notions are about women in leadership...	Build leadership competency
Participant 8	Prioritization	...it really comes down to personal choices, personal priorities and the structure that you create in your life...you do and you have to make choices and if your goal is to be a superintendent having an extremely supportive family network is very helpful.	Prioritization of family

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

*Interview Question #4: Do you Believe Female Superintendents have to Overcome Personal Challenges? If so, what are they?*

Participant 9	Balanced lifestyle	...there is always a pull for those female superintendents who are mothers to seek a work life balance; To be a leader of a school division and also serving as a mother in the home.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities
Participant 10	Balanced lifestyle	...if you're married and have children, I don't think society, nor do I want society to give me a pass on my responsibilities neither as a wife nor as a mother...just because I have the position as superintendent. That was a career choice I made, those responsibilities are still there. Would I like help with it yes, but that is the life style I have chosen and it's tough because I am a female.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities
Participant 11	Prioritization	... I would say it is family first of all. I know that many superintendents don't have the opportunity to be able to move wherever they want to go. Or if they do, they end up having to have a second home. I also think an important piece in all of this is people who have gone up the ranks in the same school system. People like myself, I love change, I love going to a place where I don't know anybody. I think that is difficult for some female superintendents and males, too.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities
Participant 12	Familial role	I would say probably...some females the one thing they need to consider if they have children is at what stage should they pursue superintendency...they do not take away to much time from family, especially their children. So, I think that is probably the biggest personal challenge.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities
Participant 13	Prioritization	...a woman's work is never done. To have a career as a superintendent or any school leader I believe requires some sacrifice and yeah, yeah because the work is never done. You have to be all things to all people.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities
Participant 14	Balanced lifestyle	...I was driving a school bus, teaching and raising two young children that was a big challenge for me; having resources so I could pay tuition... we were building a home and a future together and I had to overcome a lot of personal challenges. Not losing my identity and still trying to provide the best for my family.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities
Participant 15	Balanced lifestyle	...to overcome the challenges of superintendent takes up so much time to do it right. I, also, think to touch on an earlier question there is just that challenge of being a woman and dealing with people and organizations that just have not worked for women ... and have to get past that and school division or district to move forward.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

*Interview Question #4: Do you Believe Female Superintendents have to Overcome Personal Challenges? If so, what are they?*

Participant 16	Balanced lifestyle	I think personal challenges; very personal would be just your health and wellness focus. I think that you have to overcome maybe a mindset ... There is sometimes this conflict of being of service and losing site of self. I think that personally that is really, really important to keep in balance. You have to take care of yourself...whether it is spiritually or physically ...you know your well being, your physical health; ...your psychological health etc.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities
Participant 17	Familial role	...if you have a family providing a lot of the childcare, keeping the home going and family kind of things. So, I think that would be a huge personal challenge to overcome; ...to just balance your personal life, family included or excluded with the time demands of a superintendent. There is some bias in thinking that males can only stand at the head of large organizations and females don't really have that stamina.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities
Participant 18	Professional challenges	Well, I think everybody has to go through personal challenges... The higher you go the more challenges. I feel that female superintendents are no different than any other. We all deal with personal challenges.	Build leadership competency
Participant 19	Balanced lifestyle	Definitely, personal and professional balance is something to be overcome, because this job is one that could be all professional, all the time. So, if you choose to have a family, or you already have a family, or need personal time whatever, that is a challenge. There is no down time or at least I have not found one yet.	Aim to balance the family and work responsibilities

Interview Question #5 asked whether female superintendents in Virginia face barriers in obtaining the position and if they do what are these barriers. All (19) participants indicated that the state of Virginia is among the states with reported career barriers for female. After reviewing the codes that emerged from the transcripts of all 19 participants, they indicated varying levels of policy and program implementations in their districts.

Table 6 shows that 11 of the participants articulated that there is a willingness to change the structure that stereotype women in leadership positions. These 11 participants claimed that there are gender initiatives in the local education sector, in the form of policy implementation that provides opportunities for female leaders. Participant 13 (P13) stated that there is a willingness in the school leadership to address female stereotyping. She said:

I do think we are progressive in some ways. The number of female superintendents has increased over the years. I don't remember how many we are up to right now. But, I see more female superintendents and it's not just because you know comfort, we look for people we identify with (P13, TP7, L133-138).

However, emerging codes show that barriers in obtaining the superintendency position includes the limited number of females in local governance structures ( $n=2$ ), the perceived strengths of males and females ( $n=7$ ), dominance of males in leadership position who favor male leaders over females ( $n=7$ ), and continuous initiative of female integration in leadership position ( $n=4$ ).

Participant 11 (P11), for instance, shared that board members in her district prefer to hire female leaders over male leaders. P11 said,

I think the barriers could be put up by the school boards that are hiring the female superintendents. I think some boards are very open to female superintendents. I think we have set precedence that we are extremely hard working (TP7, L129-133).

The participants are also reiterated that females are appreciated for their innate abilities in leading and in solving issues. Participant 6 (P6) narrated that:

I think they are natural organizers and they are natural goal setters because for a female to work and have a family, a husband, being a mom and everything we intend to do you have to be very, very organized. (TP6, L109-113).

Table 6

*Interview Question #5. In Virginia, do Female Superintendents Face Barriers in Obtaining the Position? If so, why or why not?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 1	Male-dominated structure, activities designed for males	...when I came up to Central Office and there was a male superintendent, up here at the time, I noticed that everybody – like at twelve o'clock everybody stopped what they were doing and went to lunch with him...all males. The other thing I mentioned, I noticed that a lot of the stuff happened in bathrooms and men kind of areas. They have golf. You know my husband is a golfer and I play golf; but many times I have almost been the only female golfer there. I think a lot of the business happens at male kind of times. I see it on the golf course, those types of things.	Organizational structure prefers the involvement of males than female

(continued)

Table 6 (continued)

*Interview Question #5. In Virginia, do Female Superintendents Face Barriers in Obtaining the Position? If so, why or why not?*

Participant 2	Willingness to change	...if you look at what has been occurring recently you see an increasing number of women being selected for the positions. I think the way has been cleared now that women have been successful superintendents. And so I think there's a greater willingness.	Continuous initiative of female integration in leadership position
Participant 3	Willingness to change	Well, I do think things are changing. When I received my doctorate from the University of Virginia in 1992 there were either three or five female superintendents. I can't remember exactly, but when I graduated three to five out of a hundred and thirty two or three counties or cities, when I became superintendent three years ago I became number forty two. So, in twenty some years, we have moved from two to three female superintendents in the state of Virginia to number forty two.	Continuous initiative of female integration in leadership position
Participant 4	Gender biases	...if you come down to a male/female for a leadership role they are more interested in hearing about the male and his background experience. As the female you almost have to get an act of congress to get the female in, because they want to know not just your work experience...your personal life, financial life ... that is what I have seen. So, you know I do think they face some barriers, but the main thing is the gender barrier more so than anything else.	Perceived strengths of males in management
Participant 5	Willingness to change	... I got my position in Virginia so, I guess for me it's very positive. But I have noticed in the region that I am here in Virginia a huge shift. Next year, I will be starting my fourth year living here in Virginia and leading in Virginia. The first year I was here, there were probably ... twenty-two or twenty-three superintendents. I have seen that really shift over the last couple of years. I had a conversation with the Virginia Association of School of Superintendents administration... they are seeing is a shift, too. A lot of them coming into Virginia, moving into Virginia are women and leaders from other states actually. There has been an influx of female superintendents in Virginia. So it seems to be changing and I really don't know what it was like before.	Continuous initiative of female integration in leadership position

---

(continued)

Table 6 (continued)

*Interview Question #5. In Virginia, do Female Superintendents Face Barriers in Obtaining the Position? If so, why or why not?*

Participant 6	Natural leaders	....very deeply rooted conservative mindset that there is a place for women and a place for men. A lot of that not only being rooted in the business culture but also in family and religious culture. I think it plays out more powerfully in Virginia than in other states with conversations I have had with colleagues who are either superintendents or female leaders in other places... another barrier can be the history of superintendency in a particular locality. If there has never been a woman then a school division or school board can be reticent in hiring one. Or if there has been one and it's not perceived to be a good relationship then often times the school division will be hesitant to hire a second woman.	Strengths of female
Participant 7	Historical/ cultural perception against female	... I do see a tremendous change over the past few years...superintendency or anything beyond that there has been a dramatic change but the superintendency has been a slower change... the biggest barrier is just that, the barriers depend on the community you're in and the attitude in that community.	Perceived strengths of males in management
Participant 8	Willingness to change	I do see a tremendous change over the past few years. I have only been a superintendent now for four years, but having been Central Office and having been a building principal some of the things I have encountered as a building principal and you look at the course of employment across Virginia whether it's the principalship, superintendency or anything beyond that there has been a dramatic change but the superintendency has been a slower change.	Continuous initiative of female integration in leadership position
Participant 9	Less opportunities given to female	...probably why there are not very many of us around. Again the pool is very shallow as far as the number of females seeking the superintendency... that has a lot to do with the opportunities overall that are given to females at building their careers in being school leaders. There aren't very many of us out there seeking, as well...not many of us out there actually staying as superintendents. Just having that pool at large makes it harder for any of us to compete with the males...	Organizational structure prefers the involvement of males than female
Participant 10	Empathy to students	...how females are often very capable of handling the emotional side of education. Nurturing the students and providing that warmth learning, but often women are not viewed as being able to make the tough decisions to be a leader, to lead large groups of individuals, to manage the large budgets and other areas... or actually to become a CEO.	Dedication

(continued)

Table 6 (continued)

*Interview Question #5. In Virginia, do Female Superintendents Face Barriers in Obtaining the Position? If so, why or why not?*

Participant 11	Male-dominated structure, activities designed for males	...and I think more are seen as strengths in superintendents than, I would guess twenty years ago. I just threw that number out not having any data facts ... there would be some school boards very hesitant to hire a female because they would not think they are strong enough.	Organizational structure prefers the involvement of males than female
Participant 12	Perceived stereotypes against female	When I was looking ...still primarily the competing with a traditional male occupying that position. In my opinion, that is the biggest barrier. People feel that males typically should be superintendents.	Perceived strengths of males in management
Participant 13	Willingness to change	...the number of female superintendents has increased over the years. I don't remember how many we are up to right now. But, I see more female superintendents ... we look for people we identify with. But, I do feel like there are more female superintendents.	Continuous initiative of female integration in leadership position
Participant 14	Male-dominated structure, activities designed for males	...obstacles and barriers that have been there for years. The good ole boy network. That's a barrier really, but how you handle it has to do with know who you are and having the strength and purpose to achieve your goal. Virginia is a Commonwealth; it is a conservative state...even though the guy was saying the other day we've become more purple. A retired superintendent who was playing golf said to me, what do you do for pleasure? Go to church? I thought, I am offended because that is personal, whether I go to church or not. I did not answer him. There are many barriers we face in terms of dealing with the culture, the climate of the region in which you want to go into. Female superintendents in an urban area probably have a different perspective than working in a rural area.	Organizational structure prefers the involvement of males than female
Participant 15	Historical/cultural perception against female	... I truly believed the community was not ready for a female to hold a major leadership position... there were many people that were surprised they chose a female and this to me is a little bit more forward thinking community than many other areas in the state... have people in the organization talking to board members who have not worked for females before and if they have the ear of board members that might make it difficult for a female to obtain that position ... I have had men who reported to me, who have not been comfortable reporting to a female and we have had to work through those dynamics...	Perceived strengths of males in management

(continued)

Table 6 (continued)

*Interview Question #5. In Virginia, do Female Superintendents Face Barriers in Obtaining the Position? If so, why or why not?*

Participant 16	Depends on the structure and leaders	I think it depends on the locality. I would like to think that all systems would look for the attributes and the gifts and skills and the foundational beliefs that a person brings to a particular position...have a mindset of a particular person and that person could be male or could be female or could be a person not of color or a person of color...it still happens in females that it can be a barrier and there are these mindsets that are antiquated in what a woman can do and maybe she couldn't handle it.	Dominance of males leaders
Participant 17	Willingness to change	I am seeing more and more females move into the superintendency... those barriers as I said earlier were perceptions of our elected officials who are on our school boards... To handle that and work with boards that could be predominantly men in different localities that could be elected officials. I think in Virginia if we face challenges, we have some very conservative in our state.	Continuous initiative of female integration in leadership position
Participant 18	Depends on the structure and leaders	...society has about the role of a women... views that women are the weaker of the two sexes and they see this as a real high position then this position could only be for a man. I think when you look at the greatest challenges, I think these are the greatest challenge...your personal characteristics, your work ethics, your values, your experiences, your expertise, your exposure, your successes as well as the area of opportunities. I do think that women make better superintendents because I think that women have the heart of the people in this position. To hear, to listen, to understand and the real desire to make a difference...I think that sometimes that is not seen as a success.	Dominance of males leaders
Participant 19	Depends on the structure and leaders	...there are these networking in the state of Virginia that exists and a lot of it happens to be around the game of golf. There is a golf outing in the afternoon or the opportunity to network on the golf course. That is something I did not participate in. I guess it is not only based on your qualifications, but also based on who you know and networking and things like that. So, that is something I found as a non-golfer, male or female that is a barrier. That probably has to do with the greater exposure to other people in the state. I guess it depends on what your role was before becoming a superintendent, or your career path.	Dominance of males leaders

When asked in interview question #6 about the influence of career anchors on the female superintendency, all 19 participants re-affirmed that personal career anchors such as maximizing



the leadership potentials, building competency ( $n=5$ ), supportive family ( $n=3$ ), pursuing life goals ( $n=1$ ), and encouragement of the school environment influence their decisions to pursue the superintendency ( $n=1$ ). Participant 1 (P1) stated:

I think so. Again, I think a lot of people that start out, well as teachers for instance, that anchor of the lifestyle of being at home with your kids drives you ... so, if you got ambitions beyond that you become a superintendent or a principal or you become a supervisor at that time. So, I think that those personal anchors do influence women” (TP8, L145-151).

Table 7

*Interview Question #6: Do Personal Career Anchors Influence Female Superintendents? If so, how?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 1	Develops leadership skills	...a lot of people that start out, well as teachers for instance, that anchor of the lifestyle of being home with your kids drives ... so, if you got ambitions beyond that you become a superintendent or a principal or you become a supervisor at that time. So, I do think that those personal anchors do influence women.	Desire to build competency
Participant 2	Natural skills	In general, yes, but I don't know if that is a gender thing.	Maximize leadership potentials
Participant 3	Demands competency	Depending on how you are looking at career anchors, we just have to be careful that we do our jobs, and how we are perceived. I have a real strong belief that the best thing we can do is teach our children is a work ethic...the only thing over time I see change dramatically is you ... When you grew up on a tobacco farm like I did and worked hard labor and then went to school and had no money. You have school loans to pay for, it just seems like kids today ... have not had that labor.	Desire to build competency

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

*Interview Question #6: Do Personal Career Anchors Influence Female Superintendents? If so, how?*

Participant 4	Aspiration, achievement, develops skills	...before the independence, the stability ...the challenge, and the dedication they are very critical because they frame up how successful you are going to be. Because if you don't have what it takes to do the job you're not going to be able to do it. I really think these personal characteristics...that is who you are in doing the job. And if you're going to be successful you better have some gumption about you. And so, yes, I do believe they influence your effectiveness in the role.	Maximize leadership potentials
Participant 5	Aspiration, achievement, develops skills	...they influence in the sense...that if you're allowing a career anchor to have an influence over you then that means it is influencing what you do. If you change careers and I can go back to the same example of my own family...it certainly had an impact on my decision-making. In order for me to move, it meant my children would have to move or we had to move houses...that would probably be the best example.	Maximize leadership potentials
Participant 6	Natural skills	Well, I think that females are natural leaders. I think they are natural organizers and they are natural goal setters because for a female to work and have a family, a husband, being a mom and everything we intend to do you have to be very, very organized. Your competency tends to run in several different areas as oppose to one or two... The entrepreneurial creativity, making it your own project – well if you make it your own project you won't have a job.	Maximize leadership potential
Participant 7	Professional pursuit	I think personal career anchors provide a framework for professional pursuits. I think male or female you have to sit down at some point and have an honest conversation with yourself about what it is you want to achieve in life....career anchors that you set then determine the path in which you are going to take to achieve your professional pursuits. I also think the career anchors will provide motivation and inspiration in spite of adversity.	Supportive family structure

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

*Interview Question #6: Do Personal Career Anchors Influence Female Superintendents? If so, how?*

Participant 8	Aspiration, support from community	...referring to the choices we make and the things that impact our choices in which we base our decisions. But I think that is true for anyone who accepts this role. Superintendent's job is a 24/7 job. Now perhaps there is a way for it not to be but I find that very difficult...typically in this state you are expected to become part of the community. And how you go about addressing those things are impacted by the values of the standards of your community.	Desire to achieve goals
Participant 9	Dedication to service	... I find many of my colleagues that I started teaching with still in the classroom because of their loyalty to the actual craft of teaching. So with that there are some that continue to stay in the classroom, there are some that have become superintendents who want to teach to a broader audience and that it is something that propels them into this particular position.	Personal desire for service
Participant 10	No answer		
Participant 11	Support	...thinking of several female superintendents who are married, have very supportive spouse; either their spouse is already retired or they are willing to go anywhere with them. ...their wife is the main breadwinner and all of a sudden they have a lot of support from their husbands.	Encouragement from the environment
Participant 12	Personal desire	I do think so. I think the desire to want to make a difference, to make change, to move forward, to work for a cause I think is the primary influence.	Personal desire for service
Participant 13	Value important values	I think so because we want to look for things that mirror our belief system and mirror need and mirror our values and so being able to recognize those career anchors that are important or not so important help us make decisions and I would imagine that's the same for men. But I would say so.	Supportive family structure
Participant 14	Support	...it's the stress you have of purpose, that's a personal thing because all of us have different strengths. But realizing where you are helps you with the career emphasis that we talked about earlier.	Encouragement from the environment

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

*Interview Question #6: Do Personal Career Anchors Influence Female Superintendents? If so, how?*

Participant 15	Support	I think so, I mean talking to me about me needing to be in a position with some autonomy and also needing to feel as if I am doing good. It does influence what I do, it influences what I have done throughout every career move I have made. So, I think there is internal drive on whether a female will look for another position and ultimately become a superintendent. And then influence superintendents as they do their work. For me if those two things are important than how I interact with people and try to give other people autonomy is important and continuing to try and feel that doing the right thing for people is important.	Encouragement from the environment
Participant 16	Accountability to commitment	...they can't help but influence... I don't believe my personal career anchors have been barriers. If anything, I think they have held me accountable. Not to be superwoman and to be all too all people at all times...I think that is ridiculous. But they have held me accountable to reflect to take time and make sure and I'm very grateful that I have a spouse who is able to sit with me and laugh at the tough times, you know with this particular job and also listen and offer some insight as I reflect on maybe where the position and the responsibilities might interfere with a particular lifetime event.	Personal desire for service
Participant 17	Guide for life goals	I believe those career anchors do... I think they become the guide ... maybe even serve what you are fulfilling ... it's based on that anchor whichever one it might be. I believe they do, bottom line that is what you go back to on the days you are questioning why am I doing this. Then it is for me, I'm making a difference for children and trying to optimize their learning here in this one county; it's all I can take care of... and make sure children are learning, growing, achieving and becoming confident adults every day. So, I do believe anchors are what we go back to and it is what keeps us going.	Desire to achieve goals

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

*Interview Question #6: Do Personal Career Anchors Influence Female Superintendents? If so, how?*

Participant 18	Influence priorities and lifestyle	Well, I do think the personal career anchors influence us. Your life style, you have to be willing to and aware of the changes you will have to make in your life style and the adjustments... Of course I said before the dedication to the cause is real, real key and the independence to be able and willing to exercise the authority to make the changes where they need to be made.	Supportive family structure
Participant 19	Natural skills	Probably so, you know bringing people together for a common goal, I think females are particularly good at that. Definitely service and dedication to a cause, ...wanting to improve the world and making things better for children.	Maximize leadership potential

Interview question #7 asked whether female superintendents believe that professional challenges have to be overcome and what are these professional challenges. A review of the transcripts indicates that all 19 participants believed that there are personal and professional challenges to overcome in securing this position. Participant 9 highlights this best by stating, “When there is a lack of female leadership at the county level or city level... the perception of all the stakeholders of having a female leader is many times something female superintendents have to overcome” (TP7, L134-138). The codes emerging from the transcripts imply that overcoming challenges are essential in dealing with co-workers and leaders and their desire to alleviate the plight of females in the patriarchal society. Participant 8 (P8) highlights this necessity:

One of our biggest issues is, and again I had the benefit of having mentoring and support and advice not all women had that, which is a critical piece and I think you need that. We need to have others who have paved the way basically and those who are willing and able to provide the support. It’s just like you do when you’re a teacher and you work with a student teacher. That’s a professional obligation and I think women need to support women (TP8, L152-160).

These professional challenges can be summarized by the following descriptions: competent to deal with professionals ( $n=13$ ) and desire to alleviate female’s condition ( $n=3$ ). Three of the participants did not indicate their answers. Table 8 shows the codes and the descriptions of these codes as identified by the participants in this study.

Table 8

*Interview Question #7: Do you Believe Female Superintendents have to Overcome Professional Challenges? If so, what are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 1	Building competency	.... I mean you know female superintendents don't do what the males do and you see that and business takes place twenty-four hours a day... I have learned. You know and if you don't do what the males do you are going to lose out.	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 2	No code	I think, what is wrong with me it's saying this one gender has to overcome professional challenges.	No code
Participant 3	Program for female, encouragement,	...we have in Virginia is the WELV Chapter "Women Education Leaders in Virginia" group. I know that when I was a director, I was asked to speak at a WELV's group, and this has been close to nine ten years ago. So, one of those first things to overcome is isolation. You know like pick up the phone and ask questions. I know when I became Superintendent I asked who were the mentors available and one of them was Margaret Blackmon, who was one of the first female superintendents in the state of Virginia.	Desire to alleviate female's condition
Participant 4	Work harder, build competency	...this is supposed to be professional challenges, and I hope I am going to answer this the right way so if I'm going down the wrong path just stop me.... we have challenges because, to me we have to work harder, as I said before we are expected to do more to justify more so you know men and I hate to say men..	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 5	Building competency	... females have to fight that aspect in other areas of the country... more not about your professional knowledge but about personal connections in areas that are often not well received. I will give you an example one of the first interviews I did for a superintendent's job and the process to interview ... can be a yearlong process.	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 6	No answer		No answer
Participant 7	Balance responsibilities, build competency	...they have to balance multiple responsibilities ... there have been expectations made by organizations, male superintendents and female superintendents who are trying to break down some of that for those of us who are recently ascended to the superintendency or folks who are aspiring to the superintendency. I think there is an effort underway to make it a little more equitable in at least getting to the table.	Competent to deal with professionals

(continued)

Table 8 (continued)

*Interview Question #7: Do you Believe Female Superintendents have to Overcome Professional Challenges? If so, what are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 8	Mentoring, support	...one of our biggest issues is, and again I had the benefit of having mentoring and support and advice not all women had that, which is a critical piece and I think you need that. We need to have others who have paved the way basically and those who are willing and able to provide the support. That's a professional obligation and I think women need to support women. Men need to support women and we need to lose the gender issue. And it needs to be the quality of performance at the skill level.	Desire to alleviate female's condition
Participant 9	Balance responsibilities, build competency	Yes, the professional challenge, which is the biggest one. I think the battle between the professional and personal challenge it is a strong battle. Personal challenges as I mentioned is finding the work life balance. The professional challenge I may have spoken too soon...about perceptions in the work place.	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 10	Building competency	It is the professional challenges that we have to overcome in the profession. You know they are in the profession before you go into the position. It's facing those on a regular basis in the profession you are in. When you are part of a decision making group making sure you present yourself as an equal to your male counterpart.	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 11	No answer		No answer
Participant 12	Building competency	From my perspective a professional challenge that female superintendents have to overcome is proving that one, they have the capability to lead and manage.	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 13	Balance responsibilities, build competency	As we are dividing ourselves with all of the things we have to do, time is a challenge anywhere and on the job it is a challenge. For an example, my husband said to me when I took the job as a superintendent, what are your hours? I responded, I don't have hours.	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 14	Building competency	I have a certain level of comfort with you ... I have seen you from afar and the way you walk and carry yourself says a lot. Your personal agenda should not be influenced by the person next to you...you don't have to be in competition. I know who I am and I know what I have to do. I don't have to criticize my coworker next door; I don't have to be like that person.	Competent to deal with professionals

(continued)

Table 8 (continued)

*Interview Question #7: Do you Believe Female Superintendents have to Overcome Professional Challenges? If so, what are they?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 15	Building competency	...having men report to you who have never reported to a female...then having to overcome some stereotypes they may have; to work with the dynamics of there is a woman in charge and you're not in charge. So, I think that's tough, you have to find a way; you have to recognize as a superintendent that's an issue for you and you have to find a way to work through it. I also think because of that you almost have to prove yourself more than a man.	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 16	Pursue graduate studies	I have two masters and I got those in intentionally, I got them back-to-back. I have a master's in Counseling from the University of Virginia and I have a master's in School Administration and Supervision, ...actually it was an endorsement so it's a second mater's. I guess they call it an endorsement. But, my point is I knew I couldn't...pour myself into a doctorate.	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 17	Pursue graduate studies	There were the ones who went and got their doctorate and then moved into the leadership roles ...while many of us in my era became teachers. As teachers and maybe even principals, you still could manage your family and maybe go to school during the summer, get a baby sitter and get your masters.	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 18	Balance responsibilities, build competency	I guess the only thing I see with female superintendents is that our appearance seems to be a part of the professional piece that sometimes can be a challenge for some of us.	Competent to deal with professionals
Participant 19	Support, activities for female	I feel like in just the past year and I have only been in this position since last May. I started off my first opportunity to go to the VASS Conference and wow it was that eye opening to me. In that you only have professional development...	Desire to alleviate female's condition

Interview question #8 asked the factors that affect their performance as superintendents, the participants' reiterated similar responses to that of their reasons for pursuing the leadership position. These factors can be summarized in the following descriptions: strengthened female's network ( $n=6$ ), abilities to relate with others roles ( $n=5$ ), positive life and career dispositions ( $n=3$ ), structure that limits opportunities for female ( $n=3$ ), responsibilities expected for mothers ( $n=1$ ), and comparative assessment of capabilities ( $n=1$ ).



Participant 11 responded, “Having a great team around me” (TP8, L153). Participant 12 responded similarly, “I think, first of all having the right staff, having a strong staff” (TP7, L125-126). Table 9 shows that familial role and responsibilities, network of female leaders, life and career dispositions, opportunity structure, and their abilities to interact with stakeholders influence their performance as superintendents. Table 13 presents the codes identified per participant and the descriptions of the code as explained during the interview.

Table 9

*Interview Question #8: What Factors Affect your Optimal Performance as a Female Superintendent?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 1	Familial responsibilities	I think the family. Many times the female has the responsibility of taking care of the kids, having to take a vacation day where as the male would not do it. So, I just think it’s the difference between the male and the female superintendent.	Roles and responsibilities expected for mother
Participant 2	Network of female leaders	We are starting to get a better network of sharing and working together...with females. I don’t think that we are where we need to be...	Strengthened female’s network
Participant 3	Positive outlook	You have got to have a positive outlook; you have got to have that attitude of “I’m going to seize the day!” You know, I can’t change everything today, but I can work today and go home and say I did a good job.	Positive life and career dispositions
Participant 4	Criticism	Criticism is probably the main thing. Can I say ignorance, is that bad? What is another word I can use? I guess people not being aware of what it is that you do. We have a lot of critics with no credentials.	Comparative assessment of capabilities
Participant 5	Male-dominated structure	I think the role of the superintendent is tough and very demanding. What can affect optimal performance is the School Board, they are either with you or not. And sometimes even if the majority is with you but one or two are just kicking your tail all the time.	Structure that limits opportunities for female
Participant 6	Positive outlook	Other factors I would just have to say communication is a factor that affects me. It is both positive and negative...when I came here there was a lot of negative communication...it is something I have had to fight	Positive life and career dispositions
Participant 7	Strong support system	I would have to say having an exceptionally strong support system from not only my spouse, but my family.	Strengthened female’s network

(continued)

Table 9 (continued)

*Interview Question #8: What Factors Affect your Optimal Performance as a Female Superintendent?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 8	Mentoring, support	...as a building principal you saw a lot of female elementary principals but not in the middle or high.	Strengthened female's network
Participant 9	Positive outlook	The factor that I am going to mention is probably not just one that female superintendents encounter but superintendents in general ... is spending so much time with board members and not spending as much time as being an instructional leader of the division.	Positive life and career dispositions
Participant 10	Male-dominated structure	There are times that I am often mostly surrounded by males ... in those environments there are times I can feel insecure. I am a female in a male dominated world and that question just hangs in the back of your mind ... I don't belong here. Society has told us that so many times.	Structure that limits opportunities for female
Participant 11	Strong support system	This is my second superintendency and I found in both positions I had to build a team around me.	Strengthened female's network
Participant 12	Strong support system	...having a strong staff. Because if you don't it ...it makes the job much more difficult. If you are working with people who are off task, not as strong in the areas for which they were hired, you will not last long.	Strengthened female's network
Participant 13		No answer	
Participant 14	Interpersonal communication	...communication skills, seeking first to understand then I want to be understood. I want to listen to people, so those communication skills are very important.	Abilities to relate with others
Participant 15	Interpersonal communication	I'm not so sure this is necessarily true for females' verses males but my communication skills are what help me to have optimal performance because I have to communicate with so many stakeholders both internal and external.	Abilities to relate with others
Participant 16	Interpersonal communication	...maybe even number one is my ability to engage people on my staff, my very close staff, senior staff all the way across the division five hundred plus people and the community to engage them in seeing a future for our kids...	Abilities to relate with others

(continued)

Table 9 (continued)

*Interview Question #8: What Factors Affect your Optimal Performance as a Female Superintendent?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 17	Positive outlook	...but I would imagine that it would affect any human being...is when your ideas are not respected or if you're seen as not competent. Those are big things for me, because before I put anything out there I try to think through it carefully and believe anything I say or do is going to be for the good of the students...number one and for the educational system as a whole and so not being seen as competent would affect me.	Positive life and career dispositions
Participant 18	Relationship with community	The relationship you develop with the board and then the relationship with the individual board members; then individuals on the board that you have to do more with to reveal to them the person that you are...	Abilities to relate with others
Participant 19	Strong support system	If I had more staff to support me in doing what I am trying to do...but we have cut so much from our budget and everybody is trying to do.	Strengthened female's network

Question #9 asked about factors concerning the superintendent's succession. Table 14 shows that limited female opportunities, administrative issues that hinder their performance, inability to manage work-related behaviors of subordinates, career stress, and unmet expectations of educational stakeholders influences their decision to resign and or retire from their post. These codes can be summarized in the following descriptions: administrative issues that discourage leaders ( $n=6$ ), of sacrifices vis-à-vis career stress ( $n=4$ ), unmet expectations of parents and school personnel ( $n=2$ ), structure that limits opportunities for female ( $n=2$ ), uncontrollable work behaviors of school personnel ( $n=1$ ), and worth priorities are set for the family ( $n=1$ ). Three participants did not indicate their responses concerning this question.

Participant 6 states, "It is the think stress; not having time for yourself" (TP8, L150). Participant 16 identified the community elected officials as a factor stating, "People put people into office or they don't really pay attention to who ends up on the Board of Supervisors and all of a sudden your community is in turmoil and your scratching your head and thinking wait a minute I didn't mean for that to happen" (P16, TP12, L226-231). Participant 11, 12, and 13 failed to enumerate the problems associated in fulfilling their function.

Table 10

*Interview Question #9: What Factors Constitute Problems to you in your Current Position and what Factors may Influence Female Superintendent's Job Turnover?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 1	Male-dominated structure	I do think the School Board is a big factor. Example, when I became the Superintendent I had five males as board members.	Structure that limits opportunities for female
Participant 2	Budget, politics	...it's budget related but it's also political...	Administrative issues that discourage leaders
Participant 3	Behaviors of staff	I think because we work with people, you want to believe that all of your staff members that you hired to come in and be professionals or paraprofessionals behave themselves come in and do their jobs... But, that doesn't always happen.	Uncontrollable work behaviors of school personnel
Participant 4	Salary, proximity, familial responsibilities	...relocation piece is big for me, being away from home...it keeps me on the road back and forth for family matters. So, that is a big thing for me. The financial piece is huge, too. I am probably the lowest paid if not the second lowest paid superintendent in our region.	Worth of sacrifices vis-à-vis career stress
Participant 5	Administrative issues	At least in my position, we are a very high performance school division, we have high expectations but with the economy times have changed. In order for use to do what we have to do, we have to change some things.	Administrative issues that discourage leaders
Participant 6	Stress	I think it is the stress; not having any time for yourself. I don't have a life, I am trying to create one and I'm always on, and I'm in a city.	Worth of sacrifices vis-à-vis career stress
Participant 7	Time, building competition	I think that often times something that impacts the job turnover is the time. I think that female leaders often feel like they have to do more than their male counterparts to justify they are qualified for the job. To justify they can do the job...	Worth of sacrifices vis-à-vis career stress
Participant 8	Community expectations	...is community expectations, overcoming community stereotypes, especially when you are in a small rural community like I am in. Those stereotypes still exists and to overcome those. I think knowing that going into it is a critical factor in overcoming it.	Unmet expectations of parents and school personnel
Participant 9	Male-dominated structure, expectations	One of the things that may affect the turnover piece the board having somewhat different expectations from what they would have of a male.	Structure that limits opportunities for female

(continued)

Table 10 (continued)

*Interview Question #9: What Factors Constitute Problems to you in your Current Position and what Factors may Influence Female Superintendent's Job Turnover?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 10	Keeping personal and professional balance	Family is certainly something that influences many female and influences me. Keeping the balance and the need to be an active part of my family and carry out the responsibilities. Once I saw that become out of balance it would cause me to take a look at whether I am in the right position.	Worth of sacrifices vis-à-vis career stress
Participant 11	No answer		No answer
Participant 12	No answer		No answer
Participant 13	No answer		No answer
Participant 14	Prioritization of family	My children are young adults now, but I use to say we lived in a glass house. Therefore, whatever we did was perceived by the public as something positive or negative. I still love where I live and where we made our home; I love my lifestyle. I didn't feel like I had to pretend I was something I wasn't...	Priorities are set for the family
Participant 15	Administrative issues	Obviously, I'm struggling with budget here tremendously continuing cuts are a challenge I don't think it matters who is here, showing my competence earlier to away the fact that it doesn't matter if it's a male or female in the job. Sometimes, we have crisis that arise and I have to make sure I handle those well so they don't become big problems. I think part of that is especially true if there is not a supportive environment for females...	Administrative issues that discourage leaders
Participant 16	Community expectations	I would say up until the most recent elections in this county, community disengagement is a huge factor and it is interesting because I have talked about this with my husband. When a community is not engaged...it's not even apathy, it's more of a trust issue.	Unmet expectations of parents and school personnel
Participant 17	Unsupportive leadership	...but when a board does not support you, or when you and the board come to such differing opinions that you really can't reach a compromise...	Administrative issues that discourage leaders
Participant 18	Politics	I think I have discussed several of the things that could cause potential problems...I think what really pushes turnover is when we are not able to bring about those results, because of those challenges and stumbling blocks in places; we are not able to get beyond, because of levels of authorities...beyond us that you can't move.	

(continued)

Table 10 (continued)

*Interview Question #9: What Factors Constitute Problems to you in your Current Position and what Factors may Influence Female Superintendent's Job Turnover?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Response	Descriptions
Participant 19	Support of boards	I have a great board, but I could see where, just having gone through an election boy is it different working for five people than working for one. I have five people on my board. I think that could be a problem. And I could see why people would leave their positions. I think that would lead to turnover, if you get certain board members who don't agree or they didn't hire you and they get on the board and they have their own agenda.	Administrative issues that discourage leaders

Interview Question #10 asked the factors considered as liabilities and assets as female superintendents. All 19 participants enumerated their liabilities and assets concerning their leadership. The assets emerging from the transcripts include the innate characteristics of females that are effective in leading the school system ( $n=10$ ) and their coping abilities ( $n=8$ ). Participant 18 (P18) cited one of her characteristic as:

I think my communication skills are my greatest asset. My ability to get people to collaborate together and to bring about consensus; my philosophy of teamwork and really drawing on the strengths of the people in the organization and focusing on systems; driving the pedagogue as the prime focus about bringing success for education would be my asset (P18, TP16, L311-317).

The liabilities the participants considered include the perceived limitations of females in leadership and physical characteristics such as age, height, and race. Concerning gender limitations, Participant 9 (P9) shared that she considered motherhood as a liability in the leadership position. She said:

Sometimes a liability is that fact that I am a mother and I want to be a mother to my kids. I feel like that is a special personal privilege that has been given to me and the fact that I want to be there for basketball games, cheerleading, or just to go to after school tutoring with them. I think that because I am drawn to do that as a mother, I sometimes feel like that is a liability. (P9, TP9, L166-172)

However, in the case of Participant 2 (P2), she considered her body structure as a liability as well as an asset. She shared:

Again, I'm going to go back to the statue thing. I'm a small woman and that has been a liability for me, because I don't have this commanding presence. I don't have large voice. I'm small in all aspects. That has been a liability. But I can also say it has been an asset to me. Because it allows me sometimes to have those kinds of conversations with people particularly when I am dealing with an intense situation. (P2, TP13, L240-247)

Table 11

*Interview Question #10: What Factors do you Consider as Liabilities and/or Assets to you as a Female Superintendent?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 1	Problem solvers, hard working, sensitive	I think females are problem solvers. I think we get in there and try to do it whereas sometimes I think as a male, I don't want to generalize because that is what it is, but sometimes I think a male will let someone else take care of the problem.	Innate female's characteristics
Participant 2	Physical characteristics	I'm a small woman and that has been a liability for me, because I don't have this commanding presence. I don't have this large voice. I'm small in all aspects. That has been a liability. But I can also say it has been an asset...	Perceived weaknesses associated to physical characteristics
Participant 3	Community expectations of female	Liability can lie in the belief of people, which is not anything you can change, the only way you can change that is by getting in there and doing the job and showing them that you as a female can do it.	Nurturing qualities of female
Participant 4	Ability to lead	( But one of the assets to me is if you're a real leader, you're going to lead...	Innate leadership qualities
Participant 5	Knowledge, skills, characteristics	I would say your assets are your background and the knowledge that you have, so people do respect you as the lead decision maker. I don't know if liability is the right word but there are gentlemen who do not want to be led by a female.	Coping with the abilities of males
Participant 6	Age	Sometimes I feel like my age is, I just turned sixty. I am having a hard time with it and I'm having a hard time with the fact that people might think I'm old.	Perceived weaknesses associated to physical characteristics
Participant 7	Perception against female, willingness to discuss	Not because I think it is a real liability, I think it's just because of expectations of people... I think as the superintendency you have to interact with a lot of community leaders, who often times tend to be male.	Coping with the abilities of males

(continued)

Table 11 (continued)

*Interview Question #10: What Factors do you Consider as Liabilities and/or Assets to you as a Female Superintendent?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 8	Willingness to change	But the life of a superintendent is not great male or female and the school board is a huge factor ...during election you see turnover.	Coping with the abilities of males
Participant 9	Familial roles, sensitive to other needs	I am a mother and I want to be a mother to my kids. I feel like that is a special personal privilege that has been given to me and the fact that I want to be there for basketball games, cheerleading or just to go after school tutoring with them.	Innate female's characteristics
Participant 10	No answer		No answer
Participant 11	Build competency, sensitive to other needs	Well, I go back to people skills again. I think the females I am familiar with are really great at working with all kinds of different people and having more of a collaborative approach rather than a top down approach.	Nurturing qualities of female
Participant 12	Living condition, staffing	Focus on instruction and understand that this is what it's all about. This doesn't mean that I don't see all the other things, the extracurricular activities and so forth as not being important...	Coping with the abilities of males
Participant 13	Relationship	Emphasis on relationships and maintaining relationships...for some who don't have that kind of threshold...who don't recognize that threshold or have a tolerance for that can be a frustrating situation and they just want it done.	Innate female's characteristics
Participant 14	Communicator	What I think is an asset is that females tend to look at things from a different perspective than our male counterparts... I think you have to be very selective of sharing information.	Innate female's characteristics
Participant 15	Communicator, sensitive, mentor	I think if you do it right and I think that sometimes we can be better communicators and depending on how we do it and handle things sometimes we can be seen as we are taking care of everything.	Innate female's characteristics
Participant 16	Perceived weakness of female, familial role, support	Maybe a liability of being a female superintendent is there is this perception of or this tendency and again it is more from a certain age group to protect me. You know and not within my own staff, not my senior staff not my faculty but from community leaders.	Perceived weaknesses associated to physical characteristics

(continued)



Table 11 (continued)

*Interview Question #10: What Factors do you Consider as Liabilities and/or Assets to you as a Female Superintendent?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 17	Traits of female	I think the assets again... I am not one who thinks that only females have certain traits and only males do but, generally I think an asset for women is that maybe we are better at listening and more flexible in our thinking and incorporating different ideas...	Innate female's characteristics
Participant 18	Communicator, interpersonal communication, teamwork, dedication	I think my communication skills are my greatest asset. My ability to get people to collaborate together and to bring about consensus; my philosophy of teamwork and really drawing on the strength of the people in the organization and focusing on systems, and driving the pedagogue as the prime focus about bring success for education ...would be my asset	Innate female's characteristics
Participant 19	Relationship, people management	I'm the superintendent...I have five hundred employees and I serve on a board with bunch of older gentlemen and I was made to be the secretary.	Nurturing qualities of female

Interview question #11 asked the changes that could be implemented in the United States to accommodate female superintendents. All 19 participants offered their recommendations concerning the plight of female towards the superintendency. Table 12 presents the perceived actions that the federal, state, and local governing bodies could take to ensure the significant increase of females in leadership positions. These are summarized by the following descriptions: support and mentor female leaders ( $n=13$ ), establishment of female's credibility and career path ( $n=6$ ). Participant 7 (P7) shared that at the top of the list females would need to support and mentor co-female colleagues who have the potentials to lead. She proclaimed:

A major factor I think is that female teachers need to be willing to accept leadership from other females. Which may sound kind of odd but, in just observing organizational dynamics I have seen female staff members be much harder or less accepting of female leaders than they are of men who may be making that same exact decision. (P7, TP11, L209-215).

Emerging codes include enactment of policies and implementation of programs that support female to leadership positions. On the part of females who have the potential to become school

leaders, female should continue to build and establish their credibility to lead by pursuing graduate studies.

Table 12

*Interview Question #11: With Most Teachers in the United States Being Female, what Needs to be Changed, in your Opinion, to have Female Serving as Superintendents in at Least 50% of the School Districts in this Country?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 1	Salary, support for female,	I think the salary for teachers first, because that is what happens. They come in and they are a low salary. And when you think of some of the males, there are not as many males teaching but for some reason most of them going into the superintendency.	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 2	Willing to mentor, support, offer opportunities for female	I think that women have to be more willing to serve as mentors for other women and to do that aggressively. To really look in your own division and look at a succession plan...	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 3	Mentor others, support and finance education for females, encouragement, coaching	One of the things is that we need to nurture one another. I know when I was a principal I would, whether I had to find the money myself,...each year try and mentor two teachers, who were interested in moving into leadership positions...	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 4	Offer opportunities, females in administrative position, capacity building	I think we need to get more women interested. I have seen more women in administration you know, first, and then secondary. I have seen people jump from elementary and middle to the Central office. I don't know if secondary administration is there a tie between principalship and administration...	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 5	Capacity building	The normal path to the superintendency that means you are a site leader in some capacity ...some people go from Central Office but a vast majority goes through principalship. In the Midwest principalships are often correlated to coaching...and eventually the superintendency.	Establishment of female's credibility
Participant 6	Organize female activities, support, opportunities for female	We are going to have to have leadership for instance up in VASS that is not male dominated. Both of the top leaders in the VASS organization are men. While they are very supportive I still feel like sometimes my head is being patted sometimes. I think we need to be more deliberate in for females and what they are doing.	Support and mentor female leaders

(continued)

Table 12 (continued)

*Interview Question #11: With Most Teachers in the United States Being Female, what Needs to be Changed, in your Opinion, to have Female Serving as Superintendents in at Least 50% of the School Districts in this Country?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 7	Willingness of female for leadership position, encourage, motivate	A major factor I think is that female teachers need to be willing to accept leadership from other females. Which may sound kind of odd but, in just observing organizational dynamics...	Establishment of female's career path
Participant 8	Quality support, mentor, courage, encouragement, establish network	I go back to it's not about gender it's about quality, but if the issue is, which I think it is there are many women who are very capable but perhaps hesitant. They do not see themselves in that role.	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 9	Change in culture, opportunity for female, build competency, support	I think there needs to be a culture cultivated for leadership for females. I know for myself there were folks and I wish I could say there were females, who influenced me to become a school leader but there were folks who took a special interest in making sure that I had the experience in order to be ready to step into this position.	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 10	Opportunity for female	...take down the barriers that prevent the females from being in this profession, clear out those barriers and then females can make that choice. Not set an artificial percentage that we are trying to reach or a threshold...	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 11	Encourage, pursue graduate studies, build competency, support, mentor	...encourage and to help people grow into the positions. I'm always saying to some of our Lead Teachers, why not go and get a doctorate, I know of a doctorate program you can get into.	Establishment of female's credibility
Participant 12	Support, tap potentials	Putting more emphasis on it, of course, you're not going to get legislation on it; but, more studies and more studies being made known to parents and citizens that female are actually as effective or more effective in many instances.	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 13	Encourage, build competency	I do think that we who are females who are in the role have to help others understand what it is to be a superintendent. Because outside looking in you think you know...you only see the pieces your supervisor allows or wants you to see. We have to help people to understand the reality.	Establishment of female's credibility

(continued)

Table 12 (continued)

*Interview Question #11: With Most Teachers in the United States Being Female, what Needs to be Changed, in your Opinion, to have Female Serving as Superintendents in at Least 50% of the School Districts in this Country?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 14	Willingness of female for leadership position, encourage, motivate	I was keeping up with it when I became a superintendent because we only had six African American females. It's a personal issue for teachers for the female who decides she wants to become a superintendent they will need to know there are personal sacrifices that will have to be made.	Establishment of female's career path
Participant 15	Mentor others, support and finance education for female, encourage, coaching	We just have to mentor and bring up more females; I think females who are superintendents need to be successful. I think as school boards and communities look around the state or look around the country ...they will see women doing a good job at leading...	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 16	Support, tap potential mentor, build competency	I certainly think more than just having a mentor but having people sponsor you. When I talk about that there is a difference. Mentors are wonderful and having colleagues...being in the network is all wonderful but when you have someone who really latches on to you and becomes a foundational piece. I look for this in my female employees...actually in all my employees and encourage them.	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 17	Encourage, mentor, support for family, financial support	More encouragement to move into leadership positions because I do think there are some people who don't realize their potential. I know from my own experience I would not have... I wanted to be a first grade teacher and then I wanted to be a reading teacher and that is what I would have been happily ever after...if someone had not come to say you have the potential to be a leader.	Support and mentor female leaders
Participant 18	Pursue advanced degree, build competency, mentor, coach, establish network	...to pursue the degree, to pursue the licensure, to prepare themselves and to expose themselves to as many experiences to widen their understanding of their trade.	Establishment of female's credibility
Participant 19	Support familial roles, offer incentives	I think a lot of that has to do with family obligations, family obligations or not wanting to leave the classroom. A lot of our best teachers would never even dream of becoming an administrator...	Support and mentor female leaders

Interview question #12 asked about the level of influence of the participants to and from the school board. The participants said that while they struggled in dealing with the male-

dominated local school board, they earned the trust and confidence of these males. Participant 4 shares, “Sometimes I do have complete influence over them and we can move forward then there are times that doesn’t work” (TP21, L405-407). Participant 8 alludes to the political climate and the potential changes, “You have to qualify that with it changes every time you have an election” (TP15, L283-284). Participant 7 (P7) summarizes the mutual influence:

I feel I have a considerable level of influence on my school board. Part of that is I have worked very hard to build their trust and to improve communications between the office of the superintendent and as well the board as a whole. And I think that part of building that trust is making myself available to them to be influenced by them in the sense that I listen to them. And when I say they have a considerable sense of influence on me, I am not from this community so it is important that I listen to my board members to understand community dynamics (P7, TP12-13, L231-245).

Emerging codes described that possession of leadership qualities, assertiveness, desire to implement educational goals, and the initiatives to involve the school board were essential in earning the trust and confidence of the school board. These codes are summarized in the following descriptions: possessions of leadership qualities ( $n=13$ ), struggles with male-dominated structure ( $n=2$ ), emphasizes transformational leadership ( $n=1$ ), establishment of positive relationship with the educational stakeholders ( $n=1$ ), initiate participatory decision-making process ( $n=1$ ) desire to implement educational goals ( $n=1$ ). Table 13 presents the results.

Table 13

*Interview Question #12: Describe the Level of Influence you have on your School Board and the Level of Influence your School Board has on you?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 1	Ability to influence, assertive	I talk to them privately and I know several of them. I can swing opinions and I think that is what our job is...	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 2	Ability to influence, encourage to work at school level, encourage visibility	They did not get along and so I worked very hard in helping them to really come together around school issues...help them work better together as a team. And how to disagree with one another without being ugly to one another.	Emphasizes transformational leadership

(continued)

Table 13 (continued)

*Interview Question #12: Describe the Level of Influence you have on your School Board and the Level of Influence your School Board has on you?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 3	Assertive, determine the boundaries	Because I want them to understand that I know who's the boss. They are my bosses and they influence me...	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 4	Offer technical proposal, assertive	They will listen and understand but I will have to give them a dissertation to get them to understand what direction we are going...	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 5	Political biases	...three out of four changed and I have two others that have only been on there for about a year. So, I have a really new school board right now.	Struggles with male-dominated structure
Participant 6	Establish communication	I'm very communicative with them. Right now I would say that my influence is at the 75 – 85% range...	Establishment of positive relationship with the educational stakeholders
Participant 7	Visibility in the community, establish trust, knows the community dynamics	I have worked very hard to build their trust and to improve communications between the office of the superintendent and as well as the board as a whole. I communicate with them frequently. I am very active in the school division. I am visible in the community.	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 8	Visibility in the community, establish trust, knows the community dynamics, communicator, honest, interpersonal	You have to build that trust and build that relationship, it takes an unbelievable amount of time as you know. It takes a lot of individual conversations it takes a lot of a hard line approach but also takes some nurturing to help them grow to work with each other as well as with you. I think it is built on a foundation of trust, which built on a foundation of honesty.	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 9	Commitment	Because if we go back to the commitment of service, many times I find myself trying to hedge between making sure their interest are served because at the end of the day I want to make sure the students in the division are served, as well.	Desire to implement educational goals
Participant 10	Communicate, collate ideas	I am responsible for making sure they are cohesive ...that they operate as a cohesive body ...to spread all of my skills in making sure that I communicate with all of them their value as a body.	Initiate participatory decision-making process
Participant 11	Political support	...there is a businessman on it and a parent on it. They have great respect for my experience as a superintendent coming in as an experienced superintendent, which is one of the reasons, they hired me.	Struggles with male-dominated structure

(continued)

Table 13 (continued)

*Interview Question #12: Describe the Level of Influence you have on your School Board and the Level of Influence your School Board has on you?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 12	Earn majority of support, listen	As I noted you get one or two who are not necessarily supportive but over all I have a very supportive board. They listen and feel comfortable coming to me to ask questions, to get clarification on issues and they support me if they think a board member is being needlessly critical.	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 13	Ability to influence, acknowledge cultural values, management knowledge, communication	I try to influence the school board toward remembering or acknowledging the values of the community as a whole. We have seven board members who are appointed my magisterial district and they certainly represent their constituency and they are appointed not elected. But they as a board represent the entire county. I try to help influence their thinking that way, not to come to any one decision but to ensure they have considered the perspective of all.	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 14	Good working relationships, community support, communicate	I have a good working relationship with my board.	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 15	Establish trust, communicate	I have developed a high level of trust with them. Interestingly enough I think in six years I have had fifteen school board members because of term limitations...	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 16	Communicate, open to criticism, listen, effective governance	I want my board to raise really good questions. I want them to scrutinize in a healthy way because as long as their focus is governance and what we need to do to establish a better than good system...then I am okay with those questions.	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 17	Establish trust, interaction, communication, understand needs	I have led them to be more trusting of school and the superintendent and ...those in administrative positions; where as, their previous experiences for whatever reasons ...they were skeptical what they were told.	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 18	Trust, knowledge, communication, positive outlook	I believe my board trust my leadership and my knowledge. I think they have a high regard and respect for my knowledge for instruction and my communication skills; they really embrace those and trust me to do the job.	Possessions of leadership qualities
Participant 19	Communicate, interact, establish relationships	I communicate with them. In how I relate to them and how I answer their questions, interact with them, all of those kinds of things. I had to create a relationship with each of them so they felt comfortable coming to me with questions or issues or what have you.	Possessions of leadership qualities

Interview question #13 asked about the level of influence of the participants to that of the teachers, the participants believed that communication with teachers built positive relationships. The participants claimed that the level of influence they established with teachers could be associated to the established trust and respect to the teachers' leadership in the classroom. The participants described this influence by the following descriptions: communication builds positive relationship ( $n=11$ ), building trust and positive morale with the stakeholders ( $n=4$ ), and provision of autonomy ( $n=3$ ).

Participant 7 states, "I have a teacher committee...it's just me and the teacher representatives from each building, so I think that gives them a channel to provide me with information" (TP13, L259-264). Participant 10 (P10) admitted to the fact that as a female she interacts differently than a male might. She states, "...as a female I have to be much more diplomatic about how I approach. I don't want to come across as an angry mad female and definitely as an angry black mad female" (P10, TP11-12, L214-216).

Table 14

*Interview Question #13: Describe the Level of Influence you have on Teachers and the Level of Influence Teachers have on you?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 1	Longevity, open door policy, transparency, listen, communicate, knowledge, experience	I have an open door policy they can come anytime they want. Sometimes if they bring rational explanations...we change things. I have an advisory board of teachers, well students too and I listen to what the teachers...well the employees. I have someone from every job on that board. I try to listen to what they say and like I said if it is reasonable, we change it.	Communication builds positive relationships
Participant 2	Open communication, respect, organize committee,	I have a very open style of communication. They know they can come in and talk to me. I do ask that they respect their principals and have that level of conversation before they escalate anything up to me...	Building trust and positive moral with the stakeholders

(continued)



Table 14 (continued)

*Interview Question #13: Describe the Level of Influence you have on Teachers and the Level of Influence Teachers have on you?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 3	Communication, collate ideas, understand school dynamic	I sent out a little survey monkey survey before I got here. I asked them to give me something you are really proud of in our school division? Tell me something that needs work and do you have any comments or something you would like to talk to me about? It was completely anonymous unless they wanted me to know who they were. So, they knew it was safe and they knew it was going to a designated website. Nobody could see what they were writing if they wanted to be anonymous or they could share their names...I would give them a call.	Communication builds positive relationships
Participant 4	Communication, support, encourage, reward, acknowledge performance	Therefore, you work with them you can be in line with my expectations to get things done so they can be successful. But I want my teachers to know that I support them in what they do and I know they have tough jobs, especially when you're in school improvement it's even tougher. But, I want them to know my door is open and you can come to me as long as you go to your principal first. You can come to me, I am open...so my influence is really not that great and when you say influence from the top just the expectations to get things done and go on from there.	Communication builds positive relationships
Participant 5	Support teacher leadership, provide administrative support	Even though I am not in schools I go to activities and I am somewhere every night of the week, I find it much more difficult to have the deep kind of personal connections with teachers in comparison as to when I was a principal. I have that with all my Central Office Leaderships, which I would say my Leadership Team knows me better on a personal level than my teachers do.	Provision of autonomy
Participant 6	Understand school dynamics, support effective practices	When I started working here it was more like an entitlement; I had teachers tell me that teachers had done bad things and never been fired. I have the good teachers, who really believe in what we are doing and then there are the other 25% possible that need to go or do the job.	Provision of autonomy
Participant 7	Establish relationships, support teachers' committee, transparent, communicate	I have a teacher committee that I meet with four times a year that representation from all of my schools. I don't set an agenda for that, it is wide open to whatever they want to say to me. It's just me and the teacher representatives from each building, so I think that to give them a channel to provide me with information. I think it has really enhanced the relationship between the office of the superintendent and the teams ranked here in the school division.	Communication builds positive relationship

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

*Interview Question #13: Describe the Level of Influence you have on Teachers and the Level of Influence Teachers have on you?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 8	Build trust, support effective practices, encourage performance, coach	I think as a superintendent you understand what those teachers are going through every day in the classroom. However, you have to balance it with the reality of what you believe. The idea of influencing teachers, it takes time. When you go into a new division you have to build trust really fast and that is not always easy. But when teachers come back and students are not being successful or your going through, what we call teaching them a new process where we meet on a regular basis and go over benchmark tests.	Building trust and positive moral with the stakeholders
Participant 9	Provide autonomy in classroom, understand school dynamics	I would love for them to keep autonomy in the classroom making the curriculum and instruction their own.	Provision of autonomy
Participant 10	Mediate relationship, strong relationships, inspire	Is a fair balancing act and to be the board stands right in the middle of that relationship. Even though the board is not present daily in my interaction with the teachers, the board depending on which stands they take can greatly influence my ability to connect to develop a strong relationship with my teachers.	Communication builds positive relationships
Participant 11	Communication, understand school dynamic, build relationship	So, we are having some pretty deep discussions and they are very excited to have a superintendent with an elementary reading background because they have never had that before. So seeing those discussions going I think I'm having an influence on them, looking at their programs very critically and seeing what, do we need to do to get the kids on reading level.	Communication builds positive relationships
Participant 12	Listen, open communication, supportive to changes	...if there are changes that they suggest and need to be made and I feel they are the right changes then we are going to make the changes.	
Participant 13	Longevity, open door policy, transparency, listen, communicate, knowledge, experience	I set the direction. I articulate that I am the face and the attitude of the district. I take that very seriously; at the same time, I have to think about things from their perspective. What are they thinking, what are they experiencing...	Communication builds positive relationships
Participant 14	Open communication, respect, organize committee,	But I had meetings with them; I had informal chat sessions with them. I put myself in their place. I said I know what it's like to be fresh out of college with loans and have to repay them. I know what it's like to have my first child go off to college and having to pay tuition...	Communication builds positive relationships

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

*Interview Question #13: Describe the Level of Influence you have on Teachers and the Level of Influence Teachers have on you?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 15	Communication, collate ideas, understand school dynamic	I think because my teachers trust me ...I do think that I have other people in the organization who are working more directly with them that is probably where you see a greater influence from me. We like this person; we trust she is leading that person so we will follow that person.	Communication builds positive relationship
Participant 16	Communication, support, encourage, reward, acknowledge performance	I expect excellent work from them. And excellent work means they are able to be brutally honest with each other and share their resources and share their toys and ask good questions. It's interesting you ask that today because in thirty minutes I'm going to see my advisory council and they are wonderful...	Communication builds positive relationship
Participant 17	Support teacher leadership, provide administrative support	I have the highest regard for our teachers. I have remained, I hope a teacher at heart. I am in the schools and in the classrooms every week, it feeds my soul and I know the bottom line is if we are going to make learning happen for our children here it happens in each classroom every day.	Building trust and positive moral with the stakeholders
Participant 18	Understand school dynamics, support effective practices	I get actively involved in the schools and with the teachers and their families even, just knowing a little bit about them, not going too far across that line, you know, but to be able to hold a conversation with them as a professional as well as a light personal level of how are your kids and so forth.	Building trust and positive moral with the stakeholders
Participant 19	Establish relationships, support teachers' committee, transparent, communicate	It is about building relationships. And I think as I have gone through the year; now I have also been in this school division. So I had relationships and I had influence on some of them, in this current position I am always working to build the trust so I have greater influence on them.	Communication builds positive relationships

Interview Question #14 asked the description concerning the level of influence the participants have on administrators and the level of influence administrators have on these participants. All 19 participants shared the descriptions of level of influence the participants have established with their administrators. A review of these descriptions emerged the factors that help the participants in establishing a good relationship with their respective administrator. Majority of the participants identified the concept of understanding and positive working relationships with the administrators, setting leadership boundaries, autonomy of leadership practices, and respect are essential in the administrators-superintendents' relationship. These

were summarized in the following descriptions: promote understanding and positive relationship ( $n=14$ ), exercise operational guidance ( $n=3$ ), and set boundaries, autonomy, and respect for individual leadership practices ( $n=2$ ).

Participant 2 (P2) shares her insight on the influence she has on her administrators:

I have seen a difference in a way that people approach their work. Being respectful to parents, students, others um, but also having a clear direction for your school. Being in the classrooms. Providing professional feedback, all the time. I think principals were spending a lot of time dealing with things that...you know a parent walks in and they immediately start dealing with that instead of the important business of being in a classroom and providing feedback to that teacher. And so I think I have had an influence on them about determining what is the important things that need to be done in a day. ... Now we are not exactly where we need to be but we are better than we were (P2, TP19, L359-375).

Participant 9 (P9) gives an account of her relationship with her administrators:

I would think the level of influence on administrators is very high. I look at them as the official translators of any initiative I put forward, any of the board policies that they are the translators. I even call them my little clones because I am hoping they are repeating exactly what I am saying to my board and everyone else, that they are bringing back the gospel to their campus. So, I would think or hope at least there are about 90% of administrators that come from me, again because I directly connect with them. The level of influence they have on me, going back it is probably the same as teachers. I do hear what they say and take it into account for all decisions that are made. I also think of them as if they are to carry the torch back to their campus they also generate feedback. Somewhere in 10-20% if I were to quantify their influence on me (P9, TP13, L238-252).

Table 15

*Interview Question #14: Describe the Level of Influence you have on Administrators and the Level of Influence Administrators have on you?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 1	Respect, support, communicate, listen	I think the administrators respect me or at least I hope they do. They come to me; they can talk with me about private things. They are not afraid to come...because they know I have been around for so long and I have hired so many of these people. They are my people. I try to respect what they are doing and support them when I can support them...I do listen and they have an equal amount of influence on me.	Set boundaries, autonomy, and respect individual's leadership practices
Participant 2	Provide direction, professional feedback	Providing professional feedback, all the time. I think principals were spending a lot of time dealing with the things that....you know a parent walks in and they immediately start dealing with that instead of the important business of being in a classroom and providing feedback to that teacher.	Exercise operational guidance
Participant 3	Establish communication, feedback system,	Teachers and principals come to that table to be able to have input and feedback. The same thing with administrators once a month we have a Principals' Meeting and then every other Monday, we start off the week with a staff meeting.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 4	Respect, communication, team work, positive relationships, trust, build capacity	I try to nurture them as much as I can. And you know my door is open 24/7 to them. I want them to ask tough questions, want them to come to me even when they mess up. It's okay you know I want them to know we are a team...so my influence is teaming with them.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 5	Set expectations, set accountability, communicate, build relationships	I think it is about setting expectations. I have very clear and high expectations. My whole admin team knows if I ask for something, I am going to follow up. So I would say my influence on them, at least for this team here has been more of accountability factor.	Set boundaries, autonomy, and respect individual's leadership practices
Participant 6	Listen, communicate, transparency, participate in decision	I try to listen to everything they have to say. I have an open door policy, but they also know we have to turn the division around. Five of my eight schools are in trouble. So, a lot of what we talk about to do is measuring what we do, that we are doing it and how we are doing it.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 7	Set expectations, set accountability, communicate, build relationships	I have some very high expectations of myself and I set those also for my administrators. I think that I am pretty demanding in that this is a job that is too important to do half way. So my administrators know that pretty clearly, but they also know I've got their back and we stay in pretty constant communication so they are not blindsided and neither am I.	Promote understanding and positive relationships

(continued)

Table 15 (continued)

*Interview Question #14: Describe the Level of Influence you have on Administrators and the Level of Influence Administrators have on you?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 8	Work with people, embraced positivity, communicate	When I came in here and built a leadership team,...we pretty much started from ground zero. I don't want yes people. I want people who will challenge what I am saying and what I am thinking. We have a very strong team mentality.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 9	Initiate policies, build competency, listen, accountability	I look at them as the official translators of any initiative I put forward, any of the board policies that they are the translators. I even call them my little clones because I am hoping they are repeating exactly what I am saying to my board and everyone else, that they are bring back the gospel to their campus.	Exercise operational guidance
Participant 10	Build trust, sensitive to needs	I'm not sure they wanted it in their heart but they articulated that they wanted me. Over the years I do think they now want it in their heart. They don't want to be led by the board. They want someone to understand their family needs, emotional needs all of those needs and their professional needs.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 11	Communicate	They had monthly meetings but they did not include everyone, like the gifted teacher the technology person. It was strictly the three principals and I want everyone around this table.	Exercise operational guidance
Participant 12	Encourage participation, communication, trust	I give them the opportunity to convince me that it's the right thing to do. They have the freedom of course to run their schools; they know they can do that. I trust them to do what's right and if I see them going in the wrong direction, I let them know that.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 13	Appreciate performance, set direction, build relationships	I tend to be more direct with my administrators in terms of articulating specifics of what I need to have happen or concerns that I have. I am more direct with administrators than I am with teachers because my belief is that at the administrative level your spectrum is broader and you can appreciate better a bigger picture than you can as a teacher.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 14	Communicate, visibility, support	I meet with my administrators, I don't micro manage them, but I do know what they are doing. I will allow them to make decisions and I will support them 100% however, I always say use common sense. There is nothing common about common sense. I don't want to be surprised in any open school board meetings. I don't want there to be something going on and you have not given me a heads up.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 15	Communicate, participate in decision	...sometimes there are issues that I will put out there and talk it through with them. I will see their point of view and think well they have a better way to do this and that is the way we need to do it.	Promote understanding and positive relationships

(continued)

Table 15 (continued)

*Interview Question #14: Describe the Level of Influence you have on Administrators and the Level of Influence Administrators have on you?*

Participant #	Codes	Sample Responses	Descriptions
Participant 16	Build competency, working relationships, listen, communicate	I'm meaning I see changes I see people evolving and growing and deepening their skills. And they have taught me a lot; I am definitely a different superintendent than the first day I came here. I have a better grasp of what has happened, the history of the system and that is from listening to staff and listening to administrators. And really combing through with them the years of, sort of the steps to get us where we are. I would say the administrators would say a similar thing; we have a very good working relationship. I am very open and candid with them; we have a great sense of humor with everyone that happens everywhere, with my administrators and even my teaching staff. But I listen to them, both their personal and professional aspirations.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 17	Respect, support, communicate, listen, build relationships,	I have a great respect for all of them as I do of the teachers. I try to show them that I support them through listening to them, giving them help or support when they ask for it. Building trust among all of us, I didn't mention that with the teachers and school board, but I once you build up that trust then you do have those kinds of strong reciprocal relationships. You build trust of course by listening to each other and so I would say with the principals it is the same with the teachers.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 18	Spend more time, working relationships, understand	I probably spend more time with them than I do any other group in the organization. I am set up with a Cabinet with my Central Office crew they are the Superintendent Cabinet and then my principals are the extended cabinet crew. We meet more often, we text and email each other. I have developed a system of communication so that information is flowing freely, it wasn't that way when I got there but I think we have developed a real good working relationship and understanding of my expectations.	Promote understanding and positive relationships
Participant 19	Communication, teamwork	I don't do anything in isolation, so I depend on them and they very much depend on me to work through things ... I think there is definitely mutual influence there. That being said, if there is an administrator who is not feeling your team, that can be very difficult in that they are usually the one sending messages to staff members.	Promote understanding and positive relationships

**Research Question 2.** To what extent did these career anchors influence their career path towards attaining the superintendency?

Three thematic categories helped generate answers to the second research question, to what extent did these career anchors influence their career path towards attaining the

superintendency? The results are highlighted in Tables 16 through 18. The first category of themes includes the factors that influence leaders' to pursue superintendency positions. Four themes were found to be relevant based on the experiences of the participants who have been in the position for at least 20 years. Fifteen of the participants shared that pursuing superintendency positions had not been in their early career plans. Their exposure in the administrative positions as they worked in the school district and central office pushed them to accept leadership positions. Fifteen of the participants confirmed that they earned their positions based on the recommendations of the school board members. Participant 1 (TP3, L52) shared that her appointment had been an overnight decision because none of the applicants were qualified to take the vacant post of her previous superintendent.

As highlighted in Table 16, all participants indicated that while taking leadership positions had not been in their early career plans, they shared that pursuance of higher level position had been a natural career progression that employees who have been in the field for several years could expect. In the experience of Participant 2 (P2), she said:

It just seemed to be a natural progression. As you go and do increasingly different things, more complex things. I had a hunger for more. And it wasn't this burning desire. I never really thought that I would be a superintendent but the doors just opened for me. And I think a lot of it had to do somewhat with the mentors I had along the way (P2, TP3, L42-48).

However, eight of the participants shared that one of the major reasons for their decision to pursue the superintendency was their aspiration for a greater cause to influence their female colleagues to take risks in venturing into leadership roles dominated by males. Participant 3 justified, "...I saw the superintendent as a greater cause. I could affect more people; I enjoy working as a team. I felt I had the knowhow and strategy to take it head on" (TP3, L43-46).

Six of the participants shared that as they progressed to higher positions, they realized that among their life goals was the pursuit of higher career goals. The participants said that as years of leadership experiences increased and their abilities to balance work and family were honed, they were inspired to pursue a position that could provide their life with satisfaction. Participant 17 (P17) shared that:



I believe they do, bottom line that is what you go back to on the days you are questioning why am I doing this. Then it is for me, I'm making a difference for children and trying to optimize their learning here in this one county ... (TP9, L165-169).

Table 16

*Thematic Category 1: Factors that Influence Leaders to Pursue Superintendency*

Themes	Sample Response	No. of participants to offer this experience	Percent (%) of participants to offer this experience
Natural career progression	It just seemed to be a natural progression. As you go and do increasingly different things, more complex things. (P2)	16	84%
Appointment to superintendency position	My Superintendent, her contract all of a sudden ended, in May of the year she was fired. And ... I didn't even apply for it and .. while the Acting Superintendent and then two months later I was appointed...(P1)	15	79%
Greater cause to influence female leadership role	My pursuit of becoming a superintendency was very similar to my pursuit of being a teacher; To make a difference in the lives of students and to also continue along the path of being a role model for minorities specifically young women, young women of color. (P9)	8	42%
Interest to achieve life goals	I came into the profession as a career option as educating young people and being a part of the K-12 system ... I had determined from the beginning that I wanted to be a part of and make a difference in the profession ...in any way that I could by starting off as a teacher and moving on. (P10)	6	32%

After in-depth analysis, the researcher had a better understanding of the factors that influenced the pursuance of superintendency. The second thematic category shed some light on the leadership practices developed in order for participants to perform their executive function. The majority of these participants shared that their career path and achievements in their field earned the school personnel's trust and confidence. Participant 1 shared that they earned the trust and confidence because of their dedication for service despite administrative challenges. Participant 1 said: "They come in and they are a low salary.... And when you think of some of

the males, there are not as many males teaching but for some reason most of them going into Superintendency” (TP11).

The participants shared that other than their credentials, 15 of the participants indicated that listening and supporting the needs of the teachers and principals were essential in building relationships and influence. They shared that when school leaders are supported by superintendents its easier for them to influence the administration and other relevant educational stakeholders. Participant 4 (P4) shared:

...I want my teachers to know that I support them in what they do and know they have tough jobs, especially when you're in school improvement it's even tougher. But, I want them to know my door is open and you can come to me as long as you go to your principal first... (P4, TP22, L426-431).

Fourteen of the participants claimed that they established trust with their subordinates. Participant 15 described it by stating, “I think I have a high level of influence with our school board and I have developed a high level of trust with them...” (TP16, L317-319).

Table 17

*Thematic Category # 2: Leadership Practices of Women in Leadership Position*

Themes	Sample Response	No. of participants to offer this experience	Percent (%) of participants to offer this experience
Teaching career path and achievements of female in their field	They come in and they are a low salary. And when you think of some of the males, there are not as many males teaching but for some reason most of them going into the superintendency. (P1)	16	84%
Listening and supporting teachers	...I want my teachers to know that I support them in what they do and I know they have tough jobs, especially when you're in school improvement it's even tougher. But, I want them to know my door is open and you can come to me as long as you go to your principal first... (P4)	15	79%
Establishment of trust	I think I have a high level of influence with our school board and I have developed a high level of trust with them. (P15)	14	74%
Established credibility	So I have had everyone's job and they know that. And I try to listen to people, so I do think I have the influence, you have to be credible.. (P1)	5	26%
Knowledge and empathy of leaders to community	I have a great level of influence on teachers for the fact that they know I have been here for a long time. They know I have been in their job and they know I will support them. (P1)	3	16%

The third thematic category highlighted in Table 18 addresses the influence of personal career anchors on the kind of leadership female superintendents possess. Two themes were found to be significant for the participants. These include their innate passion coupled with their personality for service work. All participants shared that professional challenges seems part of their responsibilities when taking up the leadership post. When a leader develops personal career anchors, it was easier for her to complete the tasks even with tight schedules and family obligations. She shared:

There are obligations twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and you have to be willing; you have to have family willing to deal with that; superintendents often have to deal with residency requirements so it could mean you have to pick up your family and move. To me that's the greatest barrier...Lifestyle balance (P19, TP3-4, L57-63).

Participant 4 (P4) also claimed that because females have views that are different from their men counterpart, they always strive to overcome challenges. She stated:

I will go after a challenge any day. That has always been my brand, get myself into something and try to figure out how to get out of it, to fix it and to make it better...so I do agree that yes that is a personal anchor. The other one is the dedication piece. I have such a passion about kids and that I believe all of our children can learn (P4, TP7, L131-137).

Table 18

*Thematic Category 3: Influence of Personal Career Anchors on Leadership*

Themes	Sample Response	No. of participants to offer this experience	Percent (%) of participants to offer this experience
Passion and personality for service work (balanced work and career)	There are obligations twenty-four hours a day seven days a week and you have to be willing; you have to have family willing to deal with that; superintendents often have to deal with residency requirements so it could mean you have to pick up your family and move. To me that's the greatest barrier...Lifestyle balance. (P19)	16	84%
Challenges to pursue interest	I will go after a challenge any day. That has always been my brand, get myself into something and try to figure out how to get out of it, to fix it and to make it better. And so I do agree that yes, which is a personal anchor. The other one is the dedication piece. I have such a passion about kids and that I believe all of our children can learn. (P4)	11	58%

The answer to the second research question indicated that career anchors are relevant in the professional decisions of the participants in this study. These participants articulated the factors that influence them on pursuing the higher-level position in the education sector. At the top of the list include the natural career progression, appointment to this position, and their desire to influence leadership role in the academe. From these themes, their career anchors had been essential in the development of their own leadership practices in performing their executive function.

**Research Question 3.** What are the experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions as it relates to their career anchors and personal and professional factors impacting their decision making process?

The following thematic categories solicit the experiences of female superintendents with regards to the third research question and are highlighted in Table 23. Two of the themes were essential for the 19 participants concerning personal barriers to the superintendency. According to participants, in addition to gender biases in the selection of the leadership position, female participants are also reluctant to pursue the leadership career. The participants said that female roles in the family are hindrances in the participants' decisions to acquire leadership positions in the education sector. Participant 1 (P1) shared, "I had children and not that my children couldn't take care of themselves but I just felt that I wanted to be the mother first" (TP4, L64-66).

Participant 3 (P3) shared that in order to penetrate a world dominated by males, female leaders should learn and manage controlling functions. She said, "So I think that there is a mind set in some people that being a strong female means that you are controlling" (P3, TP6, L113-115). The participants feared that they might receive less support from other male leaders and parents because of the perceived notions that females are unable or will have difficulty in coping with the job demands. Table 19 presents the aforementioned results.

Table 19

*Thematic Category 4: Perceived Personal Barriers to Superintendency*

Themes	Sample Response	No. of participants to offer this experience	Percent (%) of participants to offer this experience
Familial roles to perform (husband, children)	I had children and not that my children couldn't take care of themselves but I just felt that I wanted to be the mother first. (P1)	19	100%
Job demands affecting family-work balance (e.g. relocation)	Like I said the relocation piece is big for me; being away from home so it keeps me on the road back and forth for family matters. (P4)	19	100%
Perception of the inability of female to cope with job demands	When my children were ready for secondary is when I made the move to secondary level. Not to follow my children in the school system, but because my personal life and my professional life could more closely mirror on another where I did not have to miss out on ball games and activities of that nature. (P5)	13	68%
Delays in leadership role decision-making process	I think there was a reluctance to put someone in a position that would require so much time and not knowing if this individual would have enough time to stretch between the family and the career. But I also think there was this overall perception that maybe women weren't strong enough to handle the pressures. (P2)	10	53%
Males have strong network and support with males	So, I think that there is a mind set in some people that being a strong female means that you are controlling. (P3).	8	42%

To cope with the required tasks of leaders despite the pressing gender issues, the participants shared that females emulated the abilities of males. They said that they have to keep pace with male leaders in order to earn the respect and support. According to these participants, they were expected to be decisive like males. Participant 1 (P1) explained:

... like the golf, I mean you know female superintendents don't do what the males do and you see that and business takes place twenty-four hours a day I have learned. You know and if you don't do what the males do your going to lose out (P1, TP9, L158-162). In the same thought about performing like males and being a strong female, Participant 3 (P3) shared a disturbing scenario of the price of doing so. She shared:

So, I think that there is a mind set in some people that being a strong female means that you are controlling. You want to be powerful, um, instead of if it were a guy in control or

taking care of business it would be a good thing. So, I think one of the first things we have to overcome is the fact that there are always going to be people who are going to say “she” is so pushy or “she” is so powerful or controlling. It’s really not that at all, it’s that you are doing the same thing a man is doing but you are perceived as, I know we won’t put the B-word into a dissertation but you know I had a parent call me the Head B-I-T-C-H and she had thought she had given me a compliment (P3, TP6-7, L 113-125).

The participants shared that female have innate abilities in problem resolution, and nurturing and leadership qualities. With these abilities, management of school personnel has been easy for them. Participant 6 (P6) supported this as:

Well, I think that females are natural leaders. I think they are natural organizers and they are natural goal setters because for a female to work and have a family, a husband, being a mom and everything we intend to do you have to be very, very organized (P6, TP6, L109-113).

They said that female leaders received more support because they empathize with the experiences and difficulties of teachers.

Table 20

*Thematic Category 5: Coping Strategies to Address Liabilities*

Themes	Sample Response	No. of participants to offer this experience	Percent (%) of participants to offer this experience
Cope with the abilities of males	...like the golf, I mean you know female superintendents don’t do what the males do and you see that and business takes place twenty-four hours a day I have learned. You know and if you don’t do what the males do your going to lose out. (P1)	13	68%
Nurturing qualities of female	Well, I think females are different too. I think females are problem solvers. I think we get in there and try to do it; whereas sometimes I think as a male, I don’t want to generalize because that is what it is, but sometimes I think a male will let someone else take care of the problem. Whereas, the female superintendent will take care of the problem themselves. (P1)	12	63%

(continued)

Table 20 (continued)

*Thematic Category 5: Coping Strategies to Address Liabilities*

Themes	Sample Response	No. of participants to offer this experience	Percent (%) of participants to offer this experience
Natural ability to solve issues	Well, I think that females are natural leaders. I think they are natural organizers and they are natural goal setters because for a female to work and have a family, a husband, being a mom and everything we intend to do you have to be very, very organized. (P6)	7	37%
Believe in personal capacity	Well, first of all your perception of yourself. You have got to have a positive outlook, you have got to have that attitude of "I'm going to seize the day!" (P3)	6	32%
Rely with leadership qualities	I believe my board ... trust my leadership and my knowledge. I think they have a high regard and respect for my knowledge for instruction and my communication skills. (P18)	5	26%

Table 21 presents the results of participants when asked about the specific issues that female superintendents experienced in Virginia. The participants said that stereotyping, frequent comparison to males, dominance of males on school boards, and lack of programs that encourage female leaders are issues requiring interventions and strategic succession plans from the school divisions. Participant 4 (P4) shared that "Criticism is probably the main thing. Can I say ignorance, is that bad? What is another word I can use? I guess people not being aware of what it is that you do"... (TP13, L253-256). Participant 3, on the other hand, shared how society favors male roles over female roles: "I don't know I think some people will hold it against a female more than a man, because a man is strong it's a good thing but when a woman takes care of business it's not always considered positive" (P3, TP13, L253-257).

Table 21

*Thematic Category 6: Issues of Female to Superintendency in Virginia*

Themes	Sample Response	No. of participants to offer this experience	Percent (%) of participants to offer this experience
Criticism and comparison to males	I think criticism. Criticism is probably the main thing. Can I say ignorance, is that bad? What is another word I can use? I guess people not being aware of what it is that you do. (P4)	17	89%
Perceived qualities of males	The personal challenges, to me would be having a family, having a balanced lifestyle, when you are a mother. Now if you are single, and you know it's a different job and I think it is a lifestyle choice. (P1)	16	84%
Stereotyping perceived qualities of female (indecisiveness)	I don't know I think some people will hold it against a female more than a man, because a man is strong it's a good thing but when a woman takes care of business it's not always considered positive. (P3)	16	84%
Dominance of males in school board	You know selecting a superintendent is the most important job from my perspective of a board. And um, our school board has also been a male dominated body for a number of years. It's changed now, too. (P2)	8	42%
Support and mentor female leaders	Well, first of all I think that women have to be more willing to serve as mentors for other women and to do that aggressively. To really look in your own division and look at a succession plan and seriously consider what women. (P2)	8	42%
Lack of model female leaders	...I think it is there are many women who are very capable but perhaps hesitant. They do not see themselves in that role. I think that even that is beginning to change; I think the biggest key as far as the career path goes there. (P8)	8	42%
School boards' biases in appointing male leaders	They come in and they are a low salary. And when you think of some of the males, there are not as many males teaching but for some reason most of them going into Superintendency. (P1)	4	21%

While the participants admitted to an increased number of females in educational leadership positions in Virginia across the years, they shared that there is much to be done particularly in improving the stereotyping environment within the education leadership sector. The participants shared that females struggled with several stereotypes. They indicated that other than being female, female leaders who belong to a minority population, or small in stature, or



older in age, experienced more negative reactions from school boards. For instance, Participant 2 (P2) shared that the society judged her as weak because of her small stature. She stated, “I’m a small woman and that has been a liability for me, because I don’t have this commanding presence. I don’t have this large voice” (P2, TP13, L240-243).

Based on these difficulties, one could expect that limited number of females will take the risks in pursuing school leadership positions. Politics and the abilities to emulate the disposition of males are discouraging females to venture to superintendency and/or leadership position, which are highlighted in Table 26. Participant 5 (P5) states:

Fighting those cultural issues to do the right thing. I just had this conversation this morning that I really believe that a lot of superintendents go into the job, male or female really wanting to do what is right and then it gets so difficult because the political pressures. Sometimes to do what you know is right is so strong that people are willing to step back because they don’t want to be moving every three to four years (P5, TP12-13, L234-241).

Table 22

*Thematic Category 7: Factors Affecting Turnover*

Themes	Sample Response	No. of participants to offer this experience	Percent (%) of participants to offer this experience
Stereotyped qualities of female	I'm a small woman and that has been a liability for me, because I don't have this commanding presence. I don't have this large voice... (P2)	18	95%
Politics within the school board	I think it's harder for a woman. And um, things that a woman may say may be taken in a different vein then if a man said it in the very same way. A man will be seen as forceful seeking to establish a line, a territory but a woman will be seen as aggressive... (P2)	6	32%
Double stereotyping perceptions to female (physique, age)	And for a female and especially for an African American female pursuing this, I believe your resume has to be steeped in a wealth of experiences. (P18)	5	26%
Limited number of female who want to take risk	... which I think it is there are many women who are very capable but perhaps hesitant. They do not see themselves in that role. I think that even that is beginning to change; I think the biggest key as far as the career path goes there has to be a model. There has to be someone willing to be your mentor, your encourager. (P8)	4	21%
Expectations from male school boards	Politically if you were a female, well I'm just going to say if there were some people that had the male chauvinist pig attitude toward a woman in the educational field. (P5).	1	5%

**Summary of Results**

**Research Question 1.** What are the self-perceived career anchors by female superintendents in Virginia's public K-12 school divisions?

Considering the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study, it can be observed from the data collected that service is the most prominent career anchor among the majority of the sample population, with a far minority being Variety, Managerial Competence, Lifestyle Integration, Autonomy, Security, Technical Competence, and Creativity. The second most prominent career anchors for the sample population are tied between Lifestyle Integration and Managerial Competence. As a group, however, when the career anchor mean scores of every respondent were totaled, "Service" was still the most prominent career anchor among the sample

population, followed by Variety, Managerial Competence, Lifestyle Integration, Autonomy, Security, Technical Competence, and Creativity.

**Research Question 2.** To what extent did these career anchors influence their career path towards attaining the superintendency?

Based on the qualitative results, through exploration of the experiences of the female superintendents and results of the content analysis of the transcripts from the semi-structured interview, three thematic categories emerged to be affecting the participants' career anchors and pursuance of superintendency. These theme categories are as follows: (1) Factors that influence leaders to pursue the superintendency; (2) Leadership practices of females in leadership positions; and (3) Influence of personal career anchors in leadership. These theme categories explained that attaining the superintendency among female leaders has not been primarily influenced by career anchors but by their own commitment and dedication to public service. This means that their desire to serve has been the primary factor in pursuing the superintendency rather than other career goals.

**Research Question 3.** What are the experiences of female superintendents in Virginia's public K-12 school divisions as it relates to their career anchors and personal and professional factors impacting their decision making process?

Based on the qualitative results, through exploration of the experiences of the female superintendents and results of the content analysis of the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews, four thematic categories emerged to be affecting the participants' career anchors and decision-making. These factors are as follows: (1) Perceived personal barriers to superintendency; (2) Coping strategies to address liabilities; (3) Issues of female to superintendency in Virginia; and (4) Factors affecting turnover. These theme categories describe the experiences of the participants in relation to their career anchors, personal, and professional factors that impact their decision-making process.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study to understand the unique factors that influence the career path choices of female superintendents in Virginia. The results of the study may contribute to the creation of policies to improve gender equality and access to superintendency positions in the United States. Current literature lacks an abundance of inquiry into the experiences of females in climbing the educational career ladder. This chapter begins by revisiting the purpose and significance of the topic. Next, the chapter recapitulates the three main research questions then summarizes the statistical results from the survey questions and the seven themes generated from the interviews. Afterwards, the implications of the findings on female educational leadership are revealed together with several conclusions created from the findings and previous research. Next, the researcher lists various implications for practitioners, offers recommendations to expand the current study and possibly generalize the results in future studies, before finally reflecting on the experience of this research journey.

The number of females ascending to the public education leadership positions has been increasing but males still hold the largest number of superintendent positions at the state and national level (McKinsey-Mabry, 2011). The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to understand the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia K-12 school divisions by examining the impact of personal and professional factors on their career decisions in pursuing the superintendency. Amidst the challenges of an increasingly diverse society, frequent superintendent turnover, and the impending wave of retiring education leaders, school boards need to improve the opportunities of females to attain leadership positions (Miller, 2009; and Moses, 2009). In order to facilitate more inclusive hiring practices, it is vital to understand the skills, motives, and values that females consider necessary when making career choices about becoming a superintendent. Three research questions helped shed light into the experiences of female superintendents, mainly: (1) What are the self-perceived career anchors of superintendent's in Virginia's public K-12 school divisions?; (2) To what extent did these career anchors influence their career path towards attaining the superintendency?; and (3) What are the experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions as it relates to

their career anchors and personal and professional factors impacting their decision making process?

### **Summary of Findings**

The quantitative and qualitative findings generated data driven findings to answer these research questions. The first research question was addressed through the survey results, while second and third questions were addressed by analyzing thematic categories based on participant responses from the semi-structured interview process. The survey questionnaires administered to 19 of the 38 female superintendents in the Virginia public K-12 school divisions revealed the self-perceived career anchors that supported their career decisions.

**Finding 1. A majority of the participants individually responded with “Service” as the top career anchor.** A far smaller group of participants identified Variety, Managerial Competence, Lifestyle Integration, Autonomy, Security, Technical Competence, or Creativity. However, this same small group of participants identified “Service” as their second prominent career anchor. As a group, “Service” remained the most prominent career anchor followed by Variety, Managerial Competence, Lifestyle Integration, Autonomy, Security, Technical Competence, and Creativity.

According to Schein’s Career Anchor Theory (1978), individuals with the “Service” career anchor preferred work opportunities that strongly challenged their problem solving and competitive skills. They attribute success to the feeling of having made a real contribution to the welfare of society or if they are able to use their talents in the service of others to make the world a better place. The main reason for leaving their job is when the position undermines their ability to be of service to others. Therefore, their dream careers are those that make real contributions to humanity and society. Since the superintendent’s position ensures the safety and organization of the school division, it is understandable that people who are in this position generally love to be in the service of helping other people. The position entails managing expectations, working relationships, and strategies to help align student achievement with legal mandates thereby making a positive contribution to the lives of students and teachers. In addition, their skills and competencies need to regularly be challenged, thus explaining why Managerial Competence was also one of the prominent career anchors. The other prominent career anchor was Lifestyle Integration, which would likely be attributed to the motherly nature of the female participants In

addition, Barbie (2004) enumerated several skill set like “principles such as caring, nurturance, compassion, empathy, intuition, listening, interdependence, and inspiration” that made females suitable for the position (p. 42).

**Finding 2. Attaining the superintendency among female leaders has not been primarily influenced by career anchors, but rather by their own commitment and dedication to public service.** The participants intend to achieve work-life balance where they could accomplish their role as school leader as well as spend time with their families. The Service career anchor for superintendents in the present study provided concrete evidence concerning the statement of Blount (1998; 1999) that education is a woman’s natural occupation and that females would be unsatisfied with secondary roles.

**Finding 3. A majority of the participants aspired to the superintendent’s position by appointment and natural career progression.** Some developed leadership practices including a teaching career path and following in the footsteps of accomplished females, listening and supporting teachers, and establishing trust and confidence from their peers. Once they do reach the position, their career anchors play a role in the kind of leadership they employ by their passion and personality for service work and challenges to obtain their career goals.

Sixteen participants, or 84 percent, revealed that their promotion was due to natural progression, suggesting that their career path was more horizontal and similar to the findings of Kim and Brunner (2009), Styles (2011), and Walder (2000). Meanwhile, fifteen participants, or 79 percent, answered that they attained their position through appointments. Oftentimes, they are not fully prepared to take on the position. A minority of the participants highlighted their aspirations for a greater cause to influence their female colleagues to take risks and pursue higher career goals. The major reasons could be more attributed to the Managerial Competence career anchor since these females garnered the skills necessary to make them ideal for the position. The Service career anchor became apparent when the females wanted to influence other females to take risks and attain positions that were generally dominated by males. Lifestyle Integration helped a minority of participants realize that they have the ability to pursue higher career goals. The second and third thematic categories were arguably the most related to the Service career anchor. All of the leadership practices these females developed in order for them to perform their function. They were all related to “Service,” such as highlighting their teaching career path and achievements of females in their field, listening and supporting teachers, establishing trust and

credibility, and having knowledge and empathy of leaders in the community. Most of these factors were also present in the principles of female leaders shared by Barbie (2004). Majority, or 84 percent, revealed that their career anchors gave them passion and personality for service work and 58 percent challenged them to pursue their interests. The difficulties with doing their job challenged them instead of becoming a stumbling block to their success. Therefore, the answer to the second research question is that the career anchors for these females pushed them to strive for service work and challenged them to pursue their career goals. This entailed achieving the right skills, characteristics, and qualities necessary to make them ideal for the position, which they achieved mainly through appointment or natural progression. It became apparent that being of service to others was a motivation factor for these females to be selected and agree to become superintendents.

**Finding 4. The main barrier for females to achieve the superintendent's position was related to familial roles to perform or job demands affecting family work-balance, or factors related to the Lifestyle Integration career anchor.** The females had varied experiences, each influenced by their career anchors, personal and professional factors that contributed to their decision making process. Many of these females experienced barriers to achieving the superintendent's position and thus had to develop coping strategies with the stereotypes they experienced. The fourth thematic category revealed that Similar to the findings of Derrington and Sharratt (2009b), the most significant barriers to leadership positions are self-imposed or motherhood. Sanchez and Thornton (2010) and VanTuyle and Watkins (2009) also shared the same sentiment.

**Finding 5. Female superintendents coped with expectations of being a female leader through emulating the abilities of males or employing the nurturing qualities of females.** The majority voiced their concerns such as regularly being criticized and compared to males or the perceived qualities of males, or being stereotyped based on the perceived qualities of females. The perception was that females are not able to cope with job demands and males are likely to have stronger networks. It was noted that some delay their leadership role decision-making process. In order to cope with these barriers, 68 percent of the females tried to emulate qualities of males as possibly in acquiesce to the stereotype. However, others tried to retaliate against the generalization by employing the innate qualities of females for problem solving, nurturing and leadership qualities, and management of school personnel. These female leaders

are likely to receive support since they empathize with their fellow teachers, which is another manifestation of the Service career anchor. They have to develop coping strategies, based on the Service career anchor, to differentiate them from the generally male dominated position.

The literature also cited stereotyping as a major barrier for females (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009b; Jones, 2000; Peters, 2008; Myers & Turner, 2004; and Van Tuyle & Watkins, 2009). Politics and expectations from the school board contribute to the small number of females that take the risk and try to contend for the superintendent's

**Finding 6. Some female superintendents perceived that being a female was a hindrance in their efforts to become superintendent.** The perceived lack of equal opportunity was expressed when they indicated that they were often criticized and compared to males and the perceived qualities of males. They also noted that males comprised the majority of the school boards. Barriers based on being female were evident in statements of participants that suggest that their characteristics as female construed them to lead. Participant 14 related that there are perceptions concerning the limitations of women. Participant 14 said, "It just seemed like it was not an area that they perceived women had leadership skills, not that they couldn't do the job, just that women were not put in those positions." Participant 5 described this weakness as: "I think having a family... Because it is incredibly demanding hours wise."

The study found that the school divisions in Virginia are still dominated by male leaders. Participant 15 described the structure as: "school boards that are dominated by males. We still have the good ole boy network out there, both in some portions of the education community, but certainly within communities as a whole." A male-dominated structure sees leadership that can be appropriately handled by male educators. Female educators who intend to pursue leadership position must strive to acquire perceived characteristics of males. As such, females in their retiring ages who have lesser familial responsibilities and are well experienced in terms of school management mostly achieve female superintendencies.

As found in the study, female leaders are unable to rise above the leadership position because of the male-dominated structure and the stereotyping the society had against women. These themes may be relevant in explaining that women are not motivated to establish female networks that support the plight of female against discrimination and stereotyping. As found in the study, male networks strengthened the dominance of male leaders in the education sector. Males have established activities that bind them together. When this strategy is adopted among



female educators, there is possibility that educators with leadership potentials are mentored and supported towards attaining the leadership position. Establishment of female networks is evident across the themes found in the present study. Despite the limitations of laws and programs supporting the rise of female in leadership, interaction and collaboration among teachers can be essential strategies to advocate female leadership.

### **Implications for Practice**

This study highlighted the plight and challenges that females face in achieving the superintendent's position, and to a broader extent, the field of education. The Service career anchor was highlighted as being influential to decisions that females face from their leadership qualities to coping strategies in combating stereotypes and being successful in their positions. The implications of this study are recorded below.

**Implication 1. School boards (often male dominated) should design and implement policies that provide an enabling working environment for rising female leaders.** Female leaders should be empowered to take risks with regards to their leadership roles and generally consider applying for male dominated positions. It is up to educational leaders and school boards to get creative and lay down a framework and workplace policies necessary to encourage females to pursue and endure the tenure of a superintendent's position. For instance, males in leadership positions should encourage female leaders to mentor and uphold the importance of leadership across genders.

Programs include encouraging female teachers who have been effective in the classroom setting to move into more leadership seats and professional development training. These females could be given an opportunity to hone their skills on what they do best and mentor others who are less knowledgeable with their expertise. This type of support ensures that female teachers will feel that male leaders support them and that taking a leadership position would be a rewarding experience for them.

The low employment participation rate of females in top leadership positions in the field of education allows room for growth in gender diversity. Females, who have a passion for service, should aspire to achieve top positions in order to help break down stereotypes about the required skill set and leadership characteristics needed for the position. This would hopefully

create a more inclusive and competitive work environment where the best people are placed in leadership positions based on their competencies and not on other subjective factors.

**Implication 2. Given that the major career anchor reported by these female participants was “service,” school boards should create more opportunities for service leadership in the superintendent’s position to allow the nurturing characteristics of females to fully manifest it self.** This could be done through various support programs for teaching positions within the public school system.

**Implication 3. School leadership, including school boards, should encourage female teachers to move into leadership seats and professional development training.** It is important to create ways to increase the exposure of all teaching positions to diverse groups and encourage learning among peers through increased collaboration.

**Implication 4. School leaders should encourage self-affirmation of females in schools.** Some factors that females faced during their tenure were self-perceived. Interventions could encourage females to think about their skills, characteristics, values, or roles as important. This exercise would hopefully shield females from perceived threats and consequences of their failures by affirming their self-worth.

**Implication 5. Educational leadership organizations may explore establishing affinity groups to improve networking among education professionals with diverse genders and cultures.** One major concern cited in literature that put females at a disadvantage in achieving high-level educational leadership positions was the lack of networking opportunities for females. Affinity groups can also increase awareness among diverse populations by opening its membership to all public school employees. An added benefit of the program is that it allows interaction between educators like females that otherwise would have limited contact.

### **Suggestions for Future Studies**

The scope and limitations of the study have been purposely constricted to focus on the geographical location of Virginia and female superintendents presently employed in public K-12 school divisions for academic year 2013-2014. It would be insightful for future researchers to widen the scope of the study and examine the other educational leadership positions such as the school principal. Future research could examine the influence of how race contributes to the

career anchors of female superintendents. At this point, the researcher would like to recommend the following extensions or topics:

1. Widen the geographical location to include other states. Inquiry into the experiences of female superintendents into other states would allow future researchers to compare and contrast the various career anchors and its relation to their career paths into the superintendency. The results would also be able to provide a more general understanding of the interplay of personal and professional factors on the career decision making process of female educators.
2. Extend the study to include other educational leadership positions. Although the superintendent position plays a critical role in the attainment of school, community, and division goals (VDOE, 2009), it is equally important to study the decision making process of the females employed in other areas of educational leadership positions such as principals, department heads, or head teachers, to further improve gender access and equity in educational institutions. Future studies may also include various leadership positions in private institutions or colleges and universities.
3. Determine the impact of race on the career anchors and personal and professional factors on the decision making process of the females ascending to the superintendency. The topic would help better understand whether one's culture influences the career anchors and the various factors each female has to consider when pursuing the superintendency. This helps promote not only gender diversity, but also cultural diversity in top educational leadership positions.

## **Reflections**

The researcher was elated that the results of the study coincided with the literature by leading researchers in the field. The research design was able to properly generate results that could adequately answer the three main research questions. Superintendents, being educators first and foremost, should always endeavor to be of service to the school population. The innate passion to make positive contributions to society should always be paramount or else, they would have a hard time creating and managing the best practices and policies for the school. It was somewhat disheartening to realize the gravity of the impact of stereotyping in top education leadership positions. Educational leaders, school boards, professional education leadership

organizations, and state and federal legislators should endeavor to quell the practice of stereotyping not just of females, but of other minorities as well, because of its negative impact on the organization. However, personal and professional factors did not reoccur as a barrier despite surfacing numerous times in literature. The challenges faced by the superintendent's positions call for a more effective and inclusive process for a more successful succession planning process to ensure the continuity and stability of school divisions.

### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter recapitulated the salient points generated from the results of the study, related these findings to current literature, formulated conclusions, and cited implication to readers and practitioners. Suggestions to expand the scope and breadth of the study were also offered. A key finding of the research was that Service was the main career anchor of female superintendents in K-12 public schools in Virginia. This main career anchor influenced the developed leadership qualities of female superintendents in steering through their career path to achieve top educational positions. The challenges to the road to superintendency involved various stereotypes of females, which female superintendents necessarily had to cope with. Stereotyping also became a main issue and factor for female superintendent turnover. Therefore, it is important for school boards and professional education leadership organizations to devise programs and policies to improve the overall experience of females in the field of education leadership and to encourage service-oriented leadership. All of these results and recommendations aimed to improve gender access and equity in top educational leadership posts in Virginia's K-12 public schools.

## References

- Aronson, E. (2009). Integrating leadership styles and ethical perspectives. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences/Revue Canadienne des Sciences de l'Administration*, 18(4), 244-256.
- Barbie, J. A. (2004). *Narratives of women's life experiences and how it informs their practice as school district superintendents*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver).
- Barker, C. S. (2012). *School Board Members and the Underrepresentation of Women in the Superintendency: A Case Study* (Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University).
- Bell, E. L. J., & Nkomo, S. M. (2001). *Our separate ways: Black and White women and the struggle for professional identity*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Bell, E. L., & Nkomo, S. M. (2003). *Our Separate Ways: Black and White Women Forging Paths in Corporate America*. *Unpublished book manuscript*.
- Bilimoria, D. & O'Neil, D. A. (2005). Women's career development phases: idealism, endurance, and reinvention. *Career development international*, 10(3), 168-189.
- Bimrose, J. (2001). Girls and women: Challenges for career guidance practice. *British Journal of Guidance and Counseling*, 29(1), 79-95.
- Bjork, L., & Lindle, J. C. (2001). Superintendents and interest groups. *Educational Policy*, 15(1), 76-91.
- Blackmon, M. V. (2013). Women education leaders in Virginia fall conference welcome speech and in personal email communication. Fredericksburg, Virginia.
- Blanchard, S. U. (2009). *Factors impacting the advancement of female leaders to the superintendency*. ProQuest LLC. 789 East Eisenhower Parkway, PO Box 1346, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.
- Blount, J. M. (1998). *Destined to rule the schools: Women and the superintendency, 1873-1995*. SUNY Press.
- Blount, J. M. (1999). Turning out the ladies: Elected women superintendents and the push for the appointive system, 1900-1935. *Sacred dreams: Women and the superintendency*, 9-27.
- Bowles, R. P. (1999). Measuring mountains. *Journal of Popular Measurement*, 2, 19-21.

- Bowles, H. R., Babcock, L., & Lai, L. (2007). Social incentives for gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiations: Sometimes it does hurt to ask. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 103(1), 84-103.
- Brunner, C. C. & Grogan, M. (2007). *Women leading school systems*. Lanham, MD: Rowland & Littlefield Education.
- Brunner, C. C. (2001). New faculty member examines power and female school superintendents. *The Link*, 7.
- Carter-Black, J. (2008). A black woman's journey into a predominately white academic world. *Affilia*, 23 (2), 112-122.
- Cascio, W. F. (2003). Changes in workers, work, and organizations. *Handbook of psychology*.
- Cassell, C., & Symon, G. (Eds.). (2004). *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.
- Chan, T. C., Pool, H., & Strickland, J. S. (2001). Who's in Charge around here?
- Collins, G. (2009). *When everything changed: The amazing journey of American women from 1960 to the present*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Coronel, J. M., Moreno, E., & Carrasco, M. J. (2010). Work–family conflicts and the organizational work culture as barriers to women educational managers. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 17(2), 219-239.
- Costen, W., Salazar, J., & Antun, J. (2006). Who's happy? The relationship between race/ethnicity and job satisfaction in the lodging industry. *International Journal of Organizations, Communities, and Nations*, 6(2), 15-22.
- Creswell J. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.
- Crozier, S. D. (1999). Women's career development in a “relational context”. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling*, 21(3), 231-247.
- Custodio, L. P. (2000). *Career anchors of Filipino academic executives*. Catanduanes: College of Business and Accountancy.

- Dabney-Lieras, K. (2008). *Reclaiming the superintendency: The critical skills, strategies and experiences of successful women superintendents in California.*(Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California).
- Dean, D. R., Bracken, S. J., & Allen, J. K. (2009). *Women in academic leadership: Professional strategies, personal choices.* Stylus Pub Llc.
- DeLong, T.J. (1982). Reexamining the Career Anchor Model. *Personnel*, 59 (3), 50-61.
- Denscombe, M. (2010). *The good research guide: For small-scale social research projects.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill International.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. (2000). *Qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Derrington, M., & Sharratt, G. (2009b). Self-imposed barriers. *School Administrator*,66(8), 18–21. doi:1853345151
- Dominici F, Fried L, Zeger S.L, (2009) *So Few Women Leaders: Look for the Root Causes.* Academe.
- Duffy, M., & Chenail, R. J. (2008). Values in qualitative and quantitative research. *Counseling and Values*, 53(1), 22-38.
- Eagly, A. H. (2007). Female leadership advantage and disadvantage: Resolving the contradictions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31(1), 1–12. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00326.x
- Eklund, N. (2009). Sustainable workplaces, retainable teachers. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(2), 25-27.
- Ellerson, N. M., Kowalski, T. J., McCord, R. S., Petersen, G. J., Young, P., & American Association of School Administrators. (2011). *The American school superintendent: 2010 decennial study.* Lantham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Gillis, A., & Jackson, W. (2002). *Research for nurses: Methods and interpretation.* Philadelphia: FA Davis Company.
- Glass, T. E. (2001). The superintendent crisis: A review by search consultants. Education Commission of the States: Issue paper: Leadership. Retrieved from <http://ecs.org/clearinghouse/28/25/2825.htm>
- Glass, T. E., & Franceschini, L. A. (2007). *The State of the American School Superintendency: A Mid-Decade Study.* Rowman & Littlefield Education. 15200 NBN Way, PO Box 191, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214-0191.

- Gorman, G.E., & Clayton, P. (1997). *Qualitative research for the information professional*. Library Association Publishing.
- Gottfredson, L. S. (1996). A theory of circumscription and compromise. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development: Applying contemporary theories to practice* (3rd ed., pp 179-232). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Halloran, S. J. (2007). *Are there differences in the perceived leadership practices of female and male superintendents as identified by school committee members?* (Doctoral dissertation. University of Massachusetts Lowell, UMI 3257348).
- Henry, W. J., & Glenn, N. M. (2008). Black women employed in the ivory tower: Connecting for success. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 25(1).
- Herrbach, O., & Mignonac, K. (2012). Perceived Gender Discrimination and Women's Subjective Career Success: The Moderating Role of Career Anchors. *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations*, 67(1), 25-50.
- Hill, N. R. (2009). An empirical exploration of the occupational satisfaction of counselor educators: the influence of gender, tenure status, and minority status. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 87(1), 55-61.
- Holliman, K. (1996). *A descriptive survey of women school superintendents in Texas*. (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1996).
- Horrigan, J. B. (2001). Cities online: Urban development and the internet. *Pew Internet & American Life Project*. Retrieved from [http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/pdfs/PIP\\_Cities\\_Online\\_Report.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/pdfs/PIP_Cities_Online_Report.pdf)
- Horrocks, C. & King, N. (2010). *Interviews in qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Hopkins, M. M. (2012). Obstacles and Strategies for Women Leaders in Education. *Sex Roles*, 1-4.
- Horn, L. (1998). *Women's strategies for entry into the vocational superintendency*. (Doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1998).
- Ilieva, J., Baron, S. & Healey, N.M. (2002). Online surveys in marketing research: Pros and cons. *International Journal of Marketing Research*, 44(3), 361-76.
- Jackson, J. F., & O'Callaghan, E. M. (2009). What do we know about glass ceiling effects? A taxonomy and critical review to inform higher education research. *Research in Higher Education*, 50(5), 460-482.



- Jayakumar, U. M. (2009). The invisible rainbow in diversity: Factors influencing sexual prejudice among college students. *Journal of Homosexuality, 56*(6), 675-700.
- Jayakumar, U.M., Howard, T.C., Allen, W.R., & Han, J.C. (2009). Privilege in the Academy: An exploration of racial climate, faculty retention, and the role of race. *Journal of Higher Education, 80*(2), 178-203.
- Jess, M. G. (1990). *The turnover of Wisconsin school district superintendents, 1986-1988*. University of Wisconsin: Madison.
- Jones, S. (2000). *Feminist theory and Christian theology: Cartographies of grace*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.
- Karsan, R. (2007). Calculating the cost of turnover. *Employment Relations Today, 34*(1), 33-36.
- Keller, B. (1999). Women superintendents: Few and far between. *Education Week, 19*(11), 1.
- Kim, Y. L., & Brunner, C. C. (2009). School administrators' career mobility to the Superintendency: Gender differences in career development. *Journal of Educational Administration, 47*(1), 75-107.
- Kowalski, T. J., McCord, R., Petersen, G., Young, I. P., & Ellerson, N. (2011). *The American school superintendent: 2010 decennial study*. Lanham, MA: American Association of School Administrators and Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative. research interviewing*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Lane-Washington, L., & Wilson-Jones, L. (2010). *Women superintendents: Challenges, barriers, and experiences as senior level leaders*. In National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal (Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 2-7).
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2001). *Practical research: Planning and design* (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Leithwood, K. A., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
- Lehman, A., O’Roarke, N., Hatcher, L., & Stepanski, E. J. (2005). *JMP for basic univariate and multivariate statistics: A step-by-step guide*. Cary, North Carolina: SAS Institute Inc.
- Long, A. (2010). *Male and Female Superintendents: A Comparison of Differences in Salaries, Interview Experiences, and Contract Negotiations*. (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Alabama TUSCALOOSA).

- Magnuson, S., Norem, K., & Lonneman-Doroff, T. (2009). The 2000 cohort of new assistant professors of counselor education: Reflecting at the culmination of six years. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 49*(1), 54-71.
- Margolis, D. (2008). Cognitive issues in the realist-idealist dispute. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy, 5*(1), 373–390. Doi:10.1111/j.1475-4975.1980.tb00413.x
- McKinsey-Mabry, K. (2011). *An Examination of Factors Impacting the Career Decisions of Black Women in Management Positions at US Institutions of Higher Education*. (Doctoral dissertation, St. John Fisher College).
- Metzger, C. (1997). Involuntary turnover of superintendents. *Thrust for Educational Leadership, 26*, 20-23.
- Miller, C. M. (2009). *Overcoming barriers: Women in the superintendency*. Educational Policy Studies Dissertations, 49.
- Miller, F. S. (2010). Untangling the Ivy Vines: A perspective on women of color in higher education. *Women of color in leadership: Taking their rightful place*, 3-23.
- Miskel, C., & Cosgrove, D. (1985). Leader succession in school settings. *Review of Educational Research, 55*(1), 87-105.
- Moses, Y. T. (2009). Advice from the field: Guiding women of color to academic leadership. *Women in academic leadership: Professional strategies, personal choices*, 181-207.
- Moustakas, C. (Ed.). (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Murphy, K. I. (2009). *A theoretical explanation for understanding what motivates women to aspire to the superintendency*. (Doctoral dissertation, The George Washington University).
- Myers Jr, S. L., & Turner, C. S. (2004). The effects of Ph. D. supply on minority faculty representation. *American Economic Review, 296-301*.
- National Association of Secondary School Principal (2001). Advancing high school reform in the states: policies and programs that restructure the comprehensive high school. Retrieved from [www.principals.org](http://www.principals.org)

- Nowak, M. J., & Bonner, D. (2013). Juggling work and family demands: Lifestyle career anchors for female healthcare professionals. *International Journal of Healthcare Management*, 6(1), 3-11.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Burke-Johnson, R. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.
- Padalino, P. J. (2009). *Superintendent job satisfaction in New York State*. (Doctoral dissertation, Sage Graduate School).
- Patitu, C. L., & Hinton, K. G. (2003). The experiences of African American women faculty and administrators in higher education: Has anything changed? *New Directions for Student Services*, 2003(104), 79-93.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Peters, A. (2008). Help is on the way? Support and mentoring for nontraditional school leaders. In Texas Council of Women School Executives (Ed.), *Women as school executives: Celebrating diversity*, (pp.125-135).
- Pierce, M. (2000). Portrait of the 'super principal'. *Harvard Education Letter*, 16(5), 1-5.
- Pietrofesa, J. J., & Splete, H. (1975). *Career development: Theory and research*. Grune & Stratton.
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2004). Assessing data quality. *Nursing Research. Principles and methods*, 413-445.
- Quesenberry, J. L. (2012). Re-Examining the career anchor model: An investigation of career values and motivations among women in the information technology profession. In Pande, R., & Van der Weide, T. (2012). *Globalization, Technology Diffusion and Gender Disparity: Social Impacts of ICTs*(pp. 169-183). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- Quesenberry, J. L., & Trauth, E. M. (2007, April). What do women want?: An investigation of career anchors among women in the IT workforce. In *Proceedings of the 2007 ACM SIGMIS CPR conference on Computer personnel research: The global information technology workforce* (pp. 122-127). ACM.
- Richie, B. S., Fassinger, R. E., Linn, S. G., & Johnson, J. (1997). Persistence, connection, and passion: Achieving African American black and white women. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 44(2), 135-148.

- Riordan, S., & Louw-Potgieter, J. (2011). Career success of women academics in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology, 41*(2), 157-172.
- Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (2004). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rusher, A. (1996). *African American women administrators*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Sabharwal, M., & Corley, E. A. (2009). Faculty job satisfaction across gender and discipline. *The Social Science Journal, 46*(3), 539-556.
- Sampson, P., & Davenport, M. (2010). The current women superintendents in Texas: Still in the minority. *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership, 8*(3), 143-158.
- Sanchez, J. E., & Thornton, B. (2010). Gender issues in K-12 educational leadership. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal, 30*, 13.
- Schein, E. H. (1975). How career anchors hold executives to career paths. *Personnel, 52*, (3), 11-24.
- Schein, E. H. (1978). *Career dynamics: Matching individual and organizational needs* (Vol. 24). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Schein, E. H. (1985). Career Anchors: Discovering Your Real Values. San Diego: University Associates. *Stumpf SA and Hartman K.(1984). Individual Exploration to Organizational Commitment or Withdrawal. Academy of Management, 27*, 308-329.
- Schein, E. H. (1990). *Career anchors: Discovering your real values*. San Diego: University Associates.
- Schein, E. (1990). Organizational culture. *American Psychologist, 45*(2), 109-19.
- Schein, E. H. (1996). Career anchors revisited: Implications for career development in the 21st century. *The Academy of Management Executive, 10*(4), 80-88.
- Shaw I (2008) Ethics and the practice of qualitative research, *Qualitative Social Work, 7*(4), 400-414.
- Skria, L. (2000). The social construction of gender in the superintendency. *Journal of Education Policy, 15*(3), 293-316.
- Small, D. A., Gelfand, M., Babcock, L., & Gettman, H. (2007). Who goes to the bargaining table? The influence of gender and framing on the initiation of negotiation. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 93*(4), 600.

- State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) (2011). Certified superintendent demographics by preparation route: 2006–2010. Retrieved from [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=5033&menu\\_id=886&menu\\_id2=794](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=5033&menu_id=886&menu_id2=794)
- Streubert, H. J., & Carpenter, D. R. (2011). *Qualitative research in nursing: Advancing the humanistic imperative (5th ed.)*. Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott Williams Wilkins.
- Stricherz, M. (2001). DC Principal's training designed to boost instructional leadership. *Education Week*, 21(2), 13.
- Styles, C. J. (2011). *Breaking the glass ceiling/ South Carolina female superintendents' perceptions of career paths, critical skills and barriers to advancement*. (Doctoral dissertation, South Carolina State University).
- Tafarodi, R. W. & Ho, C. (2003). In defense of insecurity. *Psychological Inquiry*, 14(1), 77-79.
- Teegarden, P. H. (2004). Nonprofit executive leadership and transitions survey 2004.
- Thomas, W. (2001). The decision to return to full-time education. *Education Economics*, 9(1), 37-51.
- Thompson, L. F., Surface, E. A., Martin, D. L., & Sanders, M. G. (2003). From paper to pixels: Moving personnel surveys to the Web. *Personnel Psychology*, 56, 197-227.
- Texas PK–16 Public Education Information Resource (TPEIR). (2011). Employed personnel-count of personnel, statewide by role, gender, and ethnicity. Texas PK–16 Public Education Resource. Retrieved from <http://www.texaseducationinfo.org>
- Turner, C. S. (2003). Incorporation and marginalization in the academy from border toward center for faculty of color?. *Journal of Black Studies*, 34(1), 112-125.
- Turner, C. S. V. T., & Meyers, Jr., S. L. (2000). *Faculty of color in academe: Bittersweet success*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Van Kaam, A. L. (1959). Phenomenal analysis: Exemplified by a study of the experience of really feeling understood. *Journal of Individual Psychology*.
- Van Manen, M. (1997). From meaning to method. *Qualitative health research*, 7(3), 345-369.
- VanTuyle, V., & Watkins, S. G. (2009). Women superintendents in Illinois: Gender barriers and challenges. *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership*, 7(3), 135-151.

- Virginia Department of Education (2012b). *Virginia board of education*. Retrieved from the Virginia Department of Education website:  
<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/index.shtml>
- Virginia Department of Education. (2000). Career and technical education statewide annual performance report. Retrieved from <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/CTE/cters/2000apr/aprssl.pdf>
- Virginia Department of Education. (2009). *Sample individualized education program*. Retrieved from [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/iep\\_instruct\\_svcs/iep/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/iep_instruct_svcs/iep/index.shtml)
- Vogt, P.W. (2007). *Quantitative Research Methods for Professionals*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Walder, B. (2000). *Career perspectives of female superintendents in the state of Arizona*. (Doctoral dissertation, Northern Arizona University).
- Weber, K., & Ladkin, A. (2011). Career Identity and its Relation to Career Anchors and Career Satisfaction: The Case of Convention and Exhibition Industry Professionals in Asia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 16(2), 167-182.
- Wright, K. B. (2005). Researching Internet-based populations: Advantages and disadvantages of online survey research, online questionnaire authoring software packages, and web survey services. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 10(3), article 11. Retrieved from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue3/wright.html>
- Young, J. J. (2011). Leadership Styles and Gender Role: Internalization among Female Managers in the United States. *Advancing Women in Leadership*, 31, 109-110.

## Appendix A

### Institutional Review Board Approval



Office of Research Compliance  
 Institutional Review Board  
 North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech  
 300 Turner Street NW  
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
 540/231-4806 Fax 540/231-0959  
 email [irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu)  
 website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

#### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** December 20, 2013  
**TO:** Agnella Katrise Perera, Carol S Cash  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires April 25, 2018)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Perceptions of Females in Virginia Regarding The Personal and Professional Factors Impacting Their Career Paths to The Superintendency  
**IRB NUMBER:** 13-1108

Effective December 19, 2013, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

#### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 8,7  
 Protocol Approval Date: December 18, 2013  
 Protocol Expiration Date: December 18, 2014  
 Continuing Review Due Date\*: December 4, 2014

\*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

#### FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

*Invent the Future*

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY  
 An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution

Date*	OSP Number	Sponsor	Grant Comparison Conducted?

\* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

**If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.**



**Appendix B**  
**Collected Data from Schein's Coi Survey Questionnaire**

<b>Respondent ID</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q5</b>	<b>Q6</b>	<b>Q7</b>	<b>Q8</b>
<b>1</b>	4	4	4	3	2	2	4	3
<b>2</b>	2	4	2	2	2	2	4	3
<b>3</b>	2	3	2	1	3	3	4	3
<b>4</b>	4	4	3	2	3	3	4	3
<b>5</b>	3	3	2	3	2	4	4	4
<b>6</b>	3	4	3	3	2	4	4	3
<b>7</b>	4	4	2	4	3	2	2	3
<b>8</b>	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
<b>9</b>	3	4	2	3	2	2	3	4
<b>10</b>	4	4	2	2	3	3	4	2
<b>11</b>	1	4	1	1	2	2	3	2
<b>12</b>	2	4	2	1	2	4	4	3
<b>13</b>	2	4	3	1	3	3	4	3
<b>14</b>	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	3
<b>15</b>	3	4	4		2	3	4	4
<b>16</b>	3	4	4	2	3	4	4	3
<b>17</b>	4	4	4	4	2	2	4	3
<b>18</b>	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	3
<b>19</b>	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	3
<b>20</b>	4	4	3	1	2	3	3	4

<b>Respondent ID</b>	<b>Q9</b>	<b>Q10</b>	<b>Q11</b>	<b>Q12</b>	<b>Q13</b>	<b>Q14</b>	<b>Q15</b>	<b>Q16</b>
<b>1</b>	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	2
<b>2</b>	4	3	3	2	2	4	4	3
<b>3</b>		3	2	2	3	4	4	
<b>4</b>	3	3	4	3	2	4	3	3
<b>5</b>	4	2	3	2	3	4	3	3
<b>6</b>	4	3	4		1	4	3	4
<b>7</b>	4	3	2	4	3	4	2	4
<b>8</b>	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>9</b>	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	3
<b>10</b>	4	3	3	4	1	4	4	3
<b>11</b>	3	1	4	2	1	2	3	4
<b>12</b>	4	1	3	2	1	4	3	4
<b>13</b>	3	3	3	2	1	4	3	4
<b>14</b>	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	4
<b>15</b>	4	2	4	2	2	3	3	3
<b>16</b>	4	4	4	3	2	4	3	4
<b>17</b>	4	4	3	4	2	4	3	4
<b>18</b>	3	4	3	4	2	4	3	3
<b>19</b>	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3
<b>20</b>	4	4	3	1	1	4	3	4

<b>Respondent ID</b>	<b>Q17</b>	<b>Q18</b>	<b>Q19</b>	<b>Q20</b>	<b>Q21</b>	<b>Q22</b>	<b>Q23</b>	<b>Q24</b>
<b>1</b>	1	3	3	4	3	4	3	2
<b>2</b>	2	3	2	2	3	4	4	3
<b>3</b>	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3
<b>4</b>	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3
<b>5</b>	1	3	2	2	1	4	3	3
<b>6</b>	1	1	3	2	3	4	2	3
<b>7</b>	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
<b>8</b>	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3
<b>9</b>	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	2
<b>10</b>	1	2	3	4	4	4	4	4
<b>11</b>	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	3
<b>12</b>	2	2	3	2	2	4	4	4
<b>13</b>	2	2	2	2	3	4	3	2
<b>14</b>	2	3	2	2	2	3	4	3
<b>15</b>	1	2	2	3	1	3	4	3
<b>16</b>	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
<b>17</b>	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
<b>18</b>	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	3
<b>19</b>	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	3
<b>20</b>	2	3	2	2	4	4	4	4

<b>Respondent ID</b>	<b>Q25</b>	<b>Q26</b>	<b>Q27</b>	<b>Q28</b>	<b>Q29</b>	<b>Q30</b>	<b>Q31</b>	<b>Q32</b>
<b>1</b>	3	4	2	4	1	3	3	3
<b>2</b>	3	2	2	4	2	2	3	4
<b>3</b>	4	2	2	4			3	4
<b>4</b>	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	4
<b>5</b>	3	1	3	4	2	1	1	3
<b>6</b>	3	3	4	4	2	4	3	3
<b>7</b>	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	3
<b>8</b>	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	3
<b>9</b>	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	4
<b>10</b>	4	4	2	4	1	2	2	4
<b>11</b>	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	4
<b>12</b>	2	2	3	4	1	3	3	4
<b>13</b>	2	1	2	4	1	3	2	4
<b>14</b>	2	2	4	4	1	2	3	4
<b>15</b>	3	2	3	4	3	1	3	3
<b>16</b>	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3
<b>17</b>	3	3	3	4	4	2	4	4
<b>18</b>	3	3	2	4	3	3	3	4
<b>19</b>	3	3		4	2	2	2	3
<b>20</b>	3	4	3	4	1	3	3	4

<b>Respondent ID</b>	<b>Q33</b>	<b>Q34</b>	<b>Q35</b>	<b>Q36</b>	<b>Q37</b>	<b>Q38</b>	<b>Q39</b>	<b>Q40</b>
<b>1</b>	2	4	4	3	3	4	1	2
<b>2</b>	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	1
<b>3</b>		3		2	2	3	2	3
<b>4</b>	1	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
<b>5</b>	3	3	4	1	2	2	2	3
<b>6</b>	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3
<b>7</b>	3	4	4	3	3	3	2	3
<b>8</b>	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	3
<b>9</b>	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
<b>10</b>	1	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
<b>11</b>	1	2	3	4	2	3	2	1
<b>12</b>	1	4	4	1	3	2	3	3
<b>13</b>	1	4	3	3	2	3	1	3
<b>14</b>	2	3	3	1	3	3	3	3
<b>15</b>	1	3	4	1	3	3	1	3
<b>16</b>	2	4	4	4	3	4	4	2
<b>17</b>	4	4	4	3	2	4	4	3
<b>18</b>	2	4	4	3	3	3	3	2
<b>19</b>	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
<b>20</b>	1	3	4	4	3	3	2	3

## Appendix C

### Initial Invite Email

#### With Link to Demographic Survey & Question

**\*\* NOTE:** This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Dear Female Superintendent in Virginia,

I am a doctorate student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (aka-Virginia Tech) in Education Leadership and Policy Study. As part of my doctoral program and under the guidance of my committee chair, Dr. Carol Cash, I am conducting a research study for my dissertation that focuses on the career anchors of female superintendents. The purpose of my study is to uncover the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency. I am writing to invite you and other female superintendents in Virginia to participate in this study.

There are 3-phases to your potential participation, which are completely voluntary. Phases 2 & 3 participants will be randomly selected by the researcher and extended invites via email. The 3-phases are outlined below.

**Phase 1-** The **Initial Demographic Survey** [SurveyLink] that includes 7-basic questions, which should take less than 3-minutes to complete. As an educator and researcher, I know the value of confidentiality; therefore, I want you to know that the initial survey does not request any identifiable personal information other than the title of your position. *Those participants who complete the initial consent question and demographic survey by December 20, 2013 will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift card. The odds of winning the gift card are 1 in 37 and the winner will be announced/notified on or by December 23, 2013.*

**Phase 2-** The **Semi-Structured Interview** - 20-randomly selected Virginia female superintendents will be selected to participate in the semi-structured interviews. These confidential interviews will be audio recorded and will consist 20-research based questions, which will take about 30-minutes of response time. The semi-structured interviews can be conducted at your convenience in person (at your office) or via SKYPE, which should be specified on the *included permission form* by January 13, 2014. Once I hear from you, I will follow up with your office to schedule and confirm the interview appointment date, time, and to answer any questions you may have. *Participants who complete the included Semi-Structured Interview Permission Form with a selected date by January 13, 2014 will be entered into a drawing for one of two a \$25 gift cards. The odds of winning are 1 in 10 and the winner will be announced/notified on or by January 15, 2014.*

**Phase 3- The Career Anchor Self-Assessment Questionnaire** - This 40-item questionnaire will be extended to all interview participants. The Career Anchor Self-Assessment Questionnaire is published by *Wiley & Sons* and was originally developed by Edgar Schein, a leader in the field of career and professional studies. The questions are designed to help reveal what you really want out of a career. It takes just 10 to 15 minutes to complete and the results are instantaneous. *Those completing the Career Anchor Self-Assessment Questionnaire by January 31, 2014 will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift card. Odds of winning this gift card are 1 in 20 and the winner will be announced/notified on or by February 3, 2014.*

To participate in this **INITIAL DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY** phase of this research study you will need to complete the following steps.

1. Review the included Research Proposal below
2. Click on the *SurveyMonkey* link included here: [SurveyLink] to provide initial participation consent and to provide basic demographic information, which should take less than 3-minutes to complete the 7-questions.
3. Once you have completed the requested initial demographic information, please indicate your consent to participate in the semi-structured interviews and the Career Anchor Self-Assessment questionnaire. The researcher will communicate additional steps to those selected to participate in Phase 2 (semi-structured interviews) and Phase 3 (Career Anchor Self-Assessment Questionnaire) by January 3, 2014.

Understanding how valuable your time is, I appreciate your consideration in assisting with this study. As noted earlier, I am including an excerpt of my Research Proposal below for your consideration. If additional information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [akp2012@vt.edu](mailto:akp2012@vt.edu) or 757.333.2039.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and your participation.

Yours in education,



A. Katrise Perera

\*\* Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.  
[RemoveLink]

\*\*\*\*\*

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Research Proposal: Perceptions of Female Superintendents in Virginia Regarding The Personal and Professional Factors Impacting Their Career Paths

Conducted by: A. Katrise Perera under the direction of Carol Cash, Ed. D.

**Abstract:** Females currently represent the largest number of teachers in the United States but yet they represent the smallest number of superintendents (Miller, 2009). While female students and educators are increasing, few of them have attained the Superintendency positions within school divisions (Hopkins, 2012). This phenomenon will be examined in the Commonwealth of Virginia through a mixed-methods research study, which will provide an understanding of the career development experiences of female superintendents. The researcher will utilize Schein's career anchor theory (1990), which examines the personal and professional values and dimensions that influence career choices. Schein's theory was applied to leadership positions in higher education and to females in other fields, but has never been applied to females in K-12 superintendent positions. The purpose of this study is to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in public K-12 school divisions in Virginia and understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency. Barriers might be identified and systematically removed, thus achieving greater gender equality in K-12 superintendent positions. Ultimately, the researcher hopes that this research study will contribute to succession planning in K-12 school divisions.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research study is to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency. This research study will identify and determine what career anchors influence female superintendent in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. To understand the career anchors behind their progress towards the superintendency would shed insight into the self-concept and self-advocacy the female superintendents have developed around her career. To understand the career anchors would also provide insight into the professional and personal choices of female superintendents in Virginia. The study will be able to contribute to policies toward improved gender access and equity in the superintendency.

**Research Guiding Questions:** This research study will focus on the career decisions of female superintendents employed in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The research was organized around the following key questions:

**Research Questions/Guiding Questions:** This research study will focus on the career decisions of female superintendents employed in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The research was organized around the following key questions:

- Research Question 1. What are the self-perceived career anchors and to what extent do these influence females in superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions?
- Research Question 2. What barriers and to what extent do these barriers prevent women from obtaining and maintaining the superintendency?



- Research Question 3. What are the experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and how do personal and professional factors influence their career decisions?

**Research Design:** A mixed methods research design will be employed to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence career decisions related to the superintendency of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. As a result of the more sophisticated and demanding research questions being asked, mixed methods designs are increasingly used (Burke-Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By using a mixed methods design, the researcher expects that a better understanding of the question can be developed compared to just using quantitative method or qualitative method alone. The current research will link two data sets together wherein one data set will build another. This makes sure that the interview section will have a relationship with the quantitative research section (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

A quantitative approach will be employed to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence career decisions related to the superintendency of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The personal and professional factors, which influence the career decisions of female superintendents, will be the phenomenon to be considered in this study.

A qualitative approach will explore the perceptions and the experiences of female superintendents in terms of their career path towards superintendency. This will help to understand perceptions, opinions, as well as the feelings of participants based on their personal experiences regarding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Vogt, 2007). The focus of this section is to show how female superintendents interpret their experiences and how they provide meaning to the personal and professional decisions they have made in order to achieve their positions. The primary learning objective is to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participants' perceptions and not that of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

**Target Population, & Samples:** An objective of the study is to explore and define the factors that influence female superintendents' personal and professional decisions from a sampling of Virginia female superintendents. For the quantitative research study, the target population will be the current 38-Virginia female superintendents. For the qualitative portion of this study, 18-20 Virginia female superintendents will be randomly selected from those participating in the survey(s). According to Gorman (1997) and Creswell (1998), it is necessary to gather at least 15 to 25 participants in order to provide thematic saturation.

## Initial Participant Consent & Demographic Survey (via SurveyMonkey - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6PFGH2Y>.)

[www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?PREVIEW\\_MODE=DO\\_NOT\\_USE\\_THIS\\_LINK\\_FOR\\_COLLECTION&sm=Kn4XUOO4R9cUw1KQONjIbhQeZnLBp8LTmBuc3spsDB...](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?PREVIEW_MODE=DO_NOT_USE_THIS_LINK_FOR_COLLECTION&sm=Kn4XUOO4R9cUw1KQONjIbhQeZnLBp8LTmBuc3spsDB...)

**\* 1. After reviewing the proposed research design, proposal, and procedures sent by the researcher, do you agree or disagree to participate in the INITIAL DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY phase of this research study?**

- Yes, I agree to participate in the INITIAL DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY phase of the research study.
- No, I do not wish to participate in this phase of the research study.

**\* 2. Are you male or female?**

- Male
- Female

**\* 3. Which of the following best describes your current position?**

- Division Superintendent
- Interim Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- School Board Representative

Other (please specify)

**\* 4. In which educational region of Virginia do you work?**

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Region 1 | <input type="radio"/> Region 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> Region 2 | <input type="radio"/> Region 6 |
| <input type="radio"/> Region 3 | <input type="radio"/> Region 7 |
| <input type="radio"/> Region 4 | <input type="radio"/> Region 8 |

Other (please specify)

**\* 5. Which best describes how long you have held your current position?**

- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10 or more years

**\* 6. Are you interested in participating in PHASE 2 (Semi-structured interview) of this research study?**

- Yes, I am interested in participating in PHASE 2 and the researcher may contact me.
- No, I am not interested in participating in PHASE 2 and the researcher should not contact me.

**\* 7. Are interested in participating in PHASE 3 (Career Anchors Self-Assessment Questionnaire) of this research study?**

- Yes, I am interested in participating in PHASE 3 and the researcher may contact me.
- No, I am not interested in participating in PHASE 3 and the researcher should not contact me.

## Appendix D

### Female Superintendent Semi-Structured Interview Invite Letters & Permission Form

Dear Female Superintendent in Virginia,

**CONGRATULATIONS!** You previously indicated that you would be interested in participating in PHASE 2 & 3 of my research study. This email confirms that you have been randomly selected to participate in the additional phases. If for some reason you have decided to not participate – please note that your participation is completely voluntary, but I ask that you review the information below before deciding.

As shared in previous communications, I am a doctorate student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Education Leadership and Policy Study. As part of my doctoral program, I am conducting a research study for my dissertation that focuses on the career anchors of female superintendents. The purpose of my study is to uncover the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency.

Below is a brief description of PHASES 2 & 3 of this research study.

**Phase 4-** The **Semi-Structured Interview** - 20-randomly selected Virginia female superintendents will be selected to participate in the semi-structured interviews. These confidential interviews will be audio recorded and will consist 20-research based questions, which will take about 30-minutes of response time. The semi-structured interviews can be conducted at your convenience in person (at your office) or via SKYPE, which should be specified on the *included ONLINE permission form (>>>>)* by January 17, 2014. Once I hear from you, I will follow up with your office to schedule and confirm the interview appointment date, time, and to answer any questions you may have. *Participants who complete the included Semi-Structured Interview Permission Form with a selected date by January 17, 2014 will be entered into a drawing for one of two a \$25 gift cards. The odds of winning are 1 in 10 and the winner will be announced/notified on or by January 21, 2014.*

**Phase 5-** The **Career Anchor Self-Assessment Questionnaire** - This 40-item questionnaire will be extended to all interview participants. The Career Anchor Self-Assessment Questionnaire is published by *Wiley & Sons* and was originally developed by Edgar Schein, a leader in the field of career and professional studies. The questions are designed to help reveal what you really want out of a career. It should take just 10 to 15 minutes to complete and the results are instantaneous. The link will be forwarded following the interview. *Those completing the Career Anchor Self-Assessment Questionnaire by February 7, 2014 will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 gift card.*

*Odds of winning this gift card are 1 in 20 and the winner will be announced/notified on or by February 11, 2014.*

As an educator and researcher, I know the value of confidentiality; therefore, I want you to know that the semi-structured interview (PHASE 2) questions will not request any personal information other than the title of your position; however, the participation permission form does request your name, division, and contact information. Please note that your personal contact information will be utilized for scheduling purposes only and will not be shared with others.

Understanding how valuable your time is I appreciate your consideration in assisting with this study and would like to schedule an interview at your convenience between January 17-February 3, 2014. The interviews can be in person at your office or via SKYPE, which should be specified on the attached permission form by January 13, 2014. Once I hear from you, I will follow up with your office to schedule and confirm the interview appointment, to share a copy of the interview questions, and to answer any questions you may have.

***Those agreeing to participate in the semi-structured interviews and returns the permission form with a selected interview date by January 17, 2014 will be entered into a drawing for one of two a \$25 gift cards. The odds of winning are 1 in 10 and the winner will be announced/notified on or by January 21, 2014.***

Again, I am including a copy of the Interview Participation Permission Form and an additional copy of an excerpt from Research Proposal in this communication for your consideration. If additional information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [akp2012@vt.edu](mailto:akp2012@vt.edu) or 757.333.2039.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours in education,



A. Katrise Perera

## Semi-Structured Interview Participant Permission Form

### PHASE 2 • Semi-Structured Interview Communication

#### Permission Form

**\* 1. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME & DIVISION BELOW.**

NAME

DIVISION

**\* 2. At which email address and phone number would you prefer the researcher contacts you?**

Email Address Preference

Phone Number Preference

**\* 3. DO YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PHASE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY?**

- YES, I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW
- NO, I DO NOT WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PHASE OF THE STUDY

**\* 4. Do you prefer to be INTERVIEWED IN PERSON?**

- Yes, I prefer to be interviewed in person
- No, I do not wish to be interviewed in person

**5. Do you prefer to be INTERVIEWED VIA SKYPE? (If you select this is your preference, please include your SKYPE address in question 6).**

- Yes, I prefer to be interviewed via SKYPE and will include my SKYPE address in the next question.
- No, I do not wish to be interviewed via SKYPE

**6. I agreed to be interviewed via SKYPE and my SKYPE address is...**

**\* 7. WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED DATE AND TIME YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE INTERVIEWED?**

	MM	DD	YYYY	HH	MM	AM/PM
1ST CHOICE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2ND CHOICE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3RD CHOICE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

## Research Proposal

Research Proposal: Perceptions of Female Superintendents in Virginia Regarding The Personal and Professional Factors Impacting Their Career Paths

Conducted by: A. Katrise Perera under the direction of Carol Cash, Ed. D.

Abstract: Females currently represent the largest number of teachers in the United States but yet they represent the smallest number of superintendents (Miller, 2009). While female students and educators are increasing, few of them have attained the Superintendency positions within school divisions (Hopkins, 2012). This phenomenon will be examined in the Commonwealth of Virginia through a mixed-methods research study, which will provide an understanding of the career development experiences of female superintendents. The researcher will utilize Schein's career anchor theory (1990), which examines the personal and professional values and dimensions that influence career choices. Schein's theory was applied to leadership positions in higher education and to females in other fields, but has never been applied to females in K-12 superintendent positions. The purpose of this study is to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in public K-12 school divisions in Virginia and understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency. Barriers might be identified and systematically removed, thus achieving greater gender equality in K-12 superintendent positions. Ultimately, the researcher hopes that this research study will contribute to succession planning in K-12 school divisions.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research study is to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency. This research study will identify and determine what career anchors influence female superintendent in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. To understand the career anchors behind their progress towards the superintendency would shed insight into the self-concept and self-advocacy the female superintendents have developed around her career. To understand the career anchors would also provide insight into the professional and personal

choices of female superintendents in Virginia. The study will be able to contribute to policies toward improved gender access and equity in the superintendency.

Research Guiding Questions: This research study will focus on the career decisions of female superintendents employed in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The research was organized around the following key questions:

Research Questions/Guiding Questions: This research study will focus on the career decisions of female superintendents employed in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The research was organized around the following key questions:

- Research Question 1. What are the self-perceived career anchors and to what extent do these influence females in superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions?
- Research Question 2. What barriers and to what extent do these barriers prevent women from obtaining and maintaining the superintendency?
- Research Question 3. What are the experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and how do personal and professional factors influence their career decisions?

Research Design: A mixed methods research design will be employed to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence career decisions related to the superintendency of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. As a result of the more sophisticated and demanding research questions being asked, mixed methods designs are increasingly used (Burke-Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By using a mixed methods design, the researcher expects that a better understanding of the question can be developed compared to just using quantitative method or qualitative method alone. The current research will link two data sets together wherein one data set will build another. This makes sure that the interview section will have a relationship with the quantitative research section (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

A quantitative approach will be employed to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence career decisions related to the superintendency of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The personal and professional factors,

which influence the career decisions of female superintendents, will be the phenomenon to be considered in this study.

A qualitative approach will explore the perceptions and the experiences of female superintendents in terms of their career path towards superintendency. This will help to understand perceptions, opinions, as well as the feelings of participants based on their personal experiences regarding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Vogt, 2007). The focus of this section is to show how female superintendents interpret their experiences and how they provide meaning to the personal and professional decisions they have made in order to achieve their positions. The primary learning objective is to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participants' perceptions and not that of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

**Target Population, & Samples:** An objective of the study is to explore and define the factors that influence female superintendents' personal and professional decisions from a sampling of Virginia female superintendents. For the quantitative research study, the target population will be the current 38-Virginia female superintendents. For the qualitative portion of this study, 18-Virginia female superintendents will be randomly selected from those participating in the survey(s). According to Gorman (1997) and Creswell (1998), it is necessary to gather at least 15 to 25 participants in order to provide thematic saturation.



**Appendix E**  
**Interview Protocol Template/Worksheet**

**INTRODUCTIONS:** (5 minutes)

- *Introduce self and allow participant to do the same*
- ***Express Appreciation** - Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today*

**HOUSEKEEPING:**

- *To facilitate our note taking, I would like to audio tape our conversations today. I know you signed the online permission form – but I want to confirm on audiotape that you are okay with me recording our interview.*
- *For your information, only myself, the researchers, and my transcriber on the project will be privy to the tapes, which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. Additionally, (1) all information will be held confidential, and (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable.*
- *Thank you again for your agreeing to participate. We have planned this interview to last no longer than an 1/2 hour. During this time, we have several questions that we would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.*

**REMINDERS:**

- ***The purpose of this research study is to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions.***
- *You were given the background info on my conceptual framework and the interview questions in advance.*

**PAUSE & REFLECT:**

- *Are there any questions about the informed consent document?*

**GROUND RULES:**

- There are no right or wrong answers—I am purely interested in your experience as a female superintendent.
- **Semi-structured Interview:** I have 14 semi-structured questions that should take us approximately 20-25minutes. Some of the questions will seem to overlap but they were designed to get the best response from each participant.

**COLLECT:** If there are no more questions ... we will proceed

1. **Question:** What made you pursue the superintendency?

**Seemed to be a natural progression... hunger for more, no burning desire. Mentors...**

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Question:** Are there barriers that exist in obtaining the superintendency for females? If so, what are they?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Question:** Do females create personal career anchors? If so, what are they?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Question:** Do you believe female superintendents have to overcome personal challenges? If so, what are they?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Question:** In Virginia, do female superintendents face barriers in obtaining the position? If so, Why or why not?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

6. **Question:** Do personal career anchors influence female superintendents? If so, how?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

7. **Question:** Do you believe female superintendents have to overcome professional challenges? If so, what are they?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

8. **Question:** What factors affect your optimal performance as female superintendent?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

9. **Question:** What factors constitute problems to you in your current position and what factors may influence female superintendent's job turnover?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

10. **Question:** What factors do you consider as liabilities and/or assets to you as female superintendent?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

11. **Question:** With most teachers in the United States being female, what needs to be changed, in your opinion, to have females serving as superintendents in at least 50% of the school districts in this country?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

12. **Question:** Describe the level of influence you have on your school board and the level of influence your school board has on you?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

13. **Question:** Describe the level of influence you have on teachers and the level of influence teachers have on you?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

14. **Question:** Describe the level of influence you have on administrators and the level of influence administrators have on you?

**Potential Probes:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

**WRAP UP:** (5 Minutes)

- Again, thank you for allowing me to interview you today.
- Remember that your identity will remain private.
- Remember – I will follow up within a week or so with the link to the *Career Anchors* survey
- Reiterate contact information (give business card) —if they have questions or concerns.
- The final \$25 gift certificate will be drawn on ...and sent out ASAP.

## Appendix F

### Letter Written to Wiley & Sons Requesting Use of Online Survey

December 2013

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.  
111 River Street  
Hoboken, New Jersey, 07030-5774  
[\(201\) 748-6011](tel:(201)748-6011)  
fax [\(201\) 748-6008](tel:(201)748-6008)

Dear Wiley & Sons representative,

I am a doctorate student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (aka-Virginia Tech) in Education Leadership and Policy Study. As part of my doctoral program, I am conducting a mixed-method research study for my dissertation that focuses on the career anchors of Virginia K-12 public school female superintendents – which consist of 38-females. This research study is being chaired by Dr. Carol Cash ([ccash48@vt.edu](mailto:ccash48@vt.edu)), with the approval of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), and is completely voluntary. The purpose of my study is to uncover the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency. **Due to the lack of research funding, I am writing to request the use of Edgar Schein’s Career Anchor online survey at no cost (waive the \$40 fee) to the 37-participants for the quantitative portion of my research study. The individual results will only be used in my research findings and will not be extended to the participants.**

As schools and school divisions face challenges in meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse society, school leaders will need to find ways to address the opportunity for the leadership growth of females (Miller, 2010; Moses, 2009). If educational leaders are to successfully increase the pool of female administrators, it is vital to understand the skills, motives, and values that females consider important when making their career choices and how they perceive leadership positions in general. Examining the career path experiences of females in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and understanding how personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency can close the gap in the literature on the impact, significance, and intersection of personal and professional factors in career decision-making among female superintendents.

I hope that the findings from this research study will impact future policies, programs, and professional practices by identifying the personal and professional factors that influence the career decisions of current female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. This

research study shall provide perspective for females who work in education of the possible factors that may influence their career choices. To comprehend the factors that shape the career decisions of female superintendents, one would make the educational sector more able to improve gender equity and diversity. I believe that the findings from this research study will ideally yield insight into effective practices for recruiting and retaining female superintendents as well as ways for school divisions to develop a more inclusive organizational culture through succession planning. Furthermore, I am willing to share the data findings with Wiley & Sons at no cost.

I am attaching an excerpt of my Research Proposal for your consideration, which is attached. If additional information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [akp2012@vt.edu](mailto:akp2012@vt.edu) or via my cell at 757.333.2039. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours in education,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'A. Katrise Perera'.

A. Katrise Perera

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL SENT TO FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS IN VIRGINIA

### Research Proposal: Perceptions of Female Superintendents in Virginia Regarding The Personal and Professional Factors Impacting Their Career Paths

Conducted by: A. Katrise Perera under the direction of Carol Cash, Ed. D.

**Abstract:** Females currently represent the largest number of teachers in the United States but yet they represent the smallest number of superintendents (Miller, 2009). While female students and educators are increasing, few of them have attained the Superintendency positions within school divisions (Hopkins, 2012). This phenomenon will be examined in the Commonwealth of Virginia through a mixed-methods research study, which will provide an understanding of the career development experiences of female superintendents. The researcher will utilize Schein's career anchor theory (1990), which examines the personal and professional values and dimensions that influence career choices. Schein's theory was applied to leadership positions in higher education and to females in other fields, but has never been applied to females in K-12 superintendent positions. The purpose of this study is to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in public K-12 school divisions in Virginia and understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency. Barriers might be identified and systematically removed, thus achieving greater gender equality in K-12 superintendent positions. Ultimately, the researcher hopes that this research study will contribute to succession planning in K-12 school divisions.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research study is to examine the career path experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence their career decisions related to the superintendency. This research study will identify and determine what career anchors influence female superintendent in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. To understand the career anchors behind their progress towards the superintendency would shed insight into the self-concept and self-advocacy the female superintendents have developed around her career. To understand the career anchors would also provide insight into the professional and personal choices of female superintendents in Virginia. The study will be able to contribute to policies toward improved gender access and equity in the superintendency.

**Research Guiding Questions:** This research study will focus on the career decisions of female superintendents employed in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The research was organized around the following key questions:

**Research Questions/Guiding Questions:** This research study will focus on the career decisions of female superintendents employed in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The research was organized around the following key questions:

- Research Question 1. What are the self-perceived career anchors and to what extent do



these influence females in superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions?

- Research Question 2. What barriers and to what extent do these barriers prevent women from obtaining and maintaining the superintendency?
- Research Question 3. What are the experiences of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions and how do personal and professional factors influence their career decisions?

**Research Design:** A mixed methods research design will be employed to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence career decisions related to the superintendency of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. As a result of the more sophisticated and demanding research questions being asked, mixed methods designs are increasingly used (Burke-Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By using a mixed methods design, the researcher expects that a better understanding of the question can be developed compared to just using quantitative method or qualitative method alone. The current research will link two data sets together wherein one data set will build another. This makes sure that the interview section will have a relationship with the quantitative research section (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

A quantitative approach will be employed to understand how and to what extent personal and professional factors influence career decisions related to the superintendency of female superintendents in Virginia public K-12 school divisions. The personal and professional factors, which influence the career decisions of female superintendents, will be the phenomenon to be considered in this study.

A qualitative approach will explore the perceptions and the experiences of female superintendents in terms of their career path towards superintendency. This will help to understand perceptions, opinions, as well as the feelings of participants based on their personal experiences regarding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Vogt, 2007). The focus of this section is to show how female superintendents interpret their experiences and how they provide meaning to the personal and professional decisions they have made in order to achieve their positions. The primary learning objective is to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participants' perceptions and not that of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

**Target Population, Samples, and Sampling Procedure:** An objective of the study is to explore and define the factors that influence female superintendents' personal and professional decisions from a purposeful sampling of 18 Virginia female superintendents. According to Gorman (1997) and Creswell (1998), it is necessary to gather at least 15 to 25 participants in order to provide thematic saturation. For the current research study, the target population will be current Virginia female superintendents. The participant sample will be identified from the panel consisting of the researcher and leadership experts willingly agreed to engage in the research study through a purposeful sampling technique. The leadership expert panelist will represent the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, the Virginia Association of School Boards, Women

Education Leaders in Virginia, and approved by the committee chair of this research study. A purposeful sampling technique will be utilized to focus the collection of responses to participants who could contribute to the purpose of the study. Purposeful sampling seeks information-rich cases for in depth study (Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling includes selecting a sample of individuals with a particular 'purpose' in mind.

## Appendix G

### Career Anchors Self-Assessment Survey Email & Sample Question Information

Dear Virginia Female Superintendent,

You've been randomly selected to participate in PHASE 3 of my research study, which request that you complete the Career Anchors Self-Assessment (link). This 40-item questionnaire was developed by Edgar Schein, a leader in the field of career and professional studies. The questions are designed to help reveal what you really want out of a career. It takes just 10 to 15 minutes to complete and the results are instantaneous.

To begin, use the link, username, and password below to enter Career Anchors Online. Once logged in, you can complete your assessment and immediately get your results.

**Username:** jane@acme.com

**Password:** as8d7f6fs

**Link:** <http://careeranchorsonline.com>

\*Proposed Sample Invite Email (still awaiting consent from the survey publisher)

### Sample Questions

The 40-item Career Anchors Online questionnaire was developed over the past four decades by was developed by the legendary MIT professor and human resources expert Edgar Schein. Participants answer

#### › Career Anchors Self-Assessment

					Intro	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	Top 5
<b>Questions 11-20</b>										
					1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Often	4 Always		
11.	I am most fulfilled in my work when I am completely free to define my own tasks, schedules, and procedures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>					
12.	I would not stay in an organization that would give me assignments that would jeopardize my job security.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
13.	Building a business of my own is more important to me than being a high-level manager in someone else's organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>					
14.	I have felt most fulfilled in my career when I have been able to use my talents in the service of others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
15.	I will feel successful in my career only if I have met and overcome increasingly difficult challenges.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>					
16.	I dream of a career that will permit me to integrate my personal, family and work needs.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
17.	Becoming a senior functional or technical manager in my area of expertise is more attractive to me than becoming a general manager.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>					
		1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Often	4 Always					
					<b>SAVE</b>	<b>BACK</b>	<b>NEXT</b>			

Participants taking the survey, answer each item **1-Never**, **2-Seldom**, **3-Often**, or **4-Always**. If they can't decide, or change their minds, they can always modify their answers before submitting the survey.

🏠 [back to top](#)

## Appendix H

### Wiley & Son Online Survey Questions and Their Labels

Q1 - I want to be so good at what I do that others will always seek my expert advice.

Q2 - I am most fulfilled in my work when I have been able to integrate the efforts of others towards a common task.

Q3 - I dream of having a career that will allow me the freedom to do a job in my own way and on my own schedule.

Q4 - I am always on the lookout for ideas that would permit me to start my own enterprise.

Q5 - Security and stability are more important to me than freedom and autonomy.

Q6 - I would rather leave my organization than be put into a job that would compromise my ability to pursue personal and family concerns.

Q7 - I will feel successful in my career only if I have a feeling of having made a real contribution to the welfare of society.

Q8 - I dream of a career in which i will always have the challenge of solving ever more difficult problems.

Q9 - I will feel successful in my career only if I can develop my skills to an ever-increasing level of competence.

Q10 - I dream of being in charge of the whole organization.

Q11 - I am most often fulfilled in my work when I am completely free to define my own tasks, schedules, and procedures.

Q12 - I would not stay in an organization that would give me assignments that would jeopardize my job security.

Q13 - Building a business of my own is more important to me than being a high-level manager in someone else's organization.

Q14 - I have felt most fulfilled in my career when I have been able to use my talents in the service of others.

Q15 - I will feel successful in my career only if I have met and overcome increasingly difficult challenges.

Q16 - I dream of a career that will permit me to integrate my personal, family, and work needs.

Q17 - Becoming a senior functional or technical manager in my area of expertise is more attractive to me than becoming a general manager.

Q18 - I will feel successful in my career only if I achieve complete autonomy and freedom to define my work.

Q19 - I usually seek jobs in organizations that will give me a sense of stability and security.

Q20 - I feel most fulfilled when I have been able to build something that is primarily the result of my own skill and effort.

Q21 - I will feel successful only if I become a high level general manager in some organization.

Q22 - Using my talents to make the world a better place to live is what drives my career decisions.

Q23 - I have been most fulfilled in my career when I have been able to solve seemingly unsolvable problems or won out over seemingly impossible odds.

Q24 - I feel successful in life only if I have been able to balance my personal, family, and career requirements.

Q25 - I dream of a career that will allow me to feel a sense of stability and security.

Q26 - I would rather leave my organization than to accept a rotational assignment that would take me out of my area of expertise.

Q27 - Balancing the demands of my personal and professional life is more important to me than a high-level managerial position.

Q28 - I dream of being in a career that makes a real contribution to humanity and society.

Q29 - I feel successful in my career only if I have created an enterprise of my own based on my own ideas and skills.

Q30 - Becoming a general manager is more attractive to me than becoming a senior functional manager in my area of expertise.

Q31 - The chance to do a job in my own way, free of rules and constraints, is very important to me.

Q32 - I prefer work opportunities that strongly challenge my problem-solving and competitive skills.

Q33 - I dream of starting up and building my own business.

Q34 - I would rather leave my organization than accept a position that would undermine my ability to be of service to others.

Q35 - I am most fulfilled in my work when I have been able to use my special skills and talents.

Q36 - I would rather leave my organization than accept a job that would take me away from the path to general management.

Q37 - I am most fulfilled in my work life when I feel that I have completed financial and employment security.

Q38 - I would rather leave my organization than accept a job that would reduce my autonomy and freedom.

Q39 - I have always sought out work opportunities that minimize interference with my personal and family concerns.

Q40 - Working on problems that are difficult to solve is more important to me than achieving a high-level managerial position.



**Appendix I**  
**Career Anchor Constructs**

*Autonomy:*

1. The chance to do a job in my own way, free of rules and constraints, is very important to me.
2. I dream of having a career that will allow me the freedom to do a job in my own way and on my own schedule.
3. I am most often fulfilled in my work when I am completely free to define my own tasks, schedules, and procedures.
4. I will feel successful in my career only if I achieve complete autonomy and freedom to define my work.
5. I would rather leave my organization than accept a job that would reduce my autonomy and freedom.

*Creativity:*

1. I am always on the lookout for ideas that would permit me to start my own enterprise.
2. Building a business of my own is more important to me than being a high-level manager in someone else's organization.
3. I dream of starting up and building my own business.
4. I feel most fulfilled when I have been able to build something that is primarily the result of my own skill and effort.
5. I am most fulfilled in my work when I have been able to use my special skills and talents.
6. I feel successful in my career only if I have created an enterprise of my own based on my own ideas and skills.

*Lifestyle Integration:*

1. I dream of a career that will permit me to integrate my personal, family, and work needs.
2. Balancing the demands of my personal and professional life is more important to me than a high-level managerial position.
3. I have always sought out work opportunities that minimize interference with my personal and family concerns.
4. I would rather leave my organization than be put into a job that would compromise my ability to pursue personal and family concerns.
5. I feel successful in life only if I have been able to balance my personal, family, and career requirements.

*Managerial Competence:*

1. I will feel successful only if I become a high level general manager in some organization.
2. Becoming a general manager is more attractive to me than becoming a senior functional manager in my area of expertise.
3. I am most fulfilled in my work when I have been able to integrate the efforts of others towards a common task.
4. I dream of being in charge of the whole organization.

*Security:*

1. Security and stability are more important to me than freedom and autonomy.
2. I would not stay in an organization that would give me assignments that would jeopardize my job security.
3. I usually seek jobs in organizations that will give me a sense of stability and security.
4. I dream of a career that will allow me to feel a sense of stability and security.

5. I am most fulfilled in my work life when I feel that I have completed financial and employment security.

*Service:*

1. I prefer work opportunities that strongly challenge my problem-solving and competitive skills.
2. I will feel successful in my career only if I have a feeling of having made a real contribution to the welfare of society.
3. I have felt most fulfilled in my career when I have been able to use my talents in the service of others.
4. Using my talents to make the world a better place to live is what drives my career decisions.
5. I would rather leave my organization than accept a position that would undermine my ability to be of service to others.
6. I dream of being in a career that makes a real contribution to humanity and society.

*Technical Competence:*

1. I would rather leave my organization than accept a job that would take me away from the path to general management.
2. Becoming a senior functional or technical manager in my area of expertise is more attractive to me than becoming a general manager.
3. I would rather leave my organization than to accept a rotational assignment that would take me out of my area of expertise.
4. I want to be so good at what I do that others will always seek my expert advice.

*Variety:*

1. Working on problems that are difficult to solve is more important to me than achieving a high-level managerial position.
2. I will feel successful in my career only if I can develop my skills to an ever-increasing level of competence.
3. I have been most fulfilled in my career when I have been able to solve seemingly unsolvable problems or won out over seemingly impossible odds.
4. I dream of a career in which i will always have the challenge of solving ever more difficult problems.
5. I will feel successful in my career only if I have met and overcome increasingly difficult challenges.

Reference: Schein, E. (2013). *Career Anchors; Self Assessment*. John Wiley & Sons