Women and the Public School Superintendency: An Integrative Review of the Dissertation Research

Carol A. Swingle
Western Michigan University

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WOMEN AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY:
AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW OF THE
DISSERTATION RESEARCH

by

Carol A. Swingle

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WOMEN AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Carol A. Swingle, Ed.D.
Western Michigan University, 1995

The purpose of this study was to prepare a comprehensive summary, evaluation, and synthesis of the dissertation research conducted from 1970 to 1994 regarding women public school superintendents.

The units of study for this research synthesis were the 79 criterion-selected doctoral dissertations completed at colleges and universities in the United States between 1970 and 1994 that utilized women public school superintendents as their sole, or primary, data set.

Data were collected relative to both the content and the quality of the selected dissertations. Data analysis was completed using the integrative research review techniques of listing factors, taking a vote, and averaging statistics.

Findings and conclusions included the following:

1. The mean quality score of the research was found to be in the upper range of mediocre; the median quality score was good. Primary quality weaknesses included failure to include an abstract; failure to include clarifying information such as delimitations, limitations, and definitions of terms; and failure to adequately discuss and justify the appropriateness of the data collection and data analysis methods selected.
2. As was found in other syntheses of women in administration research, these studies of women superintendents were primarily focused on describing who the women superintendents are; what they think; and what barriers stand, or have stood, in their way. Although valuable for the purposes of comparison, this focus ultimately does little to develop new, or advance current, educational administrative theory beyond the status quo.

3. Since the completion of the previous syntheses, there has been an increase in the number of qualitative research studies. This is important for two reasons: First, because previous syntheses recommended more qualitative research, the increase may be indicating that those recommendations have been heard and heeded. Second, this increase in the quantity of qualitative research may be a sign that the use of more sophisticated research strategies, such as case studies and observations, may also be forthcoming and, thus, greater potential to generate new educational administration theory may be emerging.
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Carol A. Swingle
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With the passage of the 1964 civil rights legislation came a resurgent interest in the study of women in America. This interest, which had lain dormant and all but forgotten in the aftermath of the women's suffrage movement, steadily regained strength over the past 30 years and continues to flourish in today's behavioral and social sciences research communities.

Shakeshaft, in her 1980 doctoral dissertation, offered three possible explanations for this resurgence of interest. First, the "Sputnik era" and the civil rights movement spawned an increase in the number of women entering graduate schools and, thus, in the number of women being trained as researchers. Secondly, the establishment of women's studies courses and programs at many colleges and universities fostered increased interest in the reading and producing of research for and about women. Finally, as the interest in research on women grew and expanded, so did funding commitments, both public and private.

Out of this resurgent interest, and since the mid to early 1970s, the study of women in educational administration has also become an increasingly prolific research theme. With this proliferation has come a number of reviews and syntheses of the research on women in educational administration (Adkison, 1981; Fauth, 1984; Motaref, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1980; Walker, 1992). While each has presented
thorough and extensive summaries of the research on the body of women educational administrators as a whole, none has conducted a synthesis of research directly focusing on any of the many subpopulations of women in educational administration, such as, women superintendents.

Statement of the Problem

The lack of research syntheses regarding women in educational administration subpopulations could be explained, at least in part, by the very fact that the research base on women educational administrators was in a growth mode during the 1970s and 1980s. Since most of the existing syntheses were prepared in the early to mid 1980s, it is possible that the quantity of available research was simply not extensive enough to support isolated subpopulation research. However, as the body of women in educational administration research continues to expand, the opportunity for and the value of studying the various women in educational administration subpopulations is an area of focus that appears to be at just the beginning of its emergence.

With this ongoing expansion of the research base and in light of the relatively recent publication of research summaries regarding women chief executive officers in work environments such as politics (Cantor & Bernay, 1992) and business (Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992; Helgesen, 1990; Morrison, White, & VanVelsor, 1992), the development of a summary and synthesis of research on women public school chief executive officers seems not only valuable but also a timely expansion of the women in administration literature base.
Additionally, a preliminary computer search of selected educational databases (Educational Resources Information Center [ERIC], Dissertation Abstracts International, and Psychological Abstracts) indicated not only that there is a substantial body of accumulated research on women and the public school superintendency, but also that this body of research contains studies relating to almost all of the major theme categories identified and used in previous women in educational administration research syntheses. These theme categories, which were originally formulated by Shakeshaft (1980), include: status, profiles, attitudes, barriers, leadership styles/effectiveness, structural determinants, theory literature, and communication.

Of the studies identified, a significant proportion were located in Dissertation Abstracts International. Because the overwhelming majority of women superintendent research was located in the dissertation literature, and because a large portion of the published research that was located consisted of the publication of dissertation findings, the research analyzed in this synthesis has been limited to dissertation studies only.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to prepare a comprehensive summary, evaluation, and synthesis of the dissertation research that has been produced on women public school superintendents from 1970 to 1994.

Specifically, this study sought to accomplish the following research goals:
1. Summarize and analyze the overall characteristics and quality of the dissertation research that investigates women public school superintendents.

2. Summarize the findings of the dissertation research on women superintendents.

3. Synthesize the dissertation research on women superintendents.

4. Compare the findings of the dissertation research on women public school superintendents to the findings of previous women in educational administration research syntheses.

5. Posit new research directions and implications from the findings of the dissertation research on women superintendents.

6. Provide new insights into career and employment strategies for both incumbent and aspiring women superintendents.

Research Questions

This synthesis was driven by 15 research questions, all of which are directly related to one of the six goals cited above. They and their corresponding research goals are as follows:

Research Goal 1: Summarize and analyze the overall characteristics and quality of the dissertation research that investigates women public school superintendents.

Research Question 1: What are the overall characteristics of the included dissertation research?

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between identified research issues and selected time periods?
Research Question 3: What is the quality of the included dissertation research?

Research Question 4: Are there relationships between the quality of the research, the research design, the issues addressed, and/or selected researcher characteristics?

Research Goal 2: Summarize the findings of the dissertation research on women superintendents.

Research Question 5: What are the findings of the dissertation research regarding women superintendents?

Research Goal 3: Synthesize the dissertation research on women superintendents.

Research Question 6: In what ways can the research findings be reexamined and integrated?

Research Question 7: What patterns or trends does the research identify?

Research Question 8: What is the direction of the identified patterns or trends?

Research Goal 4: Compare the findings of the dissertation research on women public school superintendents to the findings of previous women in educational administration research reviews.

Research Question 9: In what ways are the findings of this research synthesis similar to previous research syntheses on women in educational administration?

Research Question 10: In what ways are the findings of this research synthesis different from previous research syntheses on women in educational administration?
Research Goal 5: Posit new research directions and implications from the dissertation research on women superintendents.

Research Question 11: What recommendations regarding future research can be offered?

Research Question 12: Can changes or additions to existing theory or understandings be proposed from summarizing and synthesizing this research?

Research Question 13: Can new or modified methodological and/or research design procedures be proposed from this research?

Research Goal 6: Provide new insights into career and employment strategies for both incumbent and aspiring women superintendents.

Research Question 14: What recommendations to aspiring women superintendents can be made from this research?

Research Question 15: What recommendations to incumbent women superintendents can be made from this research?

Significance of the Study

According to Cooper (1982), "an integrative research review is . . . the synthesis of separate empirical findings into a coherent whole" (p. 291). It differs from a traditional narrative literature review in that it systematically accumulates and analyzes research findings using statistical operations.

Feldman (1971) offered four reasons that support the value of research integration. First, integration is a survey of research. Second, integration can simulate replication. Third, an integration can be used to
simulate a national sample. Fourth, integration can have characteristics of "primary" research, such as testing hypotheses, lending (or not lending) support to extant propositions, offering new information and generalizations, generating theoretical issues to be explored, and suggesting future research.

Although integrative research procedures have been applied in previous research syntheses of women in educational administration, no such procedures have been applied in a synthesis of studies focused on women superintendent studies only. Consequently, the only summary work regarding women superintendents has been that which generally appears in introductory literature review sections of primary research projects. Such introductory literature reviews are, generally, only narrative summaries and, often, only focus on those studies which provide theoretical and/or research foundation and support to the hypotheses that the researcher is proposing. When literature reviews are used only in this way, there is always the possibility of formulating misinterpretations and skewed conclusions regarding the full body of research in general.

The primary significance of this study, then, is that through a comprehensive and systematic review and synthesis of the dissertation research on women public school superintendents, a broader and, thus, more complete, analysis and interpretation of the full body of this literature may be established.
Delimitations

This study was limited to only those studies that (a) have been completed through a college or university in the United States between 1970 and 1994; (b) used women who were currently, or recently, serving as a public school superintendent as the sole, or a primary, population/sample analyzed in the data set; (c) included a hypothesis or research question specifically identifying women public school superintendents as a primary focus of inquiry; (d) were primary research studies; and (e) included a minimum of 5 subjects in each sample or population considered in the data set, if the study was empirical.

Limitations

The following limitations impacted this research synthesis:

1. Eligible studies were identified through the Dissertation Abstracts International database. Any eligible dissertations that were completed in 1994 but were not on file in the database by December 1994 would not have been included in this synthesis. As a result, there is a possibility that there could be some dissertations that should have been included but were not.

2. Any of the data cited directly from the studies being synthesized were assumed to have been computed, analyzed, and reported accurately.
Definition of Terms

**Integrative research review:** An integrative research review summarizes past research by drawing overall conclusions from many separate studies that are believed to address related or identical hypotheses (Cooper, 1984).

**Research synthesis:** Another term, or synonym, for an integrative research review (Oliver & Spokane, 1983).

**Superintendent:** An individual who is designated as the chief officer of a public school district and is charged with the responsibility and execution of activities which have as their purpose the general direction and control of the affairs of a local school district (Carlson, 1972).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into eight chapters. Chapter I introduces the study and its procedures through the purpose of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the significance of the study, delimitations and limitations, and definitions of terms.

Chapter II presents a review of literature related to women in positions of leadership not only as public school superintendents, but also in other areas of leadership including women in chief executive positions in other fields of employment. It also provides a brief summary of Shakeshaft's (1980) and Motaref's (1988) previous syntheses of the women in educational administration research.

Chapter III discusses the general guidelines for conducting a research synthesis, the targeted sample population, the selection criteria
followed, and the research procedures and instrumentation utilized.

Chapter IV descriptively summarizes and analyzes the characteristics and quality of the selected dissertation research on women public school superintendents.

Chapter V summarizes and synthesizes the included women superintendents dissertation research that investigated attitudes, barriers, status, and structural determinants.

Chapter VI summarizes and synthesizes the dissertation research on women superintendents that investigated leadership characteristics, profiles, communication, and theory.

Chapter VII compares the results of this synthesis of women superintendent research with the findings of the previous research syntheses focusing on collective populations of women in educational administration.

Chapter VIII collectively summarizes all findings, posits new research directions and implications, and offers insights into career and employment strategies for both incumbent and aspiring women superintendents.

Summary

This chapter has introduced not only the research topic, but also the procedural foundations upon which this study was built. Through the presentation of the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitations and limitations of the study, and a definition of important terms, a synthesis of the research on women public school superintendents has
been established as the study's focus.

In addition to an overview of the study's organization, the integrative research review has also been introduced as the study's research methodology.

Chapter II presents a review of literature related to women in positions of leadership not only as public school superintendents, but also in other areas of leadership including women in chief executive positions in other fields of employment.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of literature related to women and leadership. Its focus is on women and leadership in not only the field of education, but also in other areas of the work force.

Beginning with an historically-based description of 20th century women's movement into and within leadership hierarchies, this chapter then moves to a discussion of the styles and characteristics women bring to leadership positions, continues with a description of Shakeshaft's (1980) and Motaref's (1988) previous syntheses of the women in educational administration research, and ends with an introduction to women superintendents as an emerging research topic.

Historical Perspectives

Historically, the fate of women public school administrators (and managerial women in other employment sectors) has been tied directly to the feminist movement (Gotwalt & Towns, 1986). In fact, it seems that only during periods of intense feminist activity is the patriarchal social model that undergirds not only the majority of all modern-day religious dogma, but also the very foundations of modern-day society, challenged.

Example after example can be found to document the study of androcentric biases in all aspects of society. Gilligan (1993), Sanford
and Donovan (1984), Heilbrun (1979), and Chodorow (1978), among others, have each studied the psychology of women's childhood socialization experiences. Barnett and Baruch (1978); Hennig (1970); Hennig and Jardim (1977); Helgesen (1990); and Morrison et al. (1992) have reported research findings relative to male dominance in the corporate workplace. Cantor and Bernay (1992) have recently reported on the female experience in the male-dominated political arena. And Shakeshaft (1987), Adkison (1981), and Marshall (1992) are but a few of the published researchers who have explored women in public school administration.

In 1909, Ella Flagg Young, the newly appointed, first female superintendent of the Chicago public schools said, "In the near future, we shall have more women than men in charge of the vast educational system. It is a woman's natural field, and she is no longer satisfied to do the larger part of the work and yet be denied the leadership" (cited in Gotwalt & Towns, 1986, p. 13).

Unfortunately, this prediction was not meant to be realized in any near future. Shakeshaft (1987) found that between 1905 and 1985, women's representation in the public school work force had decreased at all levels except for the school board and the superintendency. While percentages for females in both board positions and the superintendency have increased since 1905, the 1985 statistics cited by Shakeshaft (1987) of 38.3% and 3%, respectively, and the current 1994 statistics of 40.3% and 10.2%, respectively (Bushweller, 1994), still do not demonstrate an equitable proportion of women in educational administration as compared to the total number of women employed in the field of
education.

After studying women managers who have broken the "glass ceiling" in medium-sized, nontraditional business organizations, Rosener (1990) posited the following:

The first female executives, because they were breaking new ground, adhered to many of the "rules of conduct" that spelled success for men. Now a second wave of women is making its way into top management, not by adopting the style and habits that have proved successful for men, but by drawing on the skills and attitudes they developed from their shared experience as women. (p. 119)

In today's work force, the representation of women in managerial positions in all work environments continues to fluctuate. During some years the percentages grow; during others, they recede. In reality, the percentages of women in managerial positions have not changed measurably since the beginning of the century.

Women as Leaders

While underrepresentation continues to be an ongoing cause for concern, one positive area of growth that is beginning to emerge is the attention to and recognition of how women lead. In Megatrends for Women, Aburdene and Naisbitt (1992) observed that

though women are not yet fully liberated, they are transforming the different [societal] arenas... by building a new reality, a new social order or paradigm that will eventually replace the old order based on the domination of the male sex, its values and power. (p. xv)

To what do they attribute this transformation? As more and more women have entered the work force, and the onset of the "information age" has required a general work force that is more highly educated, the "personality" of the work force has changed. With this change in work
force personality has come the need for changes in leadership strategies.

Drucker (1980) briefly described what this work force personality and the changes it brings would look like:

The employer of tomorrow will have to learn to use full-time people and part-time people, men and women, people past retirement age and people who are interested only in working in one functional or technical skill . . . and [those] who move on to a different employer once they have finished a particular assignment. . . . Business organization as we know it has developed fundamentally in the shape of a pyramid. . . . Increasingly, we will see organizations as concentric, overlapping, coordinated rings, rather than as pyramids. (p. 130-132)

Evidence of this move from the hierarchial, pyramid structure to the concentric, overlapping, coordinated rings, referred to by Helgesen (1990) as "the web of inclusion" (p. 41), has consistently emerged in both the literature and in practice.

The hierarchial, pyramid model of leadership, termed "transactional" by Burns (1978), was an outgrowth of the military's "command and control" philosophy, and generally, was a top-down structure based on power and authority. As considerable research has documented (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1993; Heilbrun, 1979; Hennig & Jardim, 1977; Sanford & Donovan, 1984), traditional socialization of the male child has focused on the development of power-based skills including competition, aggression, and ambition. Because of this training, men have been well suited to function in the transactional leadership model.

Female children, on the other hand, have traditionally been socialized to develop relationship-building skills such as cooperation, negotiation, and compromise and, thus, have not found themselves comfortable in, or well suited to, the transactional leadership model. As a result,
women seeking leadership positions in male-dominated arenas that utilized the transactional model generally had to adapt to the male power-building structure, or were already familiar with it through some nontraditional experiences in their childhood socialization. In fact, Heilbrun (1979) went so far as to declare the following:

One can nevertheless identify several childhood circumstances, one of which, at least, must be present to produce an achieving woman in a male-dominated profession... These circumstances are (1) socializing forces, perhaps of a particular foreign culture, which encourages professional commitment within a certain class of women; (2) the family position of first-born child, only child, or a child with all siblings very much older or younger; (3) experience in an all girl environment, either an all-girl family or an all-girl school or college; (4) the role of "son" (not boy) to the father, accompanied by a strong sense of the father as role model; and (5) a sense of the mother, however affectionately viewed, as representing a female destiny to be avoided at all costs. (p. 107)

With the evolution of the new web-like organizational structure comes the need for a new breed of leadership, which Burns (1978) has termed "transformational." This form of leadership allows workers greater involvement in organizational management and decision making. In their 1985 book, Reinventing the Corporation, Aburdene and Naisbitt searched for examples of this new breed of manager still in the process of evolving. They found that in the future a manager's top responsibility will be creating a nourishing environment for personal growth. They then went on to observe, in Megatrends for Women (1992), that "primitive descriptions of the manager of the future uncannily match those of female leadership" (p. 88).

Why is this so? Because, just as the transactional, pyramid model was directly correlated to underlying male socialization and belief
structures, the transformational, web model is directly correlated to female socialization and belief structures. As a result, as Rosener (1990) stated, "[women] are succeeding because of--not in spite of--certain characteristics generally considered to be 'feminine' and inappropriate for leaders" (p. 120).

In the web structure, skills such as cooperation, negotiation, and compromise are not only valuable, but crucial. The use of terms such as team building, consensus building, and partnership is constant, and shared planning and decision-making practices are surfacing throughout America in a multitude of businesses and human services agencies and institutions.

While this emergence of the need for leadership skills that are most commonly associated with women might cause someone--women especially--to say, "Finally, women's leadership is an idea whose time has come," a bit of caution may be well advised. Just as a male-dominated leadership force was not representative of the total work force, neither would a female-dominated leadership force, established strictly on the basis of style, represent a move forward. The issue should not be about "women taking over." Rather, as Eisler (cited in Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992), author of The Chalice and the Blade, postulated, "It is not about women taking over but [about] women and men together expressing their full potential--neither superior nor inferior" (p. xxiii).

While this opportunity for more women to move into leadership roles should not be about "pushing men out," it is important not to lose opportunities to increase the numbers and improve the effectiveness of
women in leadership positions. This is especially true at the chief executive officer level. Whether a woman has struggled to adapt and fit into the pyramid model, or whether she has been actively capitalizing on the very differences that have, until now, been viewed as inferior, the greatest opportunity for women's movement into chief executive leadership positions may very well be happening now.

In order to maximize these opportunities, a clearer picture of women who already hold chief executive leadership positions can provide invaluable information related to their experiences, their attitudes and perceptions, and their recommendations to not only women aspiring to leadership positions, but also to males and females who will be and currently are working with women in leadership positions. With such a picture, a better idea of what women need to do, not only to secure leadership roles, but also to meet the demands of changing leadership needs, can be more firmly established.

Previous Women in Educational Administration Research Syntheses

Although a number of researchers have conducted extensive reviews of the literature on women in educational administration (Adkison, 1981; Fauth, 1984; Walker, 1992), only two studies (Motaref, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1980) have conducted research syntheses that include an assessment of the quality of the research.

Shakeshaft (1980)

Shakeshaft's (1980) doctoral dissertation synthesized the dissertation research on women in educational administration that was
completed between 1973 and 1978. Her work was significant not only in terms of the results that she reported, but also in terms of the format that she used and the categories that she identified for classifying her information. Her study has since become a prototype for theme analysis and quality assessment, upon which other literature reviews and syntheses, this one included, have been based.

Through a thematic content analysis of the social science and managerial literature, Shakeshaft (1980) was able to establish the following eight categories appropriate for classifying the 114 women in educational administration dissertations that she synthesized: status, profiles, attitudes, barriers, leadership style/effectiveness, structural determinants, theory, and communication.

Using a self-developed, 3-point, Likert scale, quality assessment instrument, Shakeshaft (1980) found that the overall quality of the dissertations she synthesized was "fair." The highest quality was found in the review of literature sections; the lowest quality, in the researcher's sampling plans.

Relative to the primary research issue studied, the 114 dissertations that Shakeshaft (1980) synthesized were distributed as follows: 39 profile studies, 18 attitude studies, 8 status studies, 28 barriers studies, 19 leadership style/effectiveness studies, 2 structural determinants studies, and no theory or communication studies.

The specific findings of Shakeshaft's (1980) research relative to her eight theme classifications are discussed comparatively with the results of this synthesis in Chapter VII.
Motaref (1988)

Motaref (1988) basically took the format, processes, and instruments that Shakeshaft (1980) developed and refined and expanded them. Her research was not limited to dissertations, but included 171 published and unpublished women in educational administration empirical studies completed between 1954 and 1985.

Motaref (1988) expanded the scoring scale on Shakeshaft's (1980) quality assessment instrument from a 3-point Likert scale to a 5-point Likert scale. After making other content modifications, Motaref assessed the quality of each of the studies included in her research. The overall average for the 171 studies was "mediocre." This finding was consistent with Shakeshaft's "fair."

Motaref (1988) used Shakeshaft's (1980) eight research theme categories (leadership style/effectiveness was modified to behavior and structural determinants was modified to organizational climate) to classify each of the studies according to the primary research issue studied. The distribution of studies included: 31 behavior studies, 1 organizational climate study, 34 attitudes studies, 32 barriers studies, 16 profile studies, 3 status studies, no theory or communication studies, and 54 multiple issues studies.

As with Shakeshaft's (1980) study, the specific findings of Motaref's (1988) research relative to the eight research issue theme classifications are discussed comparatively with the results of this synthesis in Chapter VII.
Women and the Superintendency

As the body of literature on women in educational administration has expanded, so has the awareness that there is a uniqueness to the perspectives, behaviors, and experiences that women administrators have according to the positions that they hold. What may be true of leaders at one educational administration level may not be true or representative of leaders at other levels.

This is particularly true of women who are serving in superintendencies that are chief executive officer positions. As the chief administrative officer in a school district, these women have not only reached the pinnacle of achievement in the educational administration hierarchy, but they also represent the ultimate female infiltration into the most male-dominated "inner sanctum" of public education. As a result, they represent a very elite cadre of successful women from whom significant insight and learning can be obtained.

Within the past 20 years there has been a significant effort to study women in educational administration from the superintendency perspective. Until recently, sufficiently large enough populations of women superintendents who were true chief executive officers in charge of overseeing all aspects of district operation were extremely hard to identify or locate.

As a result, a number of researchers who have been credited with some of the earliest research on women and the public school superintendency (Crosby, 1974; Guy, 1980, Harris, 1977; McShea, 1980) were, in fact, studying women with various superintendency titles and
responsibilities, but not all were women chief executive officers. While there is certainly nothing wrong with studying the superintendency from a combined perspective, as time has passed, the number of studies investigating those women who hold chief executive officer superintendencies has finally grown to a number large enough to synthesize.

Through synthesizing the existing literature on women currently holding chief executive officer, public school superintendencies, a more complete picture of who they are, how they got there, what they believe, and how they behave can finally be drawn. While this research will only extend the literature base of one of the many women in educational administration subpopulations, it is hoped that it will, at least, represent a beginning in comprehensive subpopulation research.

As a result of this subpopulation research, it is hoped that incumbent women superintendents may have a vehicle through which they may better ascertain how they are doing in comparison to other superintendents, both male and female, and how their leadership behaviors align with the changing roles of leadership.

For women aspiring to chief executive officer positions in education, it is hoped that this study will provide a "window" through which they may observe the realities of their goal. Through this window they will, hopefully, be able to see more clearly where it is that they are going, what it looks like from the inside, and what it will take to get there.
Summary

Chapter II has presented a review of literature that explores women's underrepresentation in managerial positions, the changing personality and characteristics of America's work force, the unique leadership skills that women bring to managerial positions, background information regarding previous syntheses of the research on women in educational administration, and the characteristics of the expanding body of research that investigates women in educational administration. Through this literature review an historical and theoretical foundation to support a synthesis of the research on women public school superintendents has been established.

In Chapter III, the specific research design and methodology employed in this study are discussed in detail.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III describes the research methodology used in this study. Information provided in this section includes a rationale for synthesizing research, general guidelines for conducting an integrative research review, the identification and selection of the sample population, a step-by-step description of the study’s research tasks and procedures from problem formulation to preparing the final report, and a definition and description of the statistical procedures and instrumentation used for data analysis.

Rationale for Research Synthesis

As the number of primary research studies related to a particular theme or topic grows, there emerges an eventual, and periodic, need to summarize and analyze what has collectively accumulated. This need for periodic summarization and collective analysis is important not only because it provides the opportunity for a more global view or perspective of the theme or topic to be established, or reestablished, but also because, as Hedges and Olkin (cited in Wolfe, 1986) stated, "[Rarely do] single experiments or studies provide sufficiently definitive answers upon which to base policy, [trends, or theoretical conclusions]" (p. 9).

The process through which the accumulated findings of a number of research studies are collectively summarized and analyzed is termed a
research synthesis or an integrative research review. Although the integrative research review is a relatively new process that only emerged in the 1970s, it is a research vehicle that has seen considerable growth in not only its definition, but also in its acceptance and utility as a scientifically sound research procedure.

Guidelines for Conducting an Integrative Research Review

A number of social science researchers have recommended procedures for conducting integrative research reviews and meta-analyses (Cooper, 1984; Hedges, Shymansky, & Woodworth, 1989; B. G. Jackson, 1980; Wolfe, 1986). While each researcher's format is slightly different from the others, all, generally, have recommended a similar process.

For the purposes of this study, B. G. Jackson's (1980) six basic tasks were the foundation upon which the procedures section of this chapter was built. The six tasks include: (1) selecting the questions or hypotheses for review, (2) sampling the research studies that are to be used, (3) representing the characteristics of the studies and their findings, (4) analyzing the findings, (5) interpreting the results, and (6) reporting the review.

Subjects

The subjects or units of study for this integrative research review were documents rather than people. More specifically, the unit of study was the doctoral dissertation research completed at colleges and
universities in the United States between 1970 and 1994 that utilized women public school superintendents as the sole, or a primary, data set.

Procedures

The first task in an integrative research review is the selection of the questions or hypotheses to be answered through the review. Cooper (1984) referred to this stage as the "problem formulation." During this stage the purpose of the review and the research questions to be answered are defined, and the significance of conducting the review is explained. This task was completed and discussed in Chapter I.

The completion of this first task was accomplished through a cursory review of the general literature on women in educational administration, and the identification of possible topics that were personally interesting and/or whose compilation appeared to have the potential to contribute to the existing body of literature on women in educational administration. Each of the possible topics was assessed in terms of the availability of related research, whether or not a recent synthesis or integration had been conducted regarding it, and whether existing investigations recommended it as a future area of study. Through this process the appropriateness of this synthesis of research on women public school superintendents was established in that there is considerable research available to synthesize, and no known synthesis of this research was able to be located. Therefore, a synthesis of the research on women public school superintendents will not only add to the literature base through a summarization of its findings, but also through an integrative reevaluation of its collective meaning.
The second task in an integrative research review is the sampling of the research studies that are to be used. A computer search of the Dissertation Abstracts International database was conducted using the key words "women," "female," "gender," and "sex" in combination with "superintendent," "educational administrator," "school administrator," and "educational leader." From this search the initial pool of available dissertation literature written between 1970 and 1994 was identified.

From the initial pool, dissertations were sorted and selected for inclusion in or exclusion from the study based on established criteria. These criteria specified that to be included, each study had to: (a) have been completed through a college or university in the United States between 1970 and 1994; (b) use women who were currently, or recently, serving as a public school superintendent as the sole, or a primary, population/sample analyzed in the data set; (c) include a hypothesis or research question specifically identifying women public school superintendents as a primary focus of inquiry; (d) be a primary research study; and (e) include a minimum of five subjects in each sample or population considered in the data set, if the study is empirical.

These criteria were established so that (a) cultural differences from countries other than the United States would not adversely affect or skew the generalizability of the findings (external validity contamination); (b) the focus of the research would be to study women superintendents primarily or specifically, rather than as an aside component of a study with a more intense focus; (c) the researcher's intent to focus primary or singular intent on researching women public school superintendents could be clearly discerned; (d) existing secondary analyses of
women in educational administration could be used in the summary and conclusions section for comparative purposes; and (e) scientific integrity could be maintained through the exclusion of studies that have established inadequate or questionable sample sizes.

The third task in an integrative research review is to represent the characteristics of the studies and their findings. This is the stage during which the data collection occurs. In this synthesis two different forms of data collection were conducted. First, using content analysis methods, each study selected for inclusion in the synthesis was reviewed to identify general descriptor information such as: each study’s classification into one of Shakeshaft’s (1980) eight women’s leadership issues categories, information relative to the researcher, information relative to the degree-granting institution, and information regarding each study’s research design and procedures. This information was collected, recorded, and prepared for analysis on the data coding form that appears as Appendix A.

The second form of data collection was used to gather information regarding the quality of the included dissertations. The quality of each study was assessed using the evaluation instrument attached as Appendix B. This instrument was based on, but does not directly replicate, instruments used and validated by Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988).

The fourth task in an integrative research review is the analysis and presentation of the findings. Data analysis was accomplished using a variety of summative and statistical operations that are described in greater detail in the instrumentation section of this chapter. The findings
have been presented as they relate to the research goals and questions in terms of the information accumulated and classified through the general descriptor data collection, and through the quality assessment data collection.

The fifth task in an integrative research review is the interpretation of the results. Conclusions and recommendations drawn from this review and synthesis have been presented and discussed. Included in this section is a discussion of the findings of this review as they compare to the findings of the past research syntheses of the general women in educational administration literature.

The final task in an integrative research review is the reporting of the review. While B. G. Jackson (1980) identified this as the final task, it actually represents the summation of the previous five tasks. In this stage he encouraged clear and precise development and presentation of the information in the preceding tasks. In this study, this stage has been the point at which the entire document was scrutinized and reviewed to ensure that quality, thoroughness, and clarity were present in all aspects of its presentation.

Instrumentation

According to Glass (1976), primary analysis is the original analysis of data in a research study. Secondary analysis is the reanalysis of data for the purpose of answering the original research question with better statistical techniques, or answering new questions with old data. An integrative research review is one form of secondary analysis. Prior to the 1970s, narrative literature reviews were virtually the only vehicle
through which the results of primary research studies were accumulated and summarized. According to Light and Pillemer (1982), three distinctive weaknesses in the traditional narrative literature review were identified during the 1970s: (1) narrative literature reviews were subjective; (2) because of a lack of quantification, they were scientifically unsound; and (3) because of a lack of formal tools and procedures to analyze and summarize, they were an inefficient way to extract useful information.

Light and Pillemer (1982) went on to say that

[As a result of this dissatisfaction with the narrative literature review process], researchers developed procedures in an attempt to quantify the process of accumulating evidence. Glass (1976, 1977), Hedges and Olkin (1980), Light and Smith (1971), Pillemer and Light (1980a, 1980b), Rosenthal (1978, 1980), Smith and Glass (1977), Walberg and Haertel (1980), and others organized detailed quantitative procedures for carrying out literature reviews. (p. 2)

**Meta-Analysis**

From this movement, Glass (1976) was the first to coin the term "meta-analysis," which has become the most widely used vehicle for conducting a quantitative literature review. Meta-analysis involves transforming the descriptive statistics generated by individual studies to some common metric, coding various characteristics of the studies, and then using conventional statistical procedures to determine whether there is an overall effect, subsample effects, and relationships among characteristics of the studies and the findings (Shakeshaft, 1980). Essentially, this transforming can be accomplished in two ways: conducting a combined significance test or computing an average effect size.
When conducting a combined significance test, the separate tests for each variable of the primary research are combined into an overall test of a common null hypothesis for each variable. Computing an average effect size involves, first, computing an effect size (the difference between the treatment and control group means divided by the control group standard deviation) for each primary study and then averaging the results across the entire set (Light & Pillemer, 1982).

Although meta-analysis is considered by most researchers to be the strongest research synthesis tool, it is not without both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of the meta-analytic approach include providing (a) a method for simultaneously investigating the relationship between studies through the use of multivariate statistical procedures, (b) unbiased estimates of the population parameters, (c) an approach that is systematic and replicable, and (d) a framework that can be used with information from both the best and least reliable studies on a topic (Cooper, 1984; Feldman, 1971; B. G. Jackson, 1980; Motaref, 1988).

Its weaknesses include (a) the normal distribution assumption needs to be examined when dichotomous data are being transformed, (b) a method must be devised to analyze findings that are nested within variables analyzed in a study, (c) there is a sometimes difficulty in getting a standardized measure of findings from studies because of insufficient data, (d) findings need to be weighted by sample size, and (e) one cannot infer which characteristics of studies on a given topic caused the differing results (B. G. Jackson, 1980).

It was hoped that meta-analytical procedures would have been the primary data analysis technique utilized in this research synthesis.
However, the studies included in this investigation were not uniform enough in their testing of the same or common variables to allow the combining of test results, or the use of multivariate analyses of common metrics across studies.

As a result, meta-analysis was not used for any data analysis. Instead, the data synthesis that was conducted was done so using one or more of the following alternate and more appropriate data integration strategies.

Listing Factors

Listing factors is the simplest and most elementary form of research synthesis. It involves categorizing studies by the dependent variables they examine. From this, a researcher can then integrate the findings by listing the factors that have been shown to impact the dependent variable in one or more studies. Because of its simplicity, this approach also has some serious limitations, including: It fails to distinguish between those factors found in only one study and those found in numerous studies, and it has no means of indicating the direction or the intensity of a given relationship (Light & Smith, 1971).

While the approach has some serious weaknesses, it does permit integration when independent variables are not shared among studies.

Averaging Statistics

This approach consists of computing overall averages for relevant statistics across a complete set of studies. The summary measure is often not a mean, but a score such as a median, so that protection from
extreme scores can be built into the procedure (Light & Smith, 1971). Its most glaring deficiency is that a significant amount of information can be lost by averaging all the statistics.

**Taking a Vote**

Taking a vote involves clustering studies by their dependent variables, and then by their independent variables. When this is completed, the studies are classified and tallied under one of three categories based on the relationships between the dependent and independent variable: significantly positive, significantly negative, or no relationship. The category with the most studies is then deemed to be the best estimate of the true relationship between the variables (Light & Smith, 1971).

Although two advantages of the taking a vote approach include establishing statistical relationship and identifying the direction of the relationship, it also has numerous weaknesses: (a) Its tallies could result in a tie, (b) it fails to incorporate sample size into the vote, (c) it fails to get at the practical significance of a relationship, (d) it fails to get at interaction effects, (e) it fails to incorporate random sampling error into the interpretation of the vote, and (f) it may lead to overlooked inferences (Shakeshaft, 1980).

**Cluster Analysis**

This process, developed by Light and Smith (1971), combines sets of studies into clusters by independent and dependent variables, and then seeks to obtain comparability among clusters. It does not require a large number of studies, nor a common metric. Its advantages
are that it (a) preserves the maximum amount of information from studies, (b) it makes it possible to pinpoint actual variations in the findings, (c) it may single out important unmeasured variables affecting the focal dependent variable, (d) it allows the researcher to gain the advantage of a much larger sample size when the data is combined, and (e) it has implications for policy research.

Its disadvantages are that (a) it requires the availability of the original data from several studies, (b) all subjects must have been selected from a known and precisely defined population, (c) the dependent and independent variables must be measured in the same way, and (d) the instrumentation and the quality of the research design must be comparable and all bad studies must be discarded (Shakeshaft, 1980).

**Combining Probability Values**

This method, developed by Rosenthal (1978), integrates data by combining probabilities. If two or more studies test essentially the same directional hypothesis, one of nine methods of combining probabilities may be used. The nine methods include adding logs, adding \( p \) values, adding \( t \) values, adding \( z \) values, adding weighted \( z \) values, testing mean \( p \), testing mean \( z \), counting, and blocking.

**Summary**

Chapter III has defined and described the research design and procedures for this study. Following a brief description of the chapter's purpose and format, the study's sampling procedures, research tasks, statistical operations, and reporting procedures have been detailed.
In Chapter IV the overall characteristics and the quality of the studies selected for analysis in this research synthesis are descriptively summarized and analyzed.
CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS: CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITY

Chapter IV descriptively summarizes and analyzes the overall characteristics and quality of the dissertation research on women public school superintendents that was selected for inclusion in this synthesis. This summary and analysis will be directed by answering the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What are the overall characteristics of the included dissertation research?

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between identified research issues and selected time periods?

Research Question 3: What is the quality of the dissertation research regarding women superintendents?

Research Question 4: Are there relationships between the quality of the research, the research design, the issues addressed, and/or selected researcher characteristics?

Overall Characteristics

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: What are the overall characteristics of the included dissertation research?

An initial pool of 408 dissertations were identified through a computer search of Dissertation Abstracts International. This pool
consisted of those studies that matched with the key descriptor terms, women, female, gender, and sex, in combination with superintendent, educational administrator, school administrator, and educational leader. From this initial pool, 79 dissertations were selected for inclusion in this synthesis based on the following criteria. Each study had to (a) have been completed through a college or university in the United States between 1970 and 1994; (b) have used women who were currently, or recently, serving as a public school superintendent as the sole, or a primary, population/sample in the data set; (c) have included a hypothesis or research question specifically identifying women public school superintendents as a primary focus of the inquiry; (d) have been a primary research study; and (e) have included a minimum of five subjects in each sample or population considered in the data set, if the study was empirical.

At first glance the reduction from 408 potential studies to 79 acceptable studies appears to be markedly severe. However, it must be noted that the key word descriptors selected were purposely broad in nature, so that a thorough review of all the available research would be possible. As a result, many studies that had no relevance to women superintendents, but rather, happened to have one or more of the descriptor words in their text, were included in the initial pool.

The majority of the included dissertations (75%) were written using the style of the American Psychological Association (APA) and averaged 192 pages in length. Twenty-four studies were completed within the past 4 years (1991-1994). This number is significant for two reasons. First, as Table 1 indicates, when the distribution of included
dissertations is viewed regressively in 4-year time blocks from 1994 to 1976 (the last block, 1976-1981, has 5 years), 1991-1994 is the block with the greatest number of studies completed. This would suggest a growing interest in the study of women superintendents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Number of studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987-1990</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-1986</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-1985</td>
<td>14</td>
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</table>

Secondly, the number of studies included from 1994 do not include studies that would have been included in Dissertation Abstracts International after December 1994. As a result, there could be some women superintendent studies completed in 1994 that were not included in this synthesis. If there were more studies from 1994 that were not included, their identification would simply strengthen the magnitude and direction of the suggested trend of growing interest.

The remaining findings regarding the overall characteristics of the included dissertation research have been further classified into the following four subcategories to provide a more orderly presentation: characteristics of the researchers, characteristics of the research
institutions, identification of the research issues, and characteristics of the research designs and procedures.

**Characteristics of the Researchers**

An overwhelming majority of the researchers (91%) were female, while a strong majority of the research advisors (79%) were male. Of the total of seven male researchers, two were working with female advisors.

Forty-eight researchers (61%) earned the Ed.D., while 31 researchers (39%) earned the Ph.D. Further analysis of these percentages indicated that 100% of the male researchers earned the Ed.D., as opposed to 57% of the female researchers who earned the Ed.D. (Table 2).

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of researcher</th>
<th>Degree earned</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The disciplinary affiliation of the majority of researchers (52%) was educational administration or educational leadership. Of the remaining disciplinary affiliations, 37% were listed as education without a
department or college focus; 6% were listed as other educational affiliations, including curriculum and instruction and educational history; and 5% were listed as other disciplinary affiliations outside of education.

Characteristics of the Research Institution

Fifty-six colleges and universities from 22 states and the District of Columbia produced dissertations included in this research synthesis. Of these 56 colleges and universities, 20 (36%) are currently members of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), while 36 (64%) are not.

A state-by-state breakdown of the colleges and universities that produced studies eligible for inclusion in this research indicated that Ohio and Texas were tied for the most colleges and universities with six, while Illinois, New York, and Pennsylvania were tied for second with four. In terms of total studies produced, Ohio colleges and universities produced the most studies with 11. Texas and New York were tied for second, each producing nine (Table 3).

Table 3
Distribution of Dissertations by Institution and State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/institution</th>
<th>Dissertations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Arizona</td>
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<td>Arizona State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Arizona</td>
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</table>
Table 3--Continued

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<th>State/institution</th>
<th>Dissertations</th>
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<td>Arkansas</td>
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<td>Colorado</td>
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Table 3--Continued

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Table 3--Continued

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<tr>
<td>Miami University</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Akron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Toledo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lehigh University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania State University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pittsburgh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Carolina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Tennessee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Texas State University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas A&amp;M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Southern University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Houston</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Northern Texas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Texas at Austin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3--Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/institution</th>
<th>Dissertations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Virginia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Polytechnic Institute</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle University</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington State University</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia University</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regionally, the distribution of dissertations placed 33 (42%) in the Midwest, 31 (39%) in the East, and 15 (19%) in the West.

Identification of the Research Issues

Shakeshaft’s (1980) eight categories of research themes were used to sort and catalog the research issues addressed through this body of dissertation literature. The eight categories include: profiles, attitudes, status, barriers, leadership style and effectiveness, structural determinants, theory, and communication. Although these categories have endured as appropriate for the classification of women in educational administration research, for the purposes of this synthesis, two categories were altered slightly to more precisely accommodate the
cataloging of issues. The attitudes category was expanded to include perceptions. The leadership style/effectiveness category was renamed leadership characteristics to better accommodate all of its elements: leadership style, leadership effectiveness, and leadership behavior.

As Table 4 indicates, 46 of the dissertations (58%) focused primarily on profile issues, 16 dissertations (20%) on attitude or perception issues, 1 dissertation (1%) on status issues, 13 studies (16%) on barrier issues, 13 studies (16%) on leadership characteristics issues, and 3 studies (4%) on structural determinant issues. (Note: These percentages include the 6 studies that did not limit their primary focus to one theme; therefore, the numbers or percentages do not add up to exactly 79 or 100%, respectively.)

Table 4
Distribution of Dissertations by Primary Research Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research issues</th>
<th>Dissertations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profiles</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes/perceptions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Characteristics</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural determinants</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
None of the studies treated theory or communication as a primary theme. However, 53 studies (67%) included at least one secondary area of focus, and each of the two issues categories not addressed as a primary focus were addressed as a secondary focus in at least one study. (A complete listing of each dissertation and its primary research issue is provided in Appendix C).

**Characteristics of the Research Designs and Procedures**

Sixty-four researchers (81%) used a survey design as their research strategy, while eight researchers (10%) used a case study approach. Of the eight case studies, two included participant observation strategies as a part of their data collection procedures. Six researchers (8%) compiled biographical profiles, and one researcher (1%) used an historical design strategy (Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research strategy</th>
<th>Dissertations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seven researchers (9%) used document review as their sole, or primary, data collection method. Two researchers (3%) collected data through observation and survey techniques; and as Table 6 indicates, the remaining 88% used personal interviews, telephone interviews, questionnaires, and/or standardized assessments to gather data.

Table 6
Distribution of Dissertations by Data Collection Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection method</th>
<th>Dissertations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document review</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview (personal or telephone)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized instruments</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview and questionnaire</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire and standardized instrument</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview and standardized instrument</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview, questionnaire, and standardized instrument</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview and observation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview, questionnaire, and observation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For those studies that collected data with questionnaires, 77% of the instruments were developed or adapted by the dissertation researcher. For those studies that collected data through personal or telephone...
interviews, 96% of the interview guides were developed by the dissertation researcher.

Excluding the seven studies that collected data through document review and the one study that compared female superintendents to female chief executives in business, all samples/populations consisted of superintendents, school board members, and/or other administrators affiliated with all, or part of, a K-12 public school structure (Table 7).

Table 7
Distribution of Dissertations by Samples/Populations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samples/populations</th>
<th>Dissertations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female superintendents</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male and female superintendents</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female superintendents and board members</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendents and board members</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female superintendents and subordinates</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendents and subordinates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 71% of the studies collected data only once, and only 30% of the dissertations tested hypotheses.

The most frequently utilized data analysis tool was descriptive statistics (66%). Interestingly enough, the second most common tool (22%) was "no statistics." Of the 17 studies that did not use statistical analyses, 6 were biographical profiles and 11 were qualitative studies.
using theme analysis, constant comparative procedures, phenomenology, and analytic induction to analyze data. In addition to the 11 already mentioned, nine additional qualitative studies were conducted and used quantitative statistical procedures in their data analysis.

**Research Question 2**

*Research Question 2:* Is there a relationship between identified research issues and selected time periods?

One of the parameters established at the beginning of this study was that in order to be included in this research synthesis, a dissertation had to have been completed between 1970 and 1994. In reality, the earliest located dissertation that met the selection criteria was completed in 1976.

In the 18-year time span between 1976 and 1994, a number of interesting patterns and turning points did emerge relative to the targeted studies. Although the focus of this research question was directed toward research issues only, there were a number of patterns and trends relative to the designs and procedures of the research that merit discussion.

One year, 1985, emerged as pivotal to understanding this body of dissertation research in the context of time. Twenty-four of the 79 included studies were completed prior to 1985. Of these 24 studies, 17 (71%) were profile studies that collected and analyzed data either biographically or descriptively. Of the remaining 7 studies, 6 studies examined attitudes, and 1 study examined barriers. Also, in this body of 24 studies, 18 studies used national samples or populations; and 18
studies used quantitative statistical procedures.

In short, the women superintendent research conducted prior to 1985 generally represented a traditional, quantitative approach to research and a basic focus on identifying and describing the women who had succeeded in obtaining public school superintendencies. The predominance of the use of national samples at that time reflected the researchers' need to go beyond state and local boundaries in order to acquire sample/population sizes that were not only large enough, but also representative enough to allow quantitative analysis and generalizations to a larger population.

After 1984, the scope, focus, and procedures of the included studies began to change. From 1985 to 1994, 55 of the 79 included studies were completed. While profile studies continued to be the predominant research theme, their domination dropped from 71% of the studies completed before 1985, to 49% of the studies completed during or after 1985. The remaining 51% of the studies completed after 1985 showed increasing emphases on attitudes/perceptions, barriers, and leadership styles, behaviors, or effectiveness.

Another significant change that surfaced after 1985 was the researchers' selection of different samples or populations. Prior to 1985, 75% of the studies utilized national samples. After 1985, 64% of the studies utilized state, regional, or local samples. This shift reflected not only an increase in the number of women superintendents available in more locally accessible environments, but also changes in research designs.
Prior to 1985, only three studies were conducted using qualitative research designs. After 1985, 35% of the included studies used qualitative research methodologies. While this increase does not represent a predominance of qualitative research, it does represent the emergence of a research strategy that was virtually nonexistent in the women superintendent dissertation literature previously.

While most of the qualitative research that emerged after 1985 utilized case study and personal interview techniques, it is interesting to note that 2 years, 1990 and 1992, each produced one study that employed observation strategies. Although two studies can hardly justify declaration of a trend, these two studies do represent the appearance of new research directions in the exploration of women and the public school superintendency.

Quality

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: What is the quality of the included dissertation research?

The quality of each of the dissertations was analyzed using a 75-point evaluation instrument that was developed by this researcher and was based on instruments used by Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988). Although both Shakeshaft and Motaref had well-constructed and validated instruments, the decision to create a modified, combined version of both of their instruments was based on two factors.
First, because each of their instruments was slightly different from the other, combining and synthesizing their criteria enabled the development of an instrument that was based on their expertise, but was more directly attuned to the purposes of this synthesis. Secondly, both Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988) used Likert scales in their quality assessment instruments; however, Shakeshaft used a 3-point scale and Motaref a 5-point scale. Although the use of a 5-point scale similar to Motaref’s was selected for this synthesis, changes in the definition of some of the scale categories were made to accommodate the focus of this study.

As a result, the following scale was used to evaluate the quality of each of the dissertations examined in this synthesis: N/A = not applicable, 1 = no or not included but should be, 2 = poor, 3 = mediocre, 4 = good, and 5 = yes or excellent. It is important to note that when the most appropriate response to one of the assessment questions was a yes or a no, the highest score of 5 was given for a yes, and the lowest score of 1 was given for a no. A sample of the quality assessment instrument used for this synthesis may be found in Appendix B.

The finalized assessment instrument was used to evaluate each dissertation relative to the quality of 13 critical elements of a dissertation: title, abstract, statement of the problem, review of literature, definition of terms, hypotheses, scope, sampling, instrumentation, data analysis, research design, summary and conclusions, and overall form and style. The selection of these critical elements and the rationale for assigning a score for their quality were based not only on the Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988) models, but also on guidelines for the
development of a well-constructed research project or proposal as identified in Krathwohl (1988), Isaac and Michael (1990), and Borg and Gall (1989).

As Table 8 indicates, the cumulative mean for the quality of the dissertations included in this synthesis was 3.96, or mediocre, while the overall median rating was 4.18, or good.

The following is an individualized assessment of each of the critical element categories.

Title

The overall mean rating for this category was 4.41, or good. This indicated that the dissertation titles were generally well written and clearly defined the topic and intent of the study. When flaws did occur, they usually reflected the author's attempt to be creative; and in so doing, the intent or the clarity of the title was often compromised.

Abstract

When assessing the abstracts in terms of the total population of 79 dissertations, the overall mean score was 3.23, or mediocre. This low score was more a reflection of the failure of many researchers (16) to include an abstract than it was a reflection of the actual quality of the abstracts. When the missing abstracts were not factored into the quality assessment, the overall mean for those studies that did include an abstract was 4.02. This adjustment for the missing abstracts moved the overall mean out of the mediocre category and into the good category.
Table 8
Mean Quality Ratings for Critical Elements of Included Dissertations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical elements</th>
<th>Mean quality rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the problem</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the literature</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of terms</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypotheses</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of the problem</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental design</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical design</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey design--questionnaire</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview design</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational method</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary and conclusions</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form and style</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative mean</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative median</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Flaws that appeared in the quality of the abstracts generally related to a researcher's failure to provide information regarding the methods and procedures of the study. Statements of the purpose or problem and summaries of significant findings were almost always included and relevant.

**Statement of the Problem**

The overall mean rating for this element was 4.20, or good. Most studies provided a clearly stated problem statement and included appropriate supporting and clarifying information including a purpose statement, research questions, definitions of terms, limitations/delimitations, and the significance of the study.

When a poorer rating was given, it was usually because the problem statement was hard to find, it was not stated early in the study, it was not followed by many of the supporting structures cited above, and/or it was not written clearly.

**Review of the Literature**

The mean rating for the studies' review of the literature sections was 4.18, or good. While this generally reflects a reasonably high level of quality, one glaring deficiency was evident in many of the studies. This deficiency was a failure to review, or adequately review, the literature explaining and supporting the selected research strategies and procedures.

For example, most of the studies used a survey research design. Rarely did a researcher use the literature to support and explain not only
the appropriateness of using a survey design, but also how survey research is, or should be, conducted. In addition, within the scope of survey research itself, little support was cited from the literature relative to the selection of the survey tool—a personal interview, a telephone interview, and/or a questionnaire.

**Definition of Terms**

The overall rating for this element was a 3.73, or mediocre. As with the abstracts category, the lower score mostly reflected a failure to include a definition of terms section in the dissertation document. When the dissertations that did not include this section were factored out, the overall rating moved from mediocre to good, in fact very good. Overall, those studies that supported their definitions with literature citations were given a higher score than those that defined terms in their own words.

**Hypotheses**

Since hypotheses are not a required research element, the quality scores for this section were based only on those studies that included hypotheses in addition to research questions. Twenty-one of the 79 studies tested hypotheses. The quality rating for these 21 studies was 4.10, or good. The most striking flaw that surfaced relative to the included hypotheses was a failure to state them in operational terms. Although hypotheses can be written both conceptually and operationally, when assessing their testability it was difficult to assess that characteristic strictly from a conceptual perspective.
Scope

The overall rating for the quality of the researchers' treatment of the scope of the research was 4.58, or good. In most cases the researchers adequately defined and narrowed the parameters of their study. What was sometimes missing, and thus resulted in lower ratings, were clearly defined limitations and delimitations sections that concisely identified the scope of the research for the reader.

Sampling

The mean rating for the quality of sampling was 4.22, or good. Many of the studies used entire female populations on the national, state, regional, or local levels. Deficiencies generally appeared relative to response rates that did not provide adequate representation of the targeted population, or selection procedures of other samples that were used for comparison with female superintendents. When a comparison sample was used, they were often convenience samples or subjects recommended by the participating women superintendents. Although the focus in most of these studies was directed toward the women superintendents, the looseness with which comparison samples were sometimes selected has to raise questions regarding the possibility of sample biases and, thus, about the validity of the comparisons made.

Instrumentation

The mean rating for the quality of the studies' instrumentation was 3.44, or mediocre. This lower score generally reflected concerns
originally raised about the quality of the researcher's review of literature.

Keeping in mind that 80% of the researchers used a survey research design, most of those researchers (77%) also elected to develop their own survey instrument(s). Although it is certainly the researcher's prerogative to decide to use a self-developed instrument, there rarely was any discussion of an attempt to locate any already existing and valid measure that was appropriate. Additionally, when a self-developed instrument was used, some of the researchers did not conduct pilot tests before using it with the research population.

Data Analysis

The overall mean quality rating for data analysis was 4.18, or good. Concerns and lower ratings in this section did not surface relative to the researcher's selection and application of data analysis techniques. Rather, lower ratings generally reflected results that were not clearly presented or deficiencies in the use of graphs and tables.

Research Design--Experimental

None of the dissertations selected for inclusion in this research synthesis used an experimental research design. As an additional note, in order to select the dissertations that met the inclusion criteria for this research synthesis, the total population of the women superintendent dissertation literature was reviewed. No studies investigating women and the public school superintendency through an experimental research design were located during that review.
Research Design--Historical

Seven of the included dissertations used an historical research design. The mean rating for the quality of these studies was 4.44, or good. Each of these studies used document review procedures as their primary data collection process. The six biographies used narrative theme analysis procedures to analyze the data gathered. The remaining study was a combination of a status study and an historical study that used theme analysis and descriptive statistics to analyze the status of women in the public school superintendency from 1900 through the present time.

Research Design--Questionnaire

Fifty-three researchers (67%) used questionnaires to gather data. The overall mean rating for the quality of the researchers' use of questionnaires was 3.57, or mediocre. Primary concerns about this element were already discussed in previous sections. Rarely did researchers discuss or document why a questionnaire was the best way to collect the desired data. Convenience samples were used in a number of studies; therefore, questions about the validity of the results are present. A number of the researchers did not pilot their questionnaires. Finally, although most researchers were very good about contacting their nonrespondents to increase their response rates, when the final number of responses were in, few of the researchers contacted the remaining nonrespondents, or a sample of them, as a means of assessing the potential for, or presence of, sampling bias.
Research Design--Interview

Twenty-nine researchers (37%) used an interview research design in their studies. In some cases interviews were done in combination with questionnaires. The overall mean rating for this element was 3.73, or mediocre. The same concerns mentioned relative to questionnaires were concerns relative to the researchers' use of interview. Some researchers failed to mention the use of a standard interview guide; thus, questions about consistency and validity emerged. A number of researchers had panels of experts validate their interview guides but did not conduct practice interviews with populations similar to the research population.

Research Design--Observation

Two studies included participant observations in their studies. The mean rating for these two studies was 3.00, or mediocre. Of significance in this rating was that while each researcher did identify that she had observed through shadowing, each failed to adequately explain how the observations were conducted, what exactly was being observed, and what the results of the observations were.

Summary and Conclusions

The mean rating for the quality of the studies' summaries and conclusions was 4.52, or good. The majority of the researchers presented their summaries and conclusions thoroughly and clearly. Some of the researchers compared their findings to previous studies on their
topic; however, many of the studies focused this section on implications and recommendations.

**Form and Style**

This category assessed the overall presentation of the dissertations. The mean rating for this element was 3.84, or mediocre. Although there were a number of studies that were well written and exemplary in their presentation, when looked at as an entire unit, there were also a number of studies that had not adequately attended to at least one, or more, of the critical elements of their research presentation. Some dissertations were not clearly written and rambled through a significant amount of information with a less than orderly delivery. Some dissertations were very clearly and sequentially written but failed to adequately justify or execute important procedures in areas such as research design and instrumentation.

Overall, the quality of the 79 included dissertations reflected both strengths and weaknesses, but they also reflected a higher level of quality when compared to the ratings issued by both Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988).

While the assessments offered in this section only represent the opinion of one researcher, they have been based on criteria established in three published guides to the preparation of research documents. As a result, this assessment does represent a review of the quality of each dissertation that is based on standard and generally agreed upon criteria.
Research Question 4

Research Question 4: Are there relationships between the quality of the research, the research design, the issues addressed, and selected researcher characteristics?

A one-way analysis of variance was used to investigate whether a statistically significant relationship (alpha level = .05) existed between the quality of the research (dependent variable) and each of the following selected characteristics of the research design, the research issues, and the researchers themselves (independent variables): (a) sex of the researcher, (b) date of the research, (c) region in which the research institution is located, (d) research strategy used, (e) research issue studied, (f) data collection method, (g) hypothesis tested(?), and (h) APA style used(?).

As is indicated in Table 9, the only independent variable that showed a significant relationship with the quality of the research was hypothesis tested(?). The mean quality score for the dissertations that tested a hypothesis was 4.1488, good. The mean quality score for the dissertations that did not test a hypothesis was 3.9327, mediocre. Therefore, those dissertations that tested hypotheses tended to have a higher overall quality score than those that did not test hypotheses.

When the relationship between quality and hypothesis tested(?) was further analyzed for practical significance, the eta-squared score was .0506. This indicated that the hypothesis tested(?) variable was not practically significant, in that it only accounted for 5% of the total variance in the dissertations' quality.
### Table 9
Relationship of Eight Independent Variables and Quality of Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>F value</th>
<th>p value</th>
<th>Eta squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex of researcher</td>
<td>0.0157</td>
<td>.9006</td>
<td>.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of research</td>
<td>0.4577</td>
<td>.7127</td>
<td>.0180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of institution</td>
<td>1.6054</td>
<td>.2076</td>
<td>.0405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research strategy</td>
<td>2.4521</td>
<td>.0533</td>
<td>.1170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research issue</td>
<td>0.7945</td>
<td>.5571</td>
<td>.0516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection method</td>
<td>0.7322</td>
<td>.6453</td>
<td>.0673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis tested(?)</td>
<td>4.1065</td>
<td>.0462*</td>
<td>.0506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA style used(?)</td>
<td>0.8805</td>
<td>.4188</td>
<td>.0226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the .05 level.

### Summary

Chapter IV has descriptively summarized and analyzed the overall characteristics of the 79 dissertations on women in the public school superintendency included in this research synthesis.

In general, these dissertations were written by a female researcher who was advised by a male faculty member in an educational administration or educational leadership department of a college or university in the Midwestern third of the United States.

The average dissertation was 192 pages long, was written in APA style, and used survey research techniques to develop a profile of
women superintendents in the United States.

The cumulative mean quality score for the included dissertations was mediocre, while the cumulative median quality score was good. The highest ratings were given for the scope and summary/conclusions sections. The lowest ratings were given for the instrumentation and overall form and style sections.

An analysis of the impact on the quality of the dissertations of eight independent variables related to the research design, the research institution, and the researchers themselves found that the dissertations that tested hypotheses had a higher overall quality score than those that did not test hypotheses. While the relationship between the quality of the research and whether or not a hypothesis was tested was statistically significant, it was not practically significant.

In Chapter V the first four research issues—attitudes, barriers, status, and structural determinants—are summarized and synthesized.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES: ATTITUDES, BARRIERS, STATUS, AND STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS

Chapter V summarizes and synthesizes the included dissertation literature that investigated attitudes, barriers, status, and structural determinants. The following research question is the foundation upon which each of the four issues is discussed and analyzed.

Research Question 5: What are the findings of the dissertation research regarding women superintendents?

As such, Research Question 5 is stated only this one time at the beginning of the chapter. Within the discussion of each issue, the following research questions are repeated and answered:

Research Question 6: In what ways can the research findings be reexamined and integrated?

Research Question 7: What patterns or trends does the research identify?

Research Question 8: What is the direction of the identified patterns or trends?

Attitudes

The first issue to be analyzed is attitudes. A total of 27 research studies that addressed attitudes or perceptions as either a primary or secondary focus were identified. For the purposes of discussion, the studies have been grouped according to the following topics: (a) women
superintendents' attitudes/perceptions regarding self, (b) attitudes/perceptions regarding women in educational administration, (c) attitudes/perceptions regarding the superintendency, (d) perceptions of the characteristics of success, and (e) job satisfaction.

Research Question 6

Research Question 6: In what ways can the research findings be reexamined and integrated?

At first glance, it appeared that meta-analytic procedures would be appropriate to analyze portions of the data reported in this section. Unfortunately, upon further review, the criteria necessary to enable meta-analysis were not able to be met. These criteria included the requirement that the same independent variables be tested and that there be enough studies to allow multivariate analysis.

Three studies examined attitudes toward women in administration using the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS). Only two of the studies utilized the same independent variable (gender), however; and with the elimination of one study, multivariate analysis was no longer an option. As a result the integration of results in this category have been accomplished by taking a vote and listing factors.

Women Superintendents' Attitudes/Perceptions Regarding Self

Seven studies (Genzen, 1994; Miracle, 1987; Postlewait, 1990; Revere, 1986; Sanchez, 1985; Schuch, 1980; Wiley, 1987) reported on women superintendents' attitudes and perceptions about themselves.
One study (Genzen, 1994) measured the motivation levels of 14 female superintendents in Ohio using the Personality Research Form (D. Jackson, 1987). This form asked respondents to rate themselves on the following 22 personality traits: abasement, achievement, affiliation, aggression, autonomy, change, cognitive structure, defensiveness, desirability, dominance, endurance, exhibition, harm avoidance, impulsivity, infrequency, nurturance, order, play, sentience, social recognition, succorance, and understanding.

Genzen's (1994) scores were then compared with D. Jackson's (1987) norming sample of predominantly male superintendents who were also from Ohio. As a result, Genzen viewed this comparison as one between the male and female superintendents in Ohio.

In general, the women in Genzen's (1994) study scored significantly higher than their male counterparts in autonomy, dominance, endurance, achievement, and exhibition. They scored significantly lower in succorance and cognitive structure.

The remaining six studies examined women superintendents' personal attitudes/perceptions of themselves. Schuch (1980) used the Allport Study of Values (Allport, Vernon, & Linzey, 1970) and the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator (Myers, 1962) to survey 34 women superintendents' personal values and personality types. A rank ordering of six values categories in the Allport Study of Values indicated that their personal values priorities were: (1) aesthetic, (2) political, (3) theoretical, (4) economic, (5) religious, and (6) social.

At first glance the placement of aesthetic in the first position seemed somewhat peculiar for women who had achieved chief executive
officer positions. However, further investigation revealed that according to the Allport Study of Values, placing high value on aesthetics meant a love of order and harmony. In that context, it did not seem to be an unusual priority for a person in a chief executive position.

A cumulative ordering of the personality types of the women in Schuch's (1980) study, which were identified through the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator suggested that the composite personality of these woman superintendents was: extroverted (56%), intuitive (62%), thinking (68%), and judging (79%).

Postlewait (1990) identified four typologies for classifying the 31 women examined in her national study. Type 1 women viewed themselves professionally first, were intensely committed to their jobs, and were personally motivated to be successful. Type 2 women saw themselves as women first and superintendents second. Type 3 women were referred to as "split-loaders" because they were not one type or the other, but rather balanced between Types 1 and 2. Finally, Type 4 women were termed unassigned. Women who fell into Type 4 did not display any particular pattern of characteristics. Based on these typologies, Postlewait found that 17 of the women in her study (55%) were Type 1, 7 (23%) were Type 2, 5 (16%) were split-loaders, and 2 (6%) were so divergent in their scores as to be unassigned.

Sanchez (1985), in a national comparison of 122 male superintendents and 64 female superintendents, found that both male and female superintendents described themselves first as hard working and that both felt their best personal strength was common sense.
Wiley (1986) reported that 26 female superintendents in California identified the following rank order of their perceptions of the top four most important personal characteristics: self-confidence, ability to make decisions, not easily offended, and objectivity.

Two studies (Miracle, 1987; Revere, 1986) used the same interview format, originally developed by Revere, to study different women superintendent populations. Miracle studied a state population of women superintendents in Ohio; Revere studied a national sample of black women superintendents. Miracle found that accommodations that her subjects perceived they had made to achieve their professional objectives included: lack of a social life, lack of a personal life, adjustments in the way they prioritized and allocated time, and making sacrifices to obtain an advanced degree.

In addition to the accommodations cited by Miracle's (1987) subjects, Revere (1986) found that her black women superintendents were faced with making the following additional accommodations: operating without a "confidante" or network, overcoming overt racism and sexism, responding to pressures and expectations to be "traditional" in their personal lives, and dealing with the fact that the black community, in general, was more accepting of a white superintendent than a black female superintendent.

Based on the preceding seven studies, it would appear that a collective personal portrait of these women superintendents revealed hard working extroverts who have generally succeeded through intense commitment, the use of basic common sense, and a high value on order and harmony. They also represented personalities that strived for
self-confidence and objectivity; and because they identified strongly with their professional role, they were willing to make personal sacrifices in order to succeed professionally.

**Attitudes/Perceptions Regarding Women in Administration**

Overall 10 studies (Carpenter, 1994; Lutz, 1990; Mears, 1982; Miracle, 1987; Natho, 1992; Ott, 1983; Radich, 1993; Revere, 1986; Waldo, 1983; Wong, 1979) examined attitudes and perceptions regarding women in administration.

Three studies (Lutz, 1990; Waldo, 1983; Wong, 1979) used Peters, Terborg, and Taynor's (1974) Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) to assess attitudes toward women in administration. Lutz and Wong conducted their studies with samples from California only, while Waldo used a national sample. Lutz and Waldo examined male and female superintendents' attitudes; Wong, only women superintendents'.

The Women as Managers Scale (Peters, et al., 1974) measures attitudes relative to three factors: general acceptance of females as managers, feminine barriers, and manager descriptive traits. In general, all three studies reported positive attitudes toward women managers. Out of a possible 147 points, the mean total for Wong's (1979) female superintendents was 124.51, which was slightly below the test's norm of 132. Waldo's (1983) mean totals were 132.98 for her female superintendents and 117.74 for her male superintendents. Though both scores were generally positive, this difference was statistically significant. Lutz's (1990) mean totals were 137.39 for his female superintendents and 133.8 for his male superintendents. His results indicated
that there was no statistically significant difference between male and female respondents, and both scores were highly positive.

In both male-female comparison studies (Lutz, 1990; Waldo, 1983), female superintendents tended to have more positive attitudes than male superintendents, and there were differences on individual characteristics. However, given the fact that both studies reported generally positive scores from all participants, the differences did not suggest a noteworthy difference in which female attitudes toward women as managers were positive and male attitudes were negative.

Two additional studies (Mears, 1982; Natho, 1992) used male-female comparisons to investigate attitudes toward women in administration, but used nonstandardized questionnaires. Mears' nationwide study of 89 female and 103 male superintendents found no significant differences between male and female attitudes toward women in administration; however, the female superintendents' attitudes tended to be more positive than the male superintendents' attitudes.

Natho (1992) surveyed the perceptions of a national sample of 121 female superintendents and 206 male superintendents regarding the impact on women's career advancement of six internal and external barrier categories: external support (i.e., mentors, networks), male dominance, gender bias, family influences, leadership style, and external impediments (i.e., motivation, self-image). Her findings indicated significant male-female differences between some individual categories and the perceptions of males and females who had worked for a female supervisor versus the perceptions of males and females who had not. In general, the perceptions of male and female superintendents who had
worked for a female supervisor were more positive than the perceptions of those who had not. The overall result was that males and females both had relatively favorable attitudes toward women in administration.

Revere (1986) and Miracle (1987) both explored attitudes toward women in administration through two interview questions that examined (1) their subjects' perceptions of whether they had been accorded any special treatment as a woman seeking an administrative position, and (2) their subjects' perceptions of what has caused the current status of women in superintendent positions. Neither Revere's nor Miracle's subjects felt that any special treatment had been accorded them during their superintendent searches. Regarding the causes of women superintendents' current status, Miracle's subjects mentioned that some women felt that the cost was too high and, thus, some women simply weren't interested in paying the price; that there was a lack of support groups for women superintendents; and that the "good ole boy" network was still a barrier for most women. Revere's subjects felt that the status of black female superintendents was definitely improving and that there soon would be a time when black women would be hired for their competence and fitness for the job, and not for their predilection of color.

Finally, Ott (1983) used focused interviews with 13 female superintendents in Colorado to explore their attitudes regarding women as administrators. Surprisingly, she found that these women held significantly more negative beliefs about women as administrators than they held positive beliefs. Among the negative beliefs cited were: Women's families interfere with job performance; women do not prepare as well
for administrative positions; women employees prefer to work for men; and women, in general, have difficulty making decisions.

Positive traits that the women in Ott's (1983) study identified were: Women have good professional skills, women are more open in communication, and women have good personal characteristics.

Attitudes/Perceptions Regarding the Superintendency

Four studies (Boudreau, 1994; Postlewait, 1990; Senyk, 1988; Williams, 1983) reported women superintendents’ perceptions of the role of the superintendent.

Boudreau (1994), in her qualitative study of nine women superintendents in Illinois, explored the superintendency in terms of personal and professional challenges. Professional challenges included: the work itself; establishing and maintaining board, community, subordinate, and collegial/organizational relationships; hiring practices; and setting and achieving goals and aspirations. Personal challenges focused on meeting family responsibilities; maintaining memberships and being active in professional and community organizations; finding time for academic goals and pursuits; establishing and maintaining family support; and finding time for personal issues including exercise, hobbies, and recreation.

Postlewait's (1990) national sample of female superintendents felt that boards of education were not willing to give female superintendents as much latitude as male superintendents. Additionally, these women felt that women bring more focus on teaching and learning to the superintendency, while they felt men bring more focus on finance, personnel,
and facilities management.

When asked what aspects of the superintendency were most rewarding, Senyk’s (1988) 10 female superintendents in New Jersey cited working with people, developing good public relations, and improving curriculum and instruction. Least rewarding aspects were dealing with the board of education, paperwork, fiscal responsibilities, and building/physical plant issues.

When asked what constituted their major areas of stress, Senyk’s (1988) subjects indicated working with people and maintaining control of self and situations. It is interesting to note that working with people was seen as both a reward and a stressor. When viewed in the context of needing to feel in control, the variability of working with people can, indeed, be seen as both a positive and a negative.

Senyk’s (1988) findings agreed with Williams’s (1983) findings relative to the stress that people and personnel issues can cause a superintendent. Forty-two percent of Williams’s national sample of 50 female superintendents listed personnel issues as their number one source of stress. Time demands of the job and finance were the next two most commonly cited sources of stress.

Perceptions of Characteristics Necessary for Success as a Superintendent

Six studies (Douglas & Simonson, 1982; C. B. Jackson, 1981; Leedy, 1993; Micas, 1982; Postlewait, 1990; Williams, 1983) discussed perceptions of personal characteristics necessary for superintendents to be successful in their jobs.
When Douglas and Simonson (1982) compared the perceptions of male and female superintendents nationally, both agreed that the number one qualification for success was the ability to organize. When asked to rate how successful they perceived themselves to be, the majority of both males (72%) and females (72%) perceived that they were very successful and that their success was based on the fact that they each had a balance of both task-oriented and relations-oriented skills.

C. B. Jackson (1981), Leedy (1993), Postlewait (1990), Micas (1982), and Williams (1983) each studied samples that were exclusively female. A composite list of the characteristics these five researchers cited included (a) a hard worker (C. B. Jackson, 1981; Micas, 1982; Williams, 1983); (b) a positive attitude (C. B. Jackson, 1981; Postlewait, 1990); (c) physical, emotional, and mental strength (Postlewait, 1990); (d) self-confidence (Postlewait, 1990); (e) willingness to be a risk-taker (Postlewait, 1990); (f) dedication (Micas, 1982); (g) decisiveness (Postlewait, 1990); (h) courage (Postlewait, 1990); (i) good listener (Micas, 1982); (j) endurance and perseverance (Micas, 1982; Postlewait, 1990); (k) trustworthiness and ethics (C. B. Jackson, 1981; Leedy, 1993; Postlewait, 1990); (l) high motivation and professional commitment (Postlewait, 1990); (m) consideration (Micas, 1982); (n) selflessness, maturity, and stability (Postlewait, 1990); (o) intelligence, knowledge, and competence (Micas, 1982; Postlewait, 1990); (p) flexibility (Leedy, 1993); (q) strong sense of direction (Postlewait, 1990); (r) good organizational skills (Postlewait, 1990; Williams, 1983); (s) strong communication skills (Leedy, 1993; Postlewait, 1990; Williams, 1983); (t) good people skills (C. B. Jackson, 1981; Leedy, 1993; Williams,
1983; and (u) strong perception—ability to see the big picture (Postlewait, 1990).

**Job Satisfaction**


Four studies (Genzen, 1994; Schuster, 1988; Snell, 1981; Wong, 1979) examined job satisfaction through male-female comparisons. Schuster's study of a national sample of male and female superintendents found that female superintendents were more satisfied with their jobs in that they, more than their male counterparts, would choose to be a superintendent again, and they intended to remain in the superintendency for the rest of their careers.

Genzen (1994) used the Superintendent Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (R. F. Jackson, 1992) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (1977) to measure 14 Ohio women superintendents' level of job satisfaction. Her results were then compared to the norming population on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and the results of a 1992 study by R. F. Jackson which focused primarily on a sample of predominantly male Ohio superintendents that responded to his Superintendent Job Satisfaction Questionnaire.

On the Superintendent Job Satisfaction Questionnaire women were significantly more satisfied than males with student-superintendent relationships and significantly less satisfied than males regarding salary
and religious issues (evolution-creation, Halloween, etc.). Regarding the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, female superintendents were less satisfied than the manager norming sample relative to compensation, job security, and the competence of their supervisors in decision making.

Wong (1979) used Cochran's (1976) Job Satisfaction Questionnaire to explore the job satisfaction of 11 California women superintendents in comparison to Cochran's male norms. The results indicated that Wong's subjects were significantly less satisfied than the norms regarding rapport with the board of education, salary, and workload and significantly above the norms relative to community relations.

Snell's (1981) study examined the perceptions of not only male and female superintendents but also male and female board presidents. No significant differences were found between and among the four groups regarding the job satisfaction of the superintendents and the board presidents' perceptions of the superintendents' job satisfaction. The overall perceptions of all subgroups were that superintendents were moderately satisfied with their jobs.

Five studies (Hodgin, 1985; McCabe, 1992; Miracle, 1987; Paggi, 1990/1991; Revere, 1986) assessed the job satisfaction of solely female samples. In McCabe's national sample of 254 women superintendents, 85% were satisfied, very satisfied, or extremely satisfied. Similarly, Hodgin (1985) assessed the overall level of job satisfaction of 147 women superintendents nationally and then measured the impact that role conflict and role ambiguity had on their identified satisfaction levels. The results indicated that overall job satisfaction was high and that role ambiguity had little impact on satisfaction, while role conflict had a
moderate impact.

As cited in the section on attitudes and perceptions of self, Miracle (1987) and Revere (1986) examined different samples of women superintendents using the same interview format. The results from both studies indicated that the subjects were satisfied with their positions and that they had gained in self-confidence and competence as a result of it.

Finally, Paggi's (1990/1991) study of 31 California women superintendents investigated factors that contribute to job satisfaction. In general, the majority of these women (74%) felt that achievement most contributed to job satisfaction, with recognition a distant second at 29%.

In terms of dissatisfaction, the responses were more diverse. Lack of recognition was considered the most significant contributing factor by 37% of the participants, while 19% felt interpersonal relationships with subordinates was the most significant contributor to dissatisfaction.

Disaggregation by age, marital status, and level of experience did produce differing trends among Paggi's (1990/1991) subjects. Women superintendents in the middle age group (46-55) were more satisfied by achievement and less satisfied by recognition than the other two age groups. Married women were more satisfied by achievement, recognition, and interpersonal relationships with subordinates, while unmarried women were more satisfied by possibilities for growth. Women in the middle experience group (5-10 years) were more satisfied by recognition than the other two experience groups consisting of those with less than 5 years of experience and those with more than 10 years, respectively.
Research Question 7

Research Question 7: What patterns or trends does the research identify?

In general, the patterns that the dissertation research revealed regarding the attitudes and perceptions of women superintendents have already been identified as the topical subdivisions used to organize this section's presentation. Those significant patterns and, thus, topical subdivisions included: attitudes and perceptions regarding self, attitudes and perceptions regarding women in administration, attitudes and perceptions regarding the superintendency, perceptions of personal characteristics necessary for success, and job satisfaction.

Research Question 8

Research Question 8: What is the direction of the identified patterns or trends?

Noteworthy findings from the dissertation research regarding women superintendents' attitudes and perceptions indicated the following:

1. A composite portrait of women superintendents revealed hard working extroverts who generally succeeded through intense commitment, the use of common sense, and a high value on order and harmony.

2. Male and female superintendents tended to view women as managers positively, with female superintendents viewing them slightly more positively than male superintendents.
3. Some women superintendents felt that boards of education do not give women superintendents as much latitude as they give male superintendents.

4. Both male and female superintendents felt that being able to organize and having a balance between task-oriented skills and relationship-oriented skills was critical to a successful superintendency.

5. Female superintendents expressed moderate to high levels of job satisfaction. Strong satisfiers included achievement and successful interpersonal interactions. Dissatisfiers included compensation, lack of recognition, and unsuccessful interpersonal interactions.

Barriers

Second only to profiles, barriers was one of the most widely studied research issues in this body of dissertation research on women superintendents. Forty-seven studies examined barriers to women in the public school superintendency as either a primary or secondary focus. While the term barrier implies only constraints, the focus of discussion in this section is not limited to the negative aspects of barriers. Explorations of overcoming and avoiding barriers have also been discussed.

For the purposes of discussion, the information presented in this section has been classified according to the following categories: internal barriers, external barriers, and overcoming barriers.

Research Question 6

Research Question 6: In what ways can the research findings be reexamined and integrated?
The research findings in this section essentially reflect an accumulation of narrative descriptions regarding experiences and perceptions relative to barriers. In some cases, statistical comparisons and tests of significance were performed; however, the substantial variance in survey and assessment instruments and techniques only allowed for statistical comparisons within studies and not for meta-analytic comparisons across studies. Therefore, this portion of the research was integrated by listing factors and taking a vote.

Because of the sheer volume of information that was accumulated for each of the identified discussion categories, the comments and perceptions identified in each have been conceptually clustered, wherever possible, and multiple researchers have been credited with that particular concept. Additionally, only those concepts that emerged as major themes have received further discussion. For each of the categories, the identified factors, conditions, or concepts have been listed first, and the discussions have been presented second.

**Internal Barriers**

Twenty of the 79 included studies discussed internal barriers either from a personal experience perspective or from a perception of impact perspective (Boudreau, 1994; Bulls, 1987; Burkhardt, 1991; Carpenter, 1994; Castro, 1993; Chambers, 1978; Costa, 1981; Crawford, 1993; Dorner, 1983; Dulac, 1992; Hodgin, 1985; Howell, 1990; Lutz, 1990; McDade, 1981; Monaghan, 1993; Newcombe, 1985; Radich, 1993; Senyk, 1988; Snell, 1981; Zumsteg, 1992). Internal barriers that were cited included: (a) mobility (Bulls, 1987; Dulac, 1992;
Monaghan, 1993; Newcombe, 1985; Senyk, 1988; Zumsteg, 1992), (b) limitations within self (Burkhardt, 1991; Castro, 1993; Chambers, 1980; Costa, 1981; Dulac, 1992; Lutz, 1990; Newcombe, 1985; Senyk, 1988; Zumsteg, 1992), (c) family responsibilities (Boudreau, 1994; Castro, 1993; Costa, 1981; Crawford, 1993; Dorner, 1983; Dulac, 1992; Hodgin, 1985; Howell, 1990; Snell, 1981; Zumsteg, 1992), (d) role conflict and ambiguity (Costa, 1981; Dulac, 1992; Hodgin, 1985; Zumsteg, 1992), (e) impatience with nonprofessionalism (Howell, 1990), (f) aspirations and ambitions (McDade, 1981; Newcombe, 1985), (g) poor interview skills (Senyk, 1988), and (h) unwillingness to make necessary sacrifices (Senyk, 1988).

The three most commonly cited internal barriers were mobility, limitations within the self, and family responsibilities.

**Mobility.** Six of the seven studies that explored this factor found it to be a significant barrier (Bulls, 1987; Dulac, 1992; Monaghan, 1993; Newcombe, 1985; Senyk, 1988; Zumsteg, 1992). Only Radich (1993) found that her male and female superintendents in Washington were willing to relocate, but even they were only willing to relocate within their state.

**Limitations Within Self.** Limitations within the self was an internal barrier that encompassed a wide variety of personal issues. Castro (1993) in her study of 25 female superintendents in Illinois found that the most commonly cited internal barriers were fear and lack of assertiveness.
Burkhardt (1991) and Zumsteg (1992) supported Castro's (1993) identification of lack of assertiveness, both with studies in which female superintendents saw it as more of a barrier than male superintendents.

Dulac (1992) found in her regional study of women superintendents and male/female school board presidents that self-confidence and self-esteem were limitations within the self that women superintendents ranked with more importance than the board presidents.

Finally, Senyk's (1988) interviews with 10 female superintendents expanded the context of limitations within self to mean lack of maturity, lack of confidence, unwillingness to be a risk-taker, and a lack of ambition and aspiration.

Family Responsibilities. The last major category of internal barriers that surfaced was family responsibilities. A simple vote-taking tally among the 10 dissertations that discussed family responsibilities and role conflict (Boudreau, 1994; Castro, 1993; Costa, 1981; Crawford, 1993; Dorner, 1983; Dulac, 1992; Hodgin, 1985; Howell, 1990; Snell, 1981; Zumsteg, 1992) indicated that the majority (70%) viewed family responsibilities as a barrier. Responses seemed to delineate along the lines of whether or not female superintendents had dependent children at home. For those female superintendents who had no children, or whose children were grown, family responsibilities did not appear to be a strong issue. For those women superintendents who had dependent children, family responsibilities, role conflict, and the need to balance personal and professional life were commonly cited as stressors and barriers.
External Barriers


External barriers that were cited included: (a) gender bias (Blount, 1994; Boudreau, 1994; Bulls, 1987; Carpenter, 1994; Castro, 1993; Coatney, 1982; Crawford, 1993; Dopp, 1986; Dorner, 1983; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Dulac, 1992; Howell, 1990; Hummel, 1988; Leedy, 1993; McDade, 1981; Natho, 1992; Newcombe, 1985; Revere, 1986; Sannella, 1991; Schuch, 1980; Wong, 1979; Zumsteg, 1992); (b) hiring/recruitment practices (Boudreau, 1994; Burkhardt, 1991; Castro, 1993; Dulac, 1992; Howell, 1990; Lutz, 1990; McCabe, 1992; Monaghan, 1993; Postlewait, 1990; Richardson, 1980; Zumsteg, 1992); (c) male dominance--gatekeepers, employers, and candidates (Castro, 1993; Chambers, 1980; Crawford, 1993; Monaghan, 1993; Natho, 1992); (d) attitudes of colleagues--male and female (Dulac, 1992;
Lutz, 1990; Senyk, 1988); (e) race issues and bias (Adams, 1990; Bulls, 1987; Chambers, 1980; Revere, 1986); (f) unrealistic community expectations (Chambers, 1980; Howell, 1990; Revere, 1986); (g) role model issues (Carpenter, 1994; Castro, 1993; Chambers, 1980; Howell, 1990; Leedy, 1993; Monaghan, 1993; Postlewait, 1990; Sanchez, 1985); (h) myths and stereotypes (Chambers, 1980; Crawford, 1993; Dopp, 1986; Dulac, 1992; Leedy, 1993; McCabe, 1992; McDade, 1981; Postlewait, 1990; Revere, 1986; Senyk, 1988); (i) mentorship (Adams, 1990; Boudreau, 1994; Bulls, 1987; Castro, 1993; Costa, 1981; Crawford, 1993; Dopp, 1986; Dorner, 1983; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Dulac, 1992; Howell, 1990; Hummel, 1988; Jenkins, 1991; Kreps, 1987; Lasher, 1987; Leedy, 1993; Maienza, 1981; McCabe, 1992; Monaghan, 1993; Radich, 1993; Robison, 1992; Sanchez, 1985; Sannella, 1991; Savage, 1990); (j) networks (Boudreau, 1994; Carpenter, 1994; Crawford, 1992; Dulac, 1992; Howell, 1990; Hudson, 1988; Hummel, 1988; Jenkins, 1991; McCabe, 1992; Monaghan, 1993; Sanchez, 1985); (k) school and community politics (Crawford, 1993; Howell, 1990; Postlewait, 1990); (l) superintendent search consultants/headhunters (Howell, 1990); (m) professional experience and training issues (Carpenter, 1994; Chambers, 1980; Crawford, 1993; Kreger, 1993; Leedy, 1993; McCabe, 1992; Sannella, 1991; Savage, 1990; Zumsteg, 1992); and (n) inadequate support from spouse and family (Boudreau, 1994; Burkhardt, 1991; Howell, 1990; Senyk, 1988).

The most dominant themes that emerged from the included dissertations regarding external barriers were gender bias, hiring and
recruitment practices, myths and stereotypes, professional experience and training, networks, and mentorship/role models.

**Gender Bias.** Twenty-six studies discussed gender bias and the women superintendent (Blount, 1994; Boudreau, 1994; Bulls, 1987; Carpenter, 1994; Castro, 1993; Chambers, 1980; Coatney, 1982; Crawford, 1993; Dopp, 1986; Dorner, 1983; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Dulac, 1992; Farrell, 1990; Howell, 1990; Hummel, 1988; Leedy, 1993; McDade, 1981; Natho, 1992; Newcombe, 1985; Revere, 1986; Richardson, 1980; Sannella, 1991; Schuch, 1980; Stevens, 1989; Wong, 1979; Zumsteg, 1992). Only 4 studies out of the 26 reported either mixed feelings about gender bias (Dopp, 1986) or that they felt it was not a problem (Chambers, 1980; Farrell, 1990; Richardson, 1980). Three studies (Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Hummel, 1988; Natho, 1992) reported male-female comparisons in which female superintendents saw gender bias as a greater problem than male superintendents.

One study (Dulac, 1992) compared the gender bias perceptions of women superintendents and board of education presidents. The results indicated that female superintendents perceived gender bias to be a larger issue than board of education presidents.

Three studies explored the combined biases of gender and race (Bulls, 1987; Chambers, 1980; Revere, 1986). Bulls and Revere reported that both were considered a barrier; Chambers's national sample of black male and female superintendents and white female superintendents expressed greater concern with race bias than with gender bias.
Hiring and Recruitment Practices. Of the 12 studies that discussed hiring and recruitment practices as barriers (Boudreau, 1994; Burkhardt, 1991; Carpenter, 1994; Castro, 1993; Dulac, 1992; Howell, 1990; Lutz, 1990; McCabe, 1992; Monaghan, 1993; Postlewait, 1990; Richardson, 1980; Zumsteg, 1992), only one, Carpenter’s (1994) sample of 13 female superintendents in Arkansas, perceived them to be "not a problem."

Three studies (Burkhardt, 1991; Lutz, 1990; Monaghan, 1993) compared male-female perceptions of hiring and recruitment practices. Burkhardt’s and Monaghan’s studies of different samples of Ohio male and female superintendents, conducted one year apart, found that more females viewed hiring and recruitment practices as a major concern than did their male counterparts. In contrast, Lutz’s state sample of California male and female superintendents indicated that males saw hiring and recruitment practices as a greater problem than did females.

Finally, five studies (Dulac, 1992; Howell, 1990; Postlewait, 1990; Richardson, 1980; Zumsteg, 1992) reported that the most common concern regarding hiring practices and procedures was the overall attitudes of boards of education toward women as managers.

Myths and Stereotypes. Ten studies (Chambers, 1980; Crawford, 1993; Dopp, 1986; Dulac, 1992; Leedy, 1993; McCabe, 1992; McDade, 1981; Postlewait, 1990; Revere, 1986; Senyk, 1988) identified myths and stereotypes as a major external barrier.

Chambers (1980), with a national sample of black male and female superintendents and white female superintendents, found that...
negative influences on their careers were more racially-based than
gender-based. Crawford (1993), with a sample of female superintend-
ents from Georgia found that her subjects identified the major stereotype
that they encountered was the perception that men are "supposed to
be" in superintendent positions. Dulac (1992) concurred with this find-
ing; however, from her regional sample of female superintendents and
board of education presidents, she found that female superintendents
viewed the perception that men are better qualified to administer to be
more of a barrier than the board presidents found it to be.

Leedy's (1993) qualitative study of women superintendents in
Michigan revealed that they felt that women superintendents, in general,
were stereotyped to be better suited to administering smaller districts.
McDade's (1981) national sample of women superintendents, on the
other hand, pointed to more personal stereotypes such as, the expecta-
tions that women have to be "better than" men, the perception that a
successful woman is more of an exception than a rule, and the percep-
tion that aggressiveness is a negative trait in women.

Professional Experience and Training. Nine studies (Carpenter,
1994; Chambers, 1980; Crawford, 1993; Kreger, 1993; Leedy, 1993;
issues related to professional experience and training to be barriers.
Two issues stood out in particular.

Leedy's (1993) sample of Michigan women superintendents cited
that the overall preference of school boards for superintendents with
secondary rather than elementary teaching and administrative experience
was a particular hindrance for women seeking superintendencies.

Carpenter (1994), reflecting the opinions from a state sample of women superintendents, and McCabe (1992), reflecting those of a national sample, felt that the perception that women were not as well trained in, or as experienced in, school finance as men was a significant barrier to being seriously considered for and obtaining a superintendency.

Networks. Eleven studies mentioned networks (Boudreau, 1994; Carpenter, 1994; Crawford, 1993; Dulac, 1992; Howell, 1990; Hudson, 1988; Hummel, 1988; Jenkins, 1991; McCabe, 1992; Monaghan, 1993; Sanchez, 1985). All 11 studies basically expressed the opinion that networking was a necessary and important factor to access and entry to the superintendency, for both males and females. They also generally agreed that it was one of the more important strategies for women to use to overcome the barriers facing them.

Two studies (Carpenter, 1994; McCabe, 1992), one a state sample and the other a national sample of women superintendents only, observed that though networking was extremely important, breaking into existing male networks was particularly difficult.

studies discussed role models (Carpenter, 1994; Castro, 1993; Chambers, 1980; Howell, 1990; Leedy, 1993; Monaghan, 1993; Postlewait, 1990; Sanchez, 1985).

Relative to role models, all of the studies that addressed this issue emphasized the importance of role models in career role development and expressed the lack of sufficient female role models in the superintendent as a real misfortune for female aspirants.

Of the 24 studies that addressed mentoring, all 24 emphasized the importance of having a mentor, and the majority of the studies reported that their subjects had been mentored at some level, most frequently by a male.

Two studies (Kreps, 1987; Lasher, 1987) addressed mentorship as the primary focus of their research. Lasher (1987) used a questionnaire to survey 60 female superintendents in California, while Kreps (1987) used personal interviews to conduct a qualitative case study with four women superintendents in the Middle Atlantic states. Central to both studies was a description of the characteristics and process of the mentorship relationship from the protégée's point of view. Both studies indicated that the majority of mentors had been males (Lasher, 91% and Kreps, 3 of 4), that being mentored had been an important component of the majority of their subjects' professional careers, and that the critical services that had been received had been guidance/counseling/encouragement, opportunities to showcase their skills, role modeling, and sponsorship.

Lasher (1987) explored whether there were differences between male and female mentors. She found that, indeed, there were
differences. Male mentors had been more helpful in terms of informing the protégées about the overall requirements and expectations of the superintendency. They provided specific training in job-related skills and also assisted the protégées through sponsorship with obtaining promotions. Female mentors tended to provide more nurturing forms of support. These women provided their protégées with a sense of vision; protected them from conflict; warned them regarding potential problems; and like the male mentors, sponsored them for promotions.

Because hers was a case study with a very small sample (four female superintendents), Kreps (1987) explored the mentorship experience from a more personal level. In general, these four women felt that at first they were riding on the reputations of their mentors, because the mentor was essentially paving the way. In the beginning the protégées were somewhat intimidated and felt that the mentors were critical and demanding. However, in retrospect, they saw the relationship as a process of growth that evolved through stages to the point where the protégées became strong and competent leaders in their own right.

**Overcoming Barriers**

Thirteen studies discussed or suggested strategies for overcoming the barriers facing women superintendents (Boudreau, 1994; Bulls, 1987; Castro, 1993; Crawford, 1993; Dulac, 1992; Farrell, 1990; Howell, 1990; Hudson, 1988; Lasher, 1987; McCabe, 1992; Orland, 1986; Savage, 1990; Senyk, 1988). The following list of suggestions does not necessarily represent researchers' attempts to analyze the effectiveness of strategies, but rather it represents subjects' perceptions
of what may be effective. As a result, the list has been compiled and presented as a source of possibilities, not as a source of proven remedies.

The strategies for overcoming the barriers facing incumbent and aspiring women superintendents that were suggested in the included dissertation literature included: (a) networking (Boudreau, 1994; Crawford, 1993; Dulac, 1992; Farrell, 1990; Howell, 1990; Hudson, 1988; Orland, 1986; Savage, 1990; Senyk, 1988); (b) mentor relationships (Boudreau, 1994; Bulls, 1987; Castro, 1993; Crawford, 1993; Dulac, 1992; Farrell, 1990; Howell, 1990; Lasher, 1987; Senyk, 1988); (c) obtaining collegial support (Boudreau, 1994; Senyk, 1988); (d) relaxation of personal expectations and practices regarding home responsibilities (Boudreau, 1994); (e) membership in professional/feminist organizations (Boudreau, 1994); (f) securing family support (Boudreau, 1994; Dulac, 1992; Senyk, 1988); (g) provision of time for exercising, relaxing, and hobbies (Boudreau, 1994); (h) development of sound time management skills (Boudreau, 1994); (i) implementation of Affirmative Action and other policies/procedures that support women (Castro, 1993; Dulac, 1992); (j) presence of and use of more women superintendent role models (Castro, 1993; Dulac, 1992); (k) strong academic preparation (Crawford, 1993; Savage, 1990); (l) strong work ethic (Crawford, 1993); (m) varied professional experience (Crawford, 1993; Savage, 1990; Senyk, 1988); (n) development of strong leadership characteristics that are their own (Crawford, 1993); (o) increase in professional and community visibility (Dulac, 1992); (p) formulation and adherence to an action plan to achieve career goals (Dulac, 1992; Senyk, 1988);
(q) development of strong interview and job search skills (Dulac, 1992; Senyk, 1988); (r) entrance to and participation in school and community power groups (Dulac, 1992; McCabe, 1992); (s) development of personal and professional coping skills (Dulac, 1992); (t) development of a strong self concept (Dulac, 1992); (u) improvement of school finance skills (Dulac, 1992; McCabe, 1992); (v) development of political know-how (Senyk, 1988); and (w) willingness to make sacrifices (Senyk, 1988).

Only three studies (Dulac, 1992; Hudson, 1988; Savage, 1990) did an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of selected strategies for overcoming barriers. Savage (1990) and Dulac (1992) conducted similar studies that explored the perceptions of samples of women superintendents and board of education presidents (male and female) regarding possible barriers and strategies that could have an impact on women’s attainment of the superintendency. In general, the board presidents in the Savage (1990) study tended to view the barriers and strategies in much the same way as the women superintendents, while the board presidents in the Dulac (1992) study tended to see the strategies as less successful than the women superintendents did. Strategies that represent the perceptions identified in both studies as being highly successful were: developing a strong self-concept, having previous district leadership experience, knowing current trends in education, knowing the job description of the position for which one is applying, having the necessary credentials, and learning the characteristics of the school district to which one is applying.

Hudson (1988) examined the use of informal contacts
(networking) by a national sample of black and white, male and female superintendents. Her results suggested that informal job contacts were most likely to have been used by school superintendents who were not looking for jobs, who received internal promotions, and who had knowledge of the job prior to the job's posting. The use of informal contacts was found to be more prevalent in the South and Midwestern parts of the United States.

Superintendents who used more formal job contacts were more likely to have resided in the Western or Eastern part of the United States, faced more competition for their jobs in terms of numbers of interviews and applications granted, and usually did not know about the job that they eventually got prior to its official posting.

Overall, 61% of all the superintendents in the Hudson (1988) study learned about their current job through informal job contacts, and 87% of them had a male contact (75% of the women). Women (69.8%) and black (69.8%) administrators were more likely than white administrators (54.2%) to learn about their jobs through informal contacts. As a result, it would appear that this sample of superintendents found the use of networking to be a highly successful job search strategy.

Research Question 7

Research Question 7: What patterns or trends does the research identify?

As with the attitudes/perceptions section, the primary patterns or trends relative to the dissertation literature on women superintendents
and barriers generally followed the topics used to subdivide its presentation. As a result, the patterns and trends most commonly found were those that reflected the identification and discussion of internal barriers, external barriers, and strategies for overcoming barriers.

Research Question 8

**Research Question 8:** What is the direction of the identified patterns or trends?

Noteworthy findings from the dissertation research regarding barriers to the employment and success of women superintendents included.

1. The most commonly cited internal barriers were mobility; limitations within the self, such as a lack of confidence and a lack of assertiveness; and family responsibilities.

2. Family responsibilities were most frequently a concern for those women superintendents that had dependent children at home.

3. The most commonly cited external barriers were gender bias, hiring and recruiting practices, myths and stereotypes, professional experience and training, networks, and mentorship/role models.

4. In those studies that considered both racial and gender bias, black superintendents–male and female–felt that racial bias was equal to or greater than gender bias.

5. A commonly cited external barrier was the perception that women are not as well-trained in and as skilled in school finance as males.

6. Male and female mentors have different styles of mentoring.
7. The most commonly suggested strategies for overcoming the barriers to women superintendents were mentoring and networks.

Status

There was only one study out of the 79 studies included in this research synthesis that investigated the status of women superintendents as a primary topic (Blount, 1994). Two additional studies, however, addressed the status of women superintendents as a secondary issue (Johnson, 1985; Revere, 1986).

Research Question 6

Research Question 6: In what ways can the research finding be reexamined and integrated?

Because of the number of studies, minimal integration of the findings was possible. The results of each of the three studies that investigated status have been reported through listing factors.

Blount (1994) used an historical research design to study the history and status of women in the superintendency in the United States between 1900 and 1990. After determining that governmental or national association archival files (National Education Association and American Association of School Administrators) were inadequate sources of information, Blount used Patterson's American Education as her primary source for her status research.

This compilation of women superintendent statistics did not cover each year between 1900 and 1990, but rather used the key years of 1910, 1930, 1950, 1970, and 1990 to identify consistent, 20-year
status benchmarks. In essence, her research confirmed what had been previously reported in other women in administration research, that the number of women superintendents was greater in the beginning of the 20th century than at present, that the percentages of women superintendents were at their peak in the 1930s, that the percentages of women superintendents were at their lowest at or about 1970, and that between 1970 and the present the number of women in the superintendency has been steadily increasing.

Johnson (1985) included one research question in her national study of 92 women superintendents that explored how the number of women superintendents had changed since 1980. Because she was looking at the change in status of women superintendents over a 5-year period only, her benchmarks of less than 1% in 1980, slightly more than 1% in 1982, and 2.29% in 1985, must be viewed in light of the limited context they represent. However, they do suggest support for Blount’s (1994) observation of a renewed growth pattern between 1970 and 1990.

Revere (1986) conducted a national study of black women superintendents. While her study was not the first to examine the black female superintendent experience, it was the only study located that included a research objective to ascertain the status of black women in the public school superintendency. At the time of her study she was able to report that there were 29 black women superintendents in the United States. Further information on these black women superintendents has been presented in the profiles section of this synthesis.
Research Question 7

Research Question 7: What patterns or trends does the research identify?

Without question the status of women in the public school superintendency is one of gross underrepresentation. While Blount (1994) was not the first to identify this underrepresentation, her documentation of the number of women holding public school superintendencies over a 90-year period added to the body of research that substantiates this underrepresentation as a reality, not a myth.

Because Revere's (1986) report on the status of black female superintendents was the only study to do so, no direct comparisons were possible. Blount's (1994) study did not analyze her women superintendent statistics by race, but Chambers's (1980) national study of black and white superintendents included eight black female superintendents. While her research goals did not include documenting the total number of black female superintendents at that time, the fact that only eight were included in a national sample lends at least some credence to the supposition that there were not many more than that available at that time.

If it can be assumed that Chambers's (1980) sample was an accurate reflection of the number of black female superintendents in the United States in 1979, then Revere's (1986) findings of an increase to 29 by 1985 suggest a significant growth in the number of black women in the superintendency over a 6-year period. If Chambers's numbers are
not accurate, then Revere’s findings become a starting point for future comparisons.

Research Question 8

Research Question 8: What is the direction of the identified patterns or trends?

Noteworthy findings from the dissertation research regarding the status of women in the public school superintendency included:

1. Women are underrepresented in the public school superintendency in comparison to the number of women employed in public school education.

2. The percentages of women in the public school superintendency were at their highest point in the 1930s.

3. The percentages of women in the public school superintendency were at their lowest point in the early 1970s.

4. The percentages of women in the public school superintendency have been increasing since the 1970s.

Structural Determinants

Three studies (Fairbairn, 1990; Garfinkel, 1989; Maienza, 1981) studied structural determinants as a primary focus. Maienza (1981) investigated the predictors of access of women to the public school superintendency in terms of two factors: personal behaviors and structural determinants within the organizations they are trying to access. Fairbairn (1990) and Garfinkel (1989) investigated issues relative to the impact that superintendents’ leadership philosophies have on the
organizational structure and climate of the school districts within which they work.

Research Question 6

Research Question 6: In what ways can the research findings be reexamined and integrated?

Because of the small number of studies discussed in this section, the data were synthesized by listing factors only.

Maienza (1981) conducted a regional study of 10 male and 10 female superintendents of Midwestern school districts with 1,000 or more students. Several of her initial hypotheses were:

1. Men and women generally followed the same career path to the superintendency; however, there are certain variables in studying women's careers, for example, marital status, children, and sex-role conflict, that do not generally have to be considered when studying men's careers.

2. Certain organizational structures have been present in the careers of both male and female superintendents that allowed them to access their positions.

3. Access to the opportunity and power resulting in the obtaining of a superintendency came about as the result of extraordinary activities in the careers of the subjects, strong alliances, and changing priorities in the districts in which the subjects were serving.

Her findings supported her initial hypotheses and indicated that both males and females who were selected for superintendencies had the following common characteristics: They both had specialized
academic training, they both had specific work experiences that either met existing organizational expectations or met a new direction in which an organization wanted to go, and they both had extraordinary opportunities for visibility and sponsorship.

What emerged as differences were the manner in which males and females experienced and achieved the common characteristics. Female superintendents tended to have less traditional childhood leadership experiences than their male counterparts. While the male superintendents tended to have been athletes, the female superintendents had been journalists, publishing neighborhood newsletters, directing neighborhood plays, and organizing local social functions.

The male superintendents also seemed to have had more direct access to and support from sponsorship afforded through university professors and superintendent search consultants. Although some of the women reported breaking into these networks, they indicated that it usually required aggressive measures to do so, and many preferred to develop their own networks through state and national professional organizations.

In general, Maienza (1981) found that women's career experiences relative to men's experiences prior to reaching the superintendency were longer and at lower levels of management; that women's access to advanced degree programs and the resulting sponsorship that comes with them has, until recently, been limited; and that there is strong evidence that women have faced discrimination in gaining access to the superintendency at the hands of male university gatekeepers through a lack of sponsorship.
Fairbairn (1990) conducted a national study of 209 female superintendents, 380 male superintendents, and 393 board of education presidents. One of her major research questions was, "Does the sex of the superintendent make a difference in board of education/superintendent relationships?" (p. 36). The major themes that were explored to answer this question were: role functions in terms of administrative tasks and policy making, patterns of superintendent-board contacts, perceptions and responses to superintendent-board conflicts, and overall perceptions of superintendent-board relations.

While 78% of all the respondents said that the sex of the superintendent did not have a bearing on the relationship between the board and the superintendent, over one-third of the female superintendents did feel that it had a bearing. Though this one-third percentage represented a minority opinion, when compared to the male superintendents and the board presidents it was significant at the .001 level of significance (chi square).

Other interesting findings included: more female superintendents were likely to share policy development and preparation of the board agenda with the board than males; superintendents and board presidents, regardless of sex, did not agree on who is responsible for administration and policy functions--both perceived more responsibility in these areas than the other said they had; and female superintendents perceived the relations between the board and superintendent to be more informal than male superintendents did.

Garfinkel (1989) conducted a qualitative study of five male and five female superintendents and their respective administrative team.
members in New York. The primary research question was "Is there a difference between how male and female superintendents conceptualize the administrative team?" (p. 45). In general, both male and female superintendents and their administrative teams had similar conceptualizations of the organization and composition of the team, the definition of the team process, and the purposes of the team and its players. What was significantly different was the difference between the male superintendents' and the female superintendents' conceptualization of trust.

All of the subjects in this study basically agreed that trust was a desirable and critical team value. However, the way that male superintendents and most of the male and female subordinates defined trust was totally different from the way that female superintendents defined it. The prevailing definition of trust was "[a person's] ability to say what they wished to say, confident that the persons they were sharing their thoughts and opinions with would not ridicule or repeat these thoughts elsewhere" (Garfinkel, 1989, p. 342). Female superintendents, on the other hand, defined trust as "a reliance or confidence in team members to say, or do what they say they were going to do" (p. 343).

The female superintendents' definition was based on competence, which they identified as the most important team characteristic, while the male superintendents' definition was based more on loyalty, or as Kanter (cited in Garfinkel, 1989) referred to it, "the inner circle" of management (p. 343).

Obviously the differences in the above definitions of trust could result in profound ramifications for a team that thinks it is talking the same language, but finds out that it is really light years apart. Such
discrepancies have the ability to undermine not only the effectiveness of the team, but also the quality of the environment, or climate, within which the team operates.

While this study represented only a very small sample of superintendents in one state, the implications of the findings relative to trust and the impact its definition has on team function could be significant.

Research Question 7

Research Question 7: What patterns or trends does the research identify?

Because of the limited number of studies, there was no need to classify the findings thematically. In addition, each of the studies addressed structural determinants from a slightly different perspective; therefore, their findings did not collectively suggest any patterns or trends.

Research Question 8

Research Question 8: What is the direction of the patterns or trends?

Although no patterns or trends were identified, there were several findings that are noteworthy:

1. Women's career experiences relative to men's experiences prior to reaching the superintendency were longer and at lower levels of management.

2. Women's access to advanced degree programs and the resulting sponsorship that comes with them had, until recently, been very limited.
3. There is strong evidence that women have faced discrimination in gaining access to the superintendency at the hands of male university gatekeepers through a lack of sponsorship.

4. More female superintendents were likely to share policy development and preparation of the board agenda with the board than males.

5. Superintendents and board presidents, regardless of sex, did not agree on who is responsible for administration and policy functions--both perceived more responsibility in these areas than the other said they had.

6. Female superintendents perceived relations between the board and superintendent to be more informal than male superintendents did.

7. Female and male superintendents defined trust differently. Female superintendents tended to define trust in the context of competence, while male superintendents tended to define it in the context of comfort or loyalty.

Summary

Chapter V has presented a summary and synthesis of the women superintendant dissertation research on attitudes and perceptions, barriers, status, and structural determinants. Twenty-seven attitude and perception studies were discussed, as well as 47 barrier studies, 3 status studies, and 3 structural determinants studies.

In Chapter VI the remaining research issues of leadership characteristics, profiles, communication, and theory are summarized and synthesized.
CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES: LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS, PROFILES, COMMUNICATION, AND THEORY

Chapter VI summarizes and synthesizes the included dissertation literature that investigated leadership characteristics, profiles, communication, and theory. The following research question was the foundation upon which each of the four issues is discussed and analyzed:

Research Question 5: What are the findings of the dissertation research regarding women superintendents?

As such, Research Question 5 is only stated this one time at the beginning of the chapter. Within the discussion of each issue, the following research questions are repeated and answered:

Research Question 6: In what ways can the research findings be reexamined and integrated?

Research Question 7: What patterns or trends does the research identify?

Research Question 8: What is the direction of the identified patterns or trends?

Leadership Characteristics

Of the 79 dissertations included in this research synthesis, 30 treated leadership characteristics as a primary or secondary focus. The following dominant themes were used to organize the presentation of
the results of this body of research: leadership style, leadership
effectiveness, and leadership behavior.

Research Question 6

Research Question 6: In what ways can the research findings be
reexamined and integrated?

Although there were several survey instruments that were used by
more than one researcher--Hersey and Blanchard's (1973b) Leader Effec-
tiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD-Self) and Pfeiffer and
Jones's (1979) Task Person-Questionnaire (TP-Q)--there were not
enough studies testing the same independent variables with these in-
struments to permit the use of meta-analytic procedures. This was also
true for trying to combine the results of other survey instruments utilized
by just one researcher--the Management Style Questionnaire (MSQ,
Kirchhoff, 1975) or the Lipman-Blumen-Leavitt Achieving Styles Inven-
tory (L-BLA, Lipman-Blumen, Handley-Isaksen, & Leavitt, 1983)--with
either the LEAD-Self or the TP-Q results. Regardless of how the various
instruments were combined, the highest number of common independent
variables that was able to be identified was two. As a result, the pro-
cedures used to analyze the findings in this section have been listing
factors, taking a vote, and averaging statistics.

Leadership Style

Eleven studies (Dopp, 1986; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Jenkins,
1991; Lutz, 1990; Micas, 1982; Rosen, 1993; Saunders, 1976; Scott-
Soler, 1992; Snell, 1981; Wiley, 1987; Wong, 1979) examined
leadership style. Five studies (Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Lutz, 1990; Rosen, 1993; Saunders, 1976; Scott-Soler, 1992) compared male and female leadership styles. One study (Snell, 1981) compared the perceptions of leadership style of male and female superintendents and board of education presidents. Two studies (Dopp, 1986; Wiley, 1987) investigated the leadership style of female superintendents in comparison to, or in combination with, the perspectives of subordinates. The three remaining studies (Jenkins, 1991; Micas, 1982; Wong, 1979) examined the leadership style of women superintendents only.

Two studies (Dopp, 1986; Douglas & Simonson, 1982) used Hersey and Blanchard's (1973a, 1973b) Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD-Self and/or Other) to explore leadership style.

This standardized survey instrument consists of 12 job-related situations with four possible leadership behaviors for dealing with each situation. Based on the respondents' cumulative selection of behaviors relative to each situation, one of four leadership styles could be identified: (1) high task/low relationship, (2) high task/high relationship, (3) high relationship/low task, and (4) low task/low relationship.

The survey comes in two forms: the LEAD-Self for self-assessment of leadership style and the LEAD-Other for assessment of a leader's style by someone else.

With a state (Illinois) sample of 20 women superintendents and one principal from each of their districts, Dopp (1986) used both the LEAD-Self and the LEAD-Other to investigate the female superintendents' leadership style. Among her sample of female superintendents, 56% viewed their primary leadership style to be high task/high
relationship. The principals' perceptions did not agree with the superintendents'. In general, the 12 principals that participated rated their superintendents' primary leadership style as high task/low relationship.

In terms of adaptability, 56% of the women superintendents rated themselves moderately flexible, and 18% rated themselves highly flexible. Once again the principals were less agreeable. Forty-three percent rated their superintendents moderately flexible, while 31% rated them in need of improvement.

Douglas and Simonson (1982) compared the leadership styles of a national sample of male and female superintendents using the LEAD-Self. The results indicated that 60% of the male superintendents and 68% of the female superintendents rated themselves as high task/high relationship. Because of the wide range in individual scores, there was no correlation between the adaptability scores for the male and female participants.

Three researchers (Lutz, 1990; Snell, 1981; Wong, 1979) used Pfeiffer and Jones's (1974) Task-Person Questionnaire (TP-Q) to explore leadership style. The TP-Q is a survey that asks respondents to assess their own leadership behavior, using a Likert scale ranging from always to never, as it relates to questions such as, "I would most likely act as the spokesperson for a group" (cited in Lutz, 1990, p. 70). Based on the plotting of responses on a 9 x 9 managerial grid, with one axis being concern for people and the other axis concern for production, respondents are then classified according to their task-person orientation using the following general guidelines: (a) 9,9 = high people/high production, (b) 1,9 = high production/low people, (c) 5,5 = moderate people/
moderate production, (d) 1,9 = high people/low production, and (e) 1,1 = low people, low production.

Each of the three researchers that used the TP-Q used it slightly differently. Wong (1979) used it to assess the leadership style of 11 female superintendents in California. Ten of her subjects (90%) clustered in the 9,1 quadrant indicating high production/low people.

Snell (1981) used it to assess the perceptions of leadership style of a national sample of not only male and female superintendents, but also their male or female board of education presidents. In general, there were no significant differences in the perceptions of the male and female superintendents or their board presidents. Forty-nine percent of the male and female superintendents perceived their styles to be in the 9,9 quadrant, or high production/high people, while 44% of the board presidents placed their superintendents in the same quadrant.

Lutz (1990) used the TP-Q to investigate the leadership style of male and female superintendents in California. The results indicated that 71% of the male superintendents and 73% of the female superintendents rated themselves generally in the 1,9 quadrant, or high people/low production.

Although Wiley (1987) did not use the TP-Q exclusively, she did use the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ, Sergiovanni, Metzcus, & Burden, 1969), which essentially contains the TP-Q, to compare the leadership style of California women superintendents with other women administrators in California who were categorized as either aspiring to or not aspiring to the superintendency. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between the
three groups of female administrators, and that they generally rate themselves with a higher people score than task score.

Three researchers (Jenkins, 1991; Saunders, 1976; Scott-Soler, 1992) used aspects of personality to explore the leadership styles of superintendents. Jenkins (1991) used the Life Styles Inventory Self-Description (Lafferty, 1980) to measure the thinking styles of a national sample of 175 female superintendents. The scores of this sample were then compared to a norm group that represented "typical" educators. Categories for assessment included humanistic-helpful, affiliative, approval, conventional, dependence, avoidance, oppositional, power, competitive, competence, achievement, and self-actualization.

Jenkins (1991) found that his subjects were significantly lower than the norm in oppositional thinking (reflecting inquisitiveness and some skepticism), and significantly higher in the humanistic-helpful, affiliative, achievement, and self-actualizing thinking categories.

Saunders (1976) used the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS, Edwards, 1959) to assess the preferences of a national sample of 19 female and 24 male superintendents relative to the following 15 behavior characteristics: achievement, deference, order, exhibition, autonomy, affiliation, intraception, succorance, dominance, abasement, nurturance, change, endurance, heterosexuality, and aggression.

The only variable on which Saunders's (1976) male and female superintendents differed significantly was affiliation. From this Saunders concluded that male and female leaders basically operated along the same personality continuum except in their behavior as it relates to dealing with friends and forming strong attachments.
Scott-Solar (1992) used the Hermann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI, Hermann, 1988) to assess the brain dominance, or hemisphericity, of male and female superintendents in Texas. Her findings revealed that the majority of her sample (69%) identified behavior preferences associated with left brained functioning. More specifically, the findings of the female respondent group indicated that they, more than male superintendents, exhibited holistic leadership qualities that aligned closely with those of chief executive officers in the business setting and that enabled them to "provide intuitive, visionary, risk-taking skills to guide school districts through the turmoil of the next decade" (p. 248).

The two remaining researchers that explored leadership style (Micas, 1982; Rosen, 1993) did so with their own questionnaires and interview guides. Micas (1982) investigated the leadership style of a national sample of female superintendents. She found that 71% saw themselves as task-oriented, 58% saw themselves as team-oriented, and 54% saw themselves as democratic. Rosen (1993), using a questionnaire and qualitative interview format, compared the leadership styles of male and female superintendents in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. She found that female superintendents identified with a transformational leadership style more than their male counterparts did. When the relationship between leadership style, sex-role orientation, and power bases was examined, transformational women identified themselves as gender-neutral and relied significantly on expert and reward power structures, while their transformational male counterparts did not define themselves in any one particular gender category and did not rely on any identifiable power sources.
Those female superintendents who were transactional leaders were gender neutral and relied significantly on reward, referent, and coercive powers, while male superintendents who were transactional were gender-neutral and relied heavily on coercive power.

Leadership Effectiveness

Four studies investigated leadership effectiveness (Bulls, 1987; McCabe, 1992; Schara, 1993; Stevens, 1989). In her national qualitative study of nine black female superintendents, Bulls (1987) found that four leadership behaviors were cited as critical to leadership effectiveness and success: (1) being perceived as an authentic, genuine person; (2) managing conflict well; (3) managing power through others by forming a consensus, coalitions, and developing mechanisms for problem solving; and (4) possessing an intense commitment to the educational community.

Two researchers asked their samples to rate their leadership effectiveness. Stevens's (1989) sample of 10 women superintendents in Washington rated themselves above average, while 67% of McCabe's (1992) national sample of 254 female superintendents rated their effectiveness as extremely or very effective. When asked to list their primary leadership strengths, the following, rank-ordered list was compiled by McCabe's subjects: (a) communication, (b) decision-making, (c) working with the board of education, (d) school district planning, and (e) public relations.

Schara (1993) was the only researcher to specifically focus her study on leadership effectiveness. She studied the perceptions of 86
female superintendents in California regarding their perceptions of the human, technical, and conceptual skills necessary for role effectiveness. In terms of human skills, the top four identified, in rank order, included: effective oral and written communication, conflict resolution, adaptability and flexibility, and self-confidence. The top four technical skills identified, in rank order, were: effective working relationship with the board, financial management, commitment to personnel management, and ability to motivate others. Finally, the top four conceptual skills identified, in rank order, were: decision making, goal setting and planning, action orientation, and the ability to inspire vision.

In addition to identifying essential skills, Schara (1993) also analyzed the responses received to determine if there were any significant differences based on the following demographic characteristics of her respondents: size of district, location of district—urban/suburban/rural, grade level organization of school district, ethnic diversity of student population, years of experience in position, and degree of comfort with essential skills. Statistically significant differences were found for at least one factor in each of the demographic characteristic categories except years of experience in the position and degree of comfort with essential skills.

These differences generally reflected that superintendents in rural districts rated financial skills as essential more frequently than those in urban or suburban districts; superintendents in high school or unified K-12 districts rated the ability to set goals and plan and the ability to resolve conflict as more important than superintendents of elementary districts; superintendents with more ethnically diverse student
populations found budgeting and financial planning, and goal setting and implementation activities to be more important than superintendents with less ethnically-diverse student populations; and superintendents with less than 4 years experience in their positions found planning and conflict resolution skills to be more important than more experienced superintendents.

One interesting commonality that emerged from the above findings was that women superintendents in both rural and ethnically-diverse school districts placed a high priority on financial management skills. The reason cited for this priority was that these women felt that rural and ethnically-diverse districts tended to have histories of financial difficulties and, therefore, presented ongoing and unique requirements for strong financial management skills.

Additionally, Schara (1993) found that the larger and more complex the district, the more superintendents felt the need to have skills in planning, resolving conflict, motivating others, and inspiring shared vision.

Smith-Thibodaux (1991) compared the perceptions of a national sample of female superintendents to the perceptions of an earlier national sample of male superintendents who had responded to a previously administered American Association of School Administrators (AASA) survey regarding the importance of the following eight administrative performance areas: learning environment, building support for education, curriculum, instructional delivery, program evaluation, school finance, operations and facilities, and utilization of research. Both male and female superintendents agreed that finance was very important.
There was fair agreement between the two groups that curriculum and research were important. The perceptions of the women superintendents were also separately analyzed relative to selected demographic variables. As mentioned in previous studies, women in rural communities placed higher importance on finance skills than women in more urban or suburban communities.

Leadership Behavior


Counts (1988) used the Lipman-Blumen-Leavitt Achieving Styles Inventory (L-BLA, Lipman-Blumen et al., 1983), the role Quality Rewards and Concerns Scale (Baruch, Barnett, & Rivers, 1983), and a self-described workplace dilemma to compare the leadership behaviors of a New England sample of male/female superintendents and male/female principals. According to the L-BLA, achieving styles are the preferred strategies, or means, that individuals employ to accomplish tasks. From this there are three possible style domains for achieving: direct, instrumental, and relational. The direct style is characterized by direct
confrontation of the task to be completed. The instrumental style involves, though not necessarily covertly, using the achievement-related aspects of self and others to accomplish goals. In the relational style, the achiever contributes actively or passively to the relationships as part of their own accomplishments.

Counts (1988) found that each of the four subgroups within her regional sample of male and female superintendents and principals displayed the same general style preferences: the most preferred style was the relational style, with the direct and the instrumental styles coming in second and third, respectively.

The Role Quality and Rewards and Concern Scale measures the well-being of women in their mid-life, and consists of equal numbers of rewards and concerns which women experience in several roles: paid worker, wife, and mother. As with the L-BLA, the results of this scale indicated that there were no significant differences among the four subgroups relative to their perceptions of the quality of their work roles. Although not significantly different, the findings did indicate that the women superintendents rated their level of work role satisfaction lower than the other three subgroups.

Genzen (1994) administered Kouzes and Posner’s (1988) Leadership Practices Inventory-Self (LPI-Self) to 14 female superintendents in Ohio. The questionnaire essentially asked the respondents the extent to which they engaged in behaviors clustered under five "ideal leader behaviors": challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. Responses were compared to both the male and female norms for the inventory.
The participants in this study were significantly higher than both the male manager and the female manager norms for all five characteristics of exemplary leaders.

Watts (1993) compared the level of involvement in instructional leadership of male and female superintendents in Georgia. In general, female superintendents were more involved than male superintendents, but the difference was not statistically significant. One interesting finding was that for both males and females, as the years of experience increased, the level of involvement decreased.

Cobbin (1986) used the Management Style Questionnaire (Kirchhoff, 1975) to survey a national sample of female superintendents regarding the viability of incorporating the principles of Management by Objectives (MBO) into their daily work routines.

The women were sorted into one of four school district size categories; and then, the categories were compared relative to the importance they assigned to each of the eight MBO behaviors. In general, the majority of the superintendents in all groups felt that the MBO behaviors would be positive additions to their work procedures. Their collective rank ordering of the importance of the eight behaviors was: planning, personnel selection, motivating, coordinating, controlling, training and development, appraisal, and compensation. The groups demonstrated statistically significant differences on only two of the behaviors: controlling and motivation. Scheffé follow-up analyses indicated that those superintendents in the smallest district category (<1,000 students) placed greater importance on controlling than the second largest district category (3,001-10,000 students). Further analysis of the
differences in the motivation scores revealed a nonsignificant relationship.

Johnson (1985) asked a national sample of female superintendents to identify two critical incidents that had occurred in their administrative careers—one positive, one negative. Data were then analyzed relative to the following variables: impact of being female, years of experience as superintendent, average daily student attendance of district, highest degree earned, disciplinary affiliation of highest degree earned, possession of state superintendency certificate, and ethnicity.

Significant findings included: (a) Superintendents who took a proactive approach to potential problems were more likely to experience positive critical incidents; (b) "femaleness" may have contributed to the onset of an incident, but it did not determine the solution; (c) due to inexperience, female superintendents were most likely to experience negative critical incidents in the first 3 years of assuming their position; (d) the longer a woman was employed as a superintendent, the less it was likely that critical incidents affected her subsequent job performance; and (e) most female school superintendents in the study were employed in small school districts of less than 1,000 students.

C. B. Jackson (1981) interviewed 34 female superintendents from a national sample of 69. One of her questions explored her subjects' perceptions of the performance characteristics that contribute to the success of an administrator. The primary thrust of the answers that she reported was that an administrator had to have the ability to work with people and to produce.

Adams (1990) and Sherman (1993) each conducted qualitative
studies that profiled a very small sample of female superintendents and included participant observations in their data collection strategies. Adams studied two black female superintendents from the Middle Atlantic states; Sherman, two Caucasian superintendents from New York—one a veteran superintendent, the other a new superintendent.

Because the observations were not a central focus of either study, neither Adams (1990) nor Sherman (1993) reported specific findings from the shadowing they had done. However, each indicated that the experience had added an ethnographic dimension to their studies that could not have been accomplished through just interviews or questionnaires.

**Research Question 7**

**Research Question 7:** What patterns or trends does the research identify?

As with the other research issues discussed, the topical subdivisions used to guide the presentation of the research on leadership characteristics were the indicators of the trends in the research. Three basic themes or patterns have been the focus in the leadership research: leadership style, leadership effectiveness, and leadership behavior.

**Research Question 8**

**Research Question 8:** What is the direction of the identified patterns or trends?

Noteworthy findings from the dissertation research regarding leadership style, leadership effectiveness, and leadership behavior
included:

1. Male and female superintendents consistently rated themselves as more people-oriented than task- or production-oriented.

2. Both male and female superintendents favored left-brain functioning over right-brain functioning; however, women demonstrated more holistic leadership qualities than men.

3. Both male and female superintendents tended to rate themselves as highly effective.

4. The larger and more complex the district, the more women superintendents felt the need to have specific skills in planning, resolving conflict, motivating others, and inspiring shared vision.

5. Women superintendents in rural districts and districts with ethnically-diverse student populations found financial management skills to be more important than those women superintendents in comparison districts. The reason cited for this priority was that these women felt that rural and ethnically-diverse districts tended to have histories of financial difficulties and, therefore, presented ongoing and unique requirements for strong financial management skills.

6. While female superintendents tended to be slightly more involved in instructional leadership activities than their male counterparts, the level of involvement for both males and females diminished as their years of experience increased.

7. When surveyed, women superintendents generally felt that the principles of Management by Objectives (MBO) were compatible with leadership activities and daily routines of school superintendents.
8. Due to inexperience, female superintendents were more likely to experience negative critical incidents in the first 3 years of assuming their position than at any other time. Likewise, the longer a female superintendent was employed, the less it was likely that critical incidents would affect her subsequent job performance.

Profiles

Forty-six of the 79 included dissertations focused primary attention on the accumulation and analysis of profile information. Additionally, many of the other studies, though not focusing on profiles, compiled demographic information that is reported in this section.

To facilitate presentation, the information presented in this section has been categorized as follows: (a) personal characteristics, (b) educational characteristics, (c) professional characteristics, (d) school district characteristics, and (e) biographical profiles.

Research Question 6

Research Question 6: In what ways can the research findings be reexamined and integrated?

A significant amount of the information presented in this section is demographic data. As a result, whenever possible, statistics have been averaged to enable generalization. When averaging of the statistics has not been possible, data have been synthesized by listing factors or taking a vote.
Personal Characteristics

years old.

Using taking-a-vote procedures, the cumulative mean ages for males and females were compared with the remaining studies that reported age data in ranges. A majority of the remaining studies that reported age data for male and female superintendents (24 of 31 for females, 5 of 7 for males) identified primary age ranges that included the cumulative means that were computed for each gender. The studies that did not reflect ages that corresponded to the cumulative means tended to reflect ages that were above the mean for both men and women.

**Marital Status.** Forty-four dissertations reported the marital status of the male and/or female superintendents studied (Boudreau, 1994; Carpenter, 1994; Castro, 1993; Chambers, 1980; Costa, 1981; Counts, 1988; Dopp, 1986; Dorner, 1983; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Dulac, 1992; Farrell, 1990; Hodgin, 1985; Howell, 1990; C. B. Jackson, 1981; Kreger, 1993; Leedy, 1993; Lutz, 1990; Maienza, 1981; McCabe, 1992; McDade, 1981; Micas, 1982; Monaghan, 1993; Natho, 1992; Newcombe, 1985; Orland, 1986; Paggi, 1990/1991; Postlewait, 1990; Radich, 1993; Revere, 1986; Richardson, 1980; Robison, 1992; Rosen, 1993; Sanchez, 1985; Sannella, 1991; Savage, 1990; Schuch, 1980; Schuster, 1988; Senyk, 1988; Snell, 1981; Stepherson, 1981; Stevens, 1989; Williams, 1983; Wong, 1979; Zumsteg, 1992). The computation of cumulative mean percentages indicated that 64% of the female superintendents and 89% of the male superintendents were married at the time they were studied.
Children. Thirty-two researchers included information regarding the number of children the superintendents in their studies had (Carpenter, 1994; Castro, 1993; Costa, 1981; Dopp, 1986; Dorner, 1983; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Farrell, 1990; Hodgin, 1985; Howell, 1990; C. B. Jackson, 1981; Jenkins, 1991; Kreger, 1993; Leedy, 1993; Maienza, 1981; McCabe, 1992; Micas, 1982; Newcombe, 1985; Orland, 1986; Radich, 1993; Revere, 1986; Richardson, 1980; Robison, 1992; Sanchez, 1985; Sannella, 1991; Schuch, 1980; Schuster, 1988; Senyk, 1988; Snell, 1981; Stepherson, 1981; Stevens, 1989; Williams, 1983; Wong, 1979). Three studies provided these data for male superintendents as a statistical mean (Maienza, 1981; Radich, 1993; Schuster, 1988); six studies provided statistical means for female superintendents (Maienza, 1981; Micas, 1982; Orland, 1986; Radich, 1993; Sannella, 1991; Schuster, 1988). Based on the studies that provided means, the weighted, cumulative mean number of children for male superintendents was 2.89; for female superintendents it was 1.80.

For female superintendents, 69% of the remaining 26 dissertations indicated that the majority of female superintendents had between zero and two children, with two being the most common response. For male superintendents, none of the respondents in the four remaining dissertations that included male data indicated "no children," and the most common response was two children.

From these data, it would appear that women superintendents generally do tend to have children and that those who have them have between one and two children. Male superintendents very definitely have children and tend to have between two and three children. Though
the small numbers make it a very weak comparison, the data suggested that male superintendents tended to have more children than female superintendents.

**Ethnicity.** Fifteen studies provided general information regarding the ethnicity of their subjects (Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Dulac, 1992; Fairbairn, 1990; Farrell, 1990; Howell, 1990; Jenkins, 1991; Johnson, 1985; Kreger, 1993; Lutz, 1990; Natho, 1992; Richardson, 1980; Sanchez, 1985; Schuch, 1980; Stepherson, 1981; Wong, 1979). Ninety-three percent of these dissertations reported that no less than 80% of their male and female subjects were Caucasian. Only Jenkin's (1991) study reported lower percentages, with 55% of his national sample of 175 female superintendents identified as Caucasian.

In addition to those that provided general information, five studies purposely selected racially-mixed or racially-exclusive sample populations. Chambers (1980) and Hudson (1988) studied racially mixed samples of male and female superintendents. Adams (1990), Bulls (1987), and Revere (1986) included only black female superintendents in their sample populations.

**Birth Order.** Nineteen studies investigated the birth order of their subjects (Dopp, 1986; Farrell, 1990; Howell, 1990; C. B. Jackson, 1981; Leedy, 1993; Maienza, 1981; Micas, 1982; Miracle, 1987; Monaghan, 1993; Newcombe, 1985; Orland, 1986; Radich, 1993; Revere, 1986; Sanchez, 1985; Sannella, 1991; Schuster, 1988; Stevens, 1989; Williams, 1983; Wong, 1979). The cumulative percentage of female superintendents that were first born was 47%. Two
additional studies of female superintendents (C. B. Jackson, 1981; Orland, 1986) reported that a majority of their subjects were first or only born children.

For males, based on the five studies that reported comparative data, the percentage who were first born was 34%.

Although the 47% figure does not indicate that a majority of women superintendents were first born, 100% of the researchers that reported birth order data indicated that there were more women in the first born category than in any other single category.

**Siblings.** Eleven researchers accumulated information regarding the siblings of the superintendents studied (Castro, 1993; Dopp, 1986; Howell, 1990; C. B. Jackson, 1981; McDade, 1981; Micas, 1982; Miracle, 1987; Monaghan, 1993; Radich, 1993; Revere, 1986; Wong, 1979). Of the 11 studies, 10 reported that female superintendents had three or fewer siblings. Only Revere (1986), in her 1985 national study of black female superintendents, identified a different pattern with 40.9% of her subjects indicating five or more siblings.

Only two studies provided male-female comparisons (Monaghan, 1993; Radich, 1993), and in both cases the male superintendents reported the same sibling patterns as the above females.

Three studies reported on the gender of siblings (Howell, 1990; McDade, 1981; Micas, 1982). In each case both brothers and sisters were reported, with no significant patterns with either one surfacing.

**Father's Occupation.** Nine studies included information regarding the occupation of the superintendent’s father (Castro, 1993; Howell,
1990; Kreger, 1993; Leedy, 1993; McDade, 1981; Micas, 1982; Postlewait, 1990; Radich, 1993; Wong, 1979). Five of the nine studies (56%) indicated that female superintendents' fathers were white collar workers. The responses in the four other studies were varied, with agricultural occupations mentioned most frequently.

Both of the studies that reported male superintendent data (Kreger, 1993; Radich, 1993) indicated that the fathers of the male subjects worked in the skilled trades.

**Mother’s Occupation.** Ten studies reported information regarding the occupation of the superintendent’s mother (Castro, 1993; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Howell, 1990; Kreger, 1993; Leedy, 1993; McDade, 1981; Micas, 1982; Postlewait, 1990; Radich, 1993; Wong, 1979). One hundred percent of the dissertations that provided this information indicated that the majority of both male and female superintendents' mothers were housewives. The next most frequently mentioned occupation was clerical.

**Spouse’s Occupation.** Nine studies provided information regarding the occupation of superintendents’ spouses (Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Dulac, 1992; Howell, 1990; Kreger, 1993; Lasher, 1987; Lutz, 1990; McDade, 1981; Micas, 1982; Rosen, 1993). In 56% of the studies, women superintendents identified their spouse’s occupation as professional.

Based on a cumulative average from three studies (Howell, 1990; Kreger, 1993; Rosen, 1993), 47% of the female superintendents related that their spouses were employed in education. The cumulative average
from four studies (Dulac, 1992; Kreger, 1993; Lutz, 1990; Rosen, 1993) revealed that 41% of male superintendents' spouses were employed in education.

**Political Affiliation.** Four researchers inquired about their subjects' political affiliation (Hummel, 1988; Monaghan, 1993; Sannella, 1991; Schuster, 1988). Two studies (Hummel, 1988; Schuster, 1988) reported that female superintendents were more liberal than male superintendents. The finding from the other two studies were inconclusive.

**Religious Affiliation.** Six studies requested information regarding religious affiliation (Adams, 1990; Kreger, 1993; Robison, 1992; Sannella, 1991; Schuch, 1980; Schuster, 1988). No significant patterns were identified for either male or female superintendents.

**Educational Characteristics**

Thirty-five percent of the 49 dissertations reported that a clear majority of their women superintendents had doctorates. Eleven of the 17 dissertations that made male-female comparisons indicated that more female superintendents than male superintendents held doctorates.

Sixty-nine percent (24) of the 49 dissertations reported that at least 40% of their female superintendents held doctorates.

**Major: Graduate Studies.** Eleven dissertations identified the graduate field of study for each of their participants (Burkhardt, 1991; Coatney, 1982; Dorner, 1983; Jenkins, 1991; Kreger, 1993; McDade, 1981; Monaghan, 1993; Orland, 1986; Postlewait, 1990; Richardson, 1980; Stepherson, 1981). One hundred percent of the studies reported that the most common field of study for both males and females was educational administration.

**Major: Baccalaureate Studies.** Seven studies identified the baccalaureate field of study for each of their participants (Burkhardt, 1991; Crawford, 1993; Howell, 1990; Jenkins, 1991; Micas, 1982; Monaghan, 1993; Stevens, 1989). Seventy-one percent of the dissertations that included this information found that the most common undergraduate major for the women superintendents investigated was elementary education.

Only two studies provided information on the baccalaureate majors of male superintendents (Burkhardt, 1991; Monaghan, 1993). Although two studies are insufficient to suggest a trend, both indicated
that the majority of male superintendents studied held secondary baccalaureate degrees.

**Father's Level of Education.** Eleven studies reported information about each superintendent's father's level of education (Castro, 1993; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Howell, 1990; Kreger, 1993; Leedy, 1993; Maienza, 1981; McDade, 1981; Monaghan, 1993; Radich, 1993; Wiley, 1987; Wong, 1979). One hundred percent of the studies that examined this issue found that the fathers of both male and female superintendents were high school graduates or less.

**Mother's Level of Education.** Twelve dissertations provided information regarding each superintendent's mother's highest level of education (Castro, 1993; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Howell, 1990; Hummel, 1988; Kreger, 1993; Leedy, 1993; Maienza, 1981; McDade, 1981; Monaghan, 1993; Radich, 1993; Wiley, 1987; Wong, 1979). As with the fathers of superintendents, 100% of the studies found that the most common level of education for the mothers of both male and female superintendents was high school graduate or less.

**Spouse's Level of Education.** Five studies reviewed the level of education of each superintendent's spouse (Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Howell, 1990; Kreger, 1993; Lasher, 1987; Maienza, 1981). One hundred percent of the studies reported that the spouses of the majority of female superintendents were college graduates.

Two of the three studies that examined the education of male superintendents' spouses (Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Maienza, 1981)
found that these women generally had some college, but were not graduates. Kreger (1993), on the other hand, found that 60% of her 49 male superintendents in Michigan reported that their spouses had a college degree, plus graduate work.

**Professional Characteristics**

**Age--First Position in Public Education.** Three studies included the age at which their subjects first entered public education (Burkhardt, 1991; Coatney, 1982; McDade, 1981). The three studies generally reflected a range of 20 years of age to 25 years of age for both males and females.

**Age--First Administrative Position.** Nine studies identified the age at which their subjects obtained their first administrative position (Burkhardt, 1991; Coatney, 1982; Hummel, 1988; Monaghan, 1993; Revere, 1986; Richardson, 1980; Robison, 1992; Savage, 1990; Stepherson, 1981). Three studies (Burkhardt, 1991; Coatney, 1982; Robison, 1992) provided first administrative position mean ages for female superintendents which enabled a cumulative mean age of 36.5 years old to be computed. Two studies (Burkhardt, 1991; Robison, 1992) provided the same data for male superintendents. Their cumulative mean age at their first administrative position was 30.24 years of age.

Two thirds of the remaining six studies indicated that females were between 30 and 40 years old when they obtained their first administrative position. On the other hand, 60% of the remaining five studies
that included male superintendent data reported that the most common age at which males obtained their first administrative position was under the age of 40.

In general this information cumulatively suggested that the females in this synthesis were older than their male counterparts when they obtained their first administrative position.

**Age--First Superintendency.** Eighteen researchers compiled information regarding the age at which their subjects obtained their first superintendency (Coatney, 1982; Dorner, 1983; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Dulac, 1992; Farrell, 1990; Howell, 1990; Hummel, 1988; Jenkins, 1991; Kreger, 1993; Leedy, 1993; McDade, 1981; Miracle, 1987; Revere, 1986; Savage, 1990; Schuster, 1988; Snell, 1981; Stevens, 1989; Zumsteg, 1992). Fifty-six percent of the 18 studies reported that women superintendents were appointed to their first superintendency between the ages of 36 and 55. Three of the six studies that reported male data (Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Hummel, 1988; Schuster, 1988) identified the predominant range of ages for males' first appointment to the superintendency to be 30 to 50.

In addition to the 56% that presented the data in terms of a range of ages, six studies (Coatney, 1982; Dorner, 1993; Howell, 1990; Leedy, 1993; Savage, 1990; Zumsteg, 1992) provided mean ages for superintendents' first appointment to the superintendency. The weighted, cumulative mean age at which the women in these six studies received their first superintendency appointment was 43.2. Only one of the six studies (Zumsteg, 1992) reported a male mean age: 39.5.
The cumulative mean ages for both male and female superintendents fell within the ranges suggested by the studies that did not provide mean information, and the overall results suggested that male superintendents were younger than female superintendents at the time of their first appointment to a superintendency.

**Total Years of Experience in Education.** The total number of years that superintendents had spent in education was investigated in 12 dissertations (Burnham, 1989; Crawford, 1993; Dopp, 1986; Garfinkel, 1989; Howell, 1990; C. B. Jackson, 1981; Miracle, 1987; Revere, 1986; Sanchez, 1985; Schuch, 1980; Schuster, 1988; Snell, 1981). Based on the data provided in four studies (Burnham, 1989; Crawford, 1993; Garfinkel, 1989; Howell, 1990), a weighted, cumulative mean of 21.6 total years in education was computed for women superintendents. The remaining eight studies supported this figure with their findings that the majority of their subjects had 15 or more total years in education.

Two studies (Burnham, 1989; Garfinkel, 1989) provided data that resulted in a cumulative mean of 17.0 total years in education for male superintendents. This figure was not supported by the remaining two studies (Schuster, 1988; Snell, 1981) that reported that the majority of their male superintendents had 20 or more total years in education.

Further investigation into this discrepancy tended to lend greater support for the more-than-20-years figure. Three of the four studies that explored male superintendents' total number of years in education were national samples. Since two of the three national samples found that the majority of their male subjects had more than 20 years of total
education experience, and the one remaining study, Garfinkel (1989), supported this finding with a local sample average of 24 or more years; by taking a vote, it would appear that the more-than-20-years figure would be the more accurate. However, all of this is based on four studies; therefore, any conclusions are at best suspect.


Among the 18 studies that reported data indicative of 11 or less total years of classroom experience for female superintendents, 12 studies (Burkhardt, 1991; Burnham, 1989; Castro, 1993; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Farrell, 1990; Leedy, 1993; Maienza, 1981; Micas, 1982; Orland, 1986; Radich, 1993; Robison, 1992; Stevens, 1989) provided data that enabled the calculation of a weighted cumulative mean of 9.82 total years.
Nine studies included data regarding male superintendents' total number of years of classroom experience. Six dissertations enabled the calculation of a weighted, cumulative mean of 7.65 total years for male superintendents (Burkhardt, 1991; Burnham, 1989; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Maienza, 1981; Radich, 1993; Robison, 1992). Of the remaining three studies that provided male superintendent information, one did not support the cumulative mean (Chambers, 1980), while two did (Monaghan, 1993; Schuster, 1988).

**Grade Level(s) at Which Taught.** Fifteen dissertations included information regarding the level at which participating superintendents had teaching experience (Boudreau, 1994; Burnham, 1989; Carpenter, 1994; Coatney, 1982; Hummel, 1988; C. B. Jackson, 1981; Leedy, 1993; Micas, 1982; Miracle, 1987; Monaghan, 1993; Newcombe, 1985;Radich, 1993; Savage, 1990; Senyk, 1988; Stevens, 1989). Seventy-three percent of the dissertations reported that the most commonly identified level of teaching experience for female superintendents was elementary. The four studies that provided information about male teaching experience (Burnham, 1989; Hummel, 1988; Monaghan, 1993; Radich, 1993) indicated that their predominant level had been secondary.

**Total Years in Administration.** Eight researchers compiled data regarding the total number of years that the superintendents in their studies had been in administration (Burnham, 1989; Chambers, 1980; Costa, 1981; Farrell, 1990; Howell, 1990; Natho, 1992; Orland, 1986; Schuch, 1980). The findings regarding the total number of years in
administration were mixed for both male and female superintendents. Based on four studies (Burnham, 1989; Costa, 1981; Howell, 1990; Orland, 1986) a weighted, cumulative mean of 10.18 total years was determined for female superintendents. Among the remaining four studies two indicated a majority of women superintendents had 10 or more total years (Natho, 1992; Schuch, 1980), while two indicated a majority had 10 or less (Chambers, 1980; Farrell, 1990).

One study (Burnham, 1989) reported a male superintendent mean of 9.21 total years in administration. Of the remaining two studies that provided male data, one (Natho, 1992) indicated a majority of male superintendents had more than a total of 10 years administrative experience, while one (Chambers, 1980) indicated that majority of her black male superintendents had less than 10 years total experience.

**Total Years as a Superintendent.** The total number of years that subjects had been in the superintendency was reported in 19 dissertations (Boudreau, 1994; Burkhardt, 1991; Burnham, 1989; Castro, 1993; Chambers, 1980; Crawford, 1993; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Fairbairn, 1990; Garfinkel, 1989; Newcombe, 1985; Orland, 1986; Paggi, 1990/1991; Postlewait, 1990; Rosen, 1993; Saunders, 1976; Savage, 1990; Schuster, 1988; Snell, 1981; Stepherson, 1981). According to the data from nine dissertations (Burkhardt, 1991; Burnham, 1989; Crawford, 1993; Fairbairn, 1990; Garfinkel, 1989; Newcombe, 1985; Orland, 1986; Rosen, 1993; Savage, 1990), women had a weighted, cumulative mean of 4.63 total years in the superintendency. Ninety percent of the remaining studies suggested a female range
of less than 10 years in the superintendency; while 50% suggested a range of less than 5 years.

The averaging of data from five studies (Burkhardt, 1991; Burnham, 1989; Fairbairn, 1990; Garfinkel, 1989; Rosen, 1993) produced a male superintendent weighted, cumulative mean of 11.53 total years in the superintendency. Eighty percent of the remaining five studies that included male data (Chambers, 1980; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Saunders, 1976; Schuster, 1988; Snell, 1981) supported a total that exceeded 4 years.

Number of Years in Current Superintendency. Fifteen studies explored the number of years superintendents had served in their current position (Coatney, 1982; Costa, 1981; Dulac, 1992; Fairbairn, 1990; Farrell, 1990; Hudson, 1988; Richardson, 1980; Robison, 1992; Rosen, 1993; Sannella, 1991; Schara, 1993; Snell, 1981; Stepherson, 1981; Waldo, 1983; Wong, 1979). From the data provided in six studies (Coatney, 1982; Costa, 1981; Fairbairn, 1990; Robison, 1992; Rosen, 1993; Sannella, 1991), a weighted, cumulative mean of 4.3 years in the current position was determined for female superintendents. Of the remaining nine dissertations, only three (Farrell, 1990; Richardson, 1980; Wong, 1979) did not support a range of less than 5 years for women superintendents.

Seven dissertations explored the number of years that male superintendents had been in their current position. From three studies (Fairbairn, 1990; Robison, 1992; Rosen, 1993) the male superintendent weighted, cumulative mean was 5.74 years. While Hudson (1988)
found that the majority of her black and Caucasian male superintendents had between zero and 5 years of experience in their current superintendency, three others studies (Richardson, 1980; Snell, 1981; Waldo, 1983) supported a range of more than 4 years.

**Number of Superintendencies Held.** Fifteen researchers explored the total number of superintendencies that their subjects had held (Burkhardt, 1991; Burnham, 1989; Castro, 1993; Costa, 1981; Dulac, 1992; Farrell, 1990; Hummel, 1988; Leedy, 1993; Lutz, 1990; Monaghan, 1993; Richardson, 1980; Savage, 1990; Schuster, 1988; Snell, 1981; Williams, 1983). Eighty percent of the 15 studies found that the majority of female superintendents were in their first superintendency. Likewise, in the eight studies that reported male data (Burkhardt, 1991; Burnham, 1989; Hummel, 1988; Lutz, 1990; Monaghan, 1993; Richardson, 1980; Schuster, 1988; Snell, 1981), only Hummel (1988) found that the most commonly reported number was more than one (two or more).

Three of the dissertations provided their data as a mean number of superintendencies for both males and females (Burkhardt, 1991; Burnham, 1989; Schuster, 1988). Based on these three studies, the cumulative mean number of superintendencies for the women studied was 1.45; for men it was 1.36.

**Leaves of Absence.** Ten dissertations explored the issue of interruptions in career path or employment for the purposes of childbirth, child rearing, education, or other reasons (Bulls, 1987; Burkhardt, 1991; Castro, 1993; Coatney, 1982; Costa, 1981; Farrell, 1990; Micas, 1982;
Newcombe, 1985; Sannella, 1991; Wong, 1979). Only two studies found that a majority of their female superintendents had taken temporary leaves from their employment at any time throughout their careers (Farrell, 1990; Sannella, 1991). In general, when leaves were taken, they were taken for the purposes of childbirth or child rearing.

No studies reported that any male superintendents had taken leaves in their careers.

Methods of Appointment. Six researchers inquired into the method by which the superintendents in their study received their positions (Coatney, 1982; McCabe, 1992; Revere, 1986; Robison, 1992; Schuch, 1980; Stepherson, 1981). Eighty-three percent of the studies reported that appointments by the board of education had been the primary mode by which female superintendents had secured their positions. Only one study (Stepherson, 1981) indicated that female superintendents had been elected rather than appointed.

Only one study reported male superintendent data (Robison, 1992), and the male superintendents had been appointed rather than elected, just as the female superintendents.

Benefits and Salary. Fifteen dissertations presented superintendents' salary information (Coatney, 1982; Crawford, 1993; Dopp, 1986; Dulac, 1992; Farrell, 1990; Howell, 1990; Hudson, 1988; Maienza, 1981; Miracle, 1987; Revere, 1986; Rosen, 1993; Schuster, 1988; Stepherson, 1981; Wong, 1979; Zumsteg, 1992). Because the salary figures represented compensation over a 20-year time period, no attempt was made to compare the difference in compensation among the
studies. Four studies compared male and female superintendent salaries (Hudson, 1988; Maienza, 1981; Rosen, 1993; Zumsteg, 1992). Rosen (1993) and Zumsteg (1992) found that the female superintendents received less money than the male superintendents in their studies. Maienza (1981) found that female superintendents were actually making more than their male counterparts, and Hudson (1988) found that both male and female superintendents in her study were in the same salary range of $10,000 to $39,999.

**Career Path.** Thirty-nine dissertations included discussions of career path information (Boudreau, 1994; Bulls, 1987; Burkhardt, 1991; Burnham, 1989; Carpenter, 1994; Coatney, 1982; Crawford, 1993; Dopp, 1986; Dorner, 1983; Douglas & Simonson, 1982; Dulac, 1992; Garfinkel, 1989; Hummel, 1988; Kreger, 1993; Leedy, 1993; Maienza, 1981; McCabe, 1992; McDade, 1981; Micas, 1982; Miracle, 1987; Monaghan, 1993; Newcombe, 1985; Orland, 1986; Postlewait, 1990; Radich, 1993; Revere, 1986; Richardson, 1980; Robison, 1992; Sannella, 1991; Savage, 1990; Schuch, 1980; Schuster, 1988; Senyk, 1988; Snell, 1981; Stevens, 1989; Wiley, 1987; Williams, 1983; Wong, 1979; Zumsteg, 1992). What was most significant about the 39 studies was that there was no consistent pattern or path that most female superintendents followed. While five studies identified a fairly traditional, four-step career path of teacher-secondary principal-central office-superintendent for male superintendents (Maienza, 1981; Radich, 1993; Robison, 1992; Schuster, 1988; Snell, 1981), no one particular pattern emerged among the women superintendents. Instead, the following four
basic patterns were somewhat repetitive: (1) teacher-principal-superintendent, (2) teacher-principal-central office-superintendent, (3) teacher-central office-superintendent, and (4) teacher-department head-supervisor-superintendent.

Based on information provided earlier (baccalaureate major and grade level taught), it would seem reasonable to conclude that many of the teacher positions in the above career paths for women superintendents were elementary positions. From that, it would also seem reasonable that many of the women's principalships were also elementary. However, since only six studies (Dopp, 1986; Dulac, 1992; Micas, 1982; Miracle, 1987; Revere, 1986; Williams, 1983) identified the types of principalships held as elementary, the conclusions suggested should be viewed with extreme caution.

School District Characteristics

Grade Level Organization. Eighteen studies presented data on the grade level organization of districts in which the superintendents being studied were employed (Boudreau, 1994; Burkhardt, 1991; Castro, 1993; Coatney, 1982; Dorner, 1983; Fairbairn, 1990; Farrell, 1990; Garfinkel, 1989; Hummel, 1988; McDade, 1981; Monaghan, 1993; Paggi, 1990/1991; Revere, 1986; Sannella, 1991; Savage, 1990; Schara, 1993; Schuch, 1980; Wong, 1979). Sixty-seven percent of the 18 studies reported that a majority of the female superintendents in their study were in charge of K-12 districts. One hundred percent of the five studies that reported male superintendent data found that a majority
were in charge of K-12 districts (Burkhardt, 1991; Fairbairn, 1990; Garfinkel, 1989; Hummel, 1988; Monaghan, 1993).


Cumulative average percentages for male and female superintendents revealed that 43% of the female superintendents and 47% of the male superintendents studied were in districts with less than 1,000 students. When the range of students was expanded to 3,000, 57% of the female superintendents and 69% of the male superintendents were in districts with less than 3,000 students.

Wiley, 1987; Williams, 1983; Wong, 1979). A cumulative average percentage of female and male superintendents indicated that 45% of the females and 52.8% of the males were in school districts that were classified as rural. The next most common location for both males and females was suburban.

**Geographic Location.** Eight studies investigated geographic location and women superintendents (Coatney, 1982; Costa, 1981; Fairbairn, 1990; McDade, 1981; Postlewait, 1990; Scally, 1982; Schuch, 1980; Smith-Thibodaux, 1991). No significant patterns relative to regions or states showing a predominance in the employment of female superintendents were identified.

**Biographical Profiles.** Six researchers prepared full biographical profiles of outstanding women educators that gained prominence on either a national or state level. Those profiled were: Tennessee educator, Margaret E. Doyle (Baker, 1978); Ohio activist and educator, Betsy Mix Cowles (DeBlasio, 1981); Texas journalist and educator, Laura V. Hamner (Hall, 1989); Washington educator, Josephine Corliss Preston (Rude, 1986); Texas educator, Annie Webb Blanton (Scott, 1993); and Iowa educator, Agnes Samuelson (Vitiello, 1985).

Each of the profiles presented not only biographical information, but they also discussed each woman in terms of the barriers that she faced as a leader in her times and the contribution that she made to the field of education.
Research Question 7

Research Question 7: What patterns or trends does the research identify?

The dissertation literature on women superintendent profile information showed a pattern of study in the following areas: personal characteristics, educational characteristics, professional characteristics, school district characteristics, and biographical profiles.

Research Question 8

Research Question 8: What is the direction of the identified patterns or trends?

Noteworthy findings from the dissertation research regarding personal characteristics, educational characteristics, professional characteristics, school district characteristics, and biographical profiles included:

1. The mean age for female superintendents tended to be slightly higher than the mean age for male superintendents for all age variables.

2. A majority of female superintendents were married and had between one and two children.

3. A very slight minority of female superintendents (47%) indicated that they had been a first born, or only child, in their families of origin.

4. A majority of the parents of female superintendents had a high school diploma or less.
5. A majority of women superintendents' highest degree earned was a master's or specialist degree.

6. A majority of the dissertations that compared male-female highest degrees earned found that women superintendents held doctorates more often than male superintendents.

7. Although the total number of years in education was very similar for males and females (both 20+), women superintendents had more classroom teaching experience than male superintendents.

8. The most commonly identified grade level taught was elementary for female superintendents and secondary for male superintendents.

9. Male superintendents generally had more years of experience in administration than female superintendents had.

10. While the most common career path for the male superintendents studied was teacher-principal-central office-superintendent, there was no single career path that was most common among female superintendents.

11. The majority of female superintendents were employed in K-12 school districts.

12. The majority of female superintendents studied were employed in districts of less than 3,000 students.

13. A higher percentage of male superintendents than female superintendents were employed in rural school districts.
Communication

Only one of the 79 dissertations included in this synthesis (Dopp, 1986) addressed the issue of communication, and that was only as a secondary focus.

Because there is only one study discussed in this section, Research Questions 6, 7, and 8 have not been formally addressed. The information cited in this section was identified through thematic content analysis and has been analyzed through listing factors.

The primary purpose of Dopp’s (1986) study was to create a profile of the women superintendents in the state of Illinois. Part of that profile was a communication style audit. Twenty of 21 female superintendents and 1 principal from each of their districts participated in the communications audit. Tasks involved in the audit included determining the communication style most appropriate for the school district and its community, and then having the superintendent and the selected principal assess the district’s communication patterns relative to three categories: communication with employees; communication with parents and other citizens; and communication between departments, units, and school buildings.

As might be expected, the results indicated that the superintendents’ communication style varied depending upon the specifics of situations and the characteristics of the group with which they were dealing. All of the participating superintendents indicated a preference for informal communications with each of the assessed groups; however, the perceptions of the principals surveyed indicated that they felt the
superintendents frequently used a semiformal style. In general, the communication styles of the women superintendents met the standards for appropriateness established in the audit guidelines.

Theory

As with communication, only one of the 79 dissertations included in this synthesis (Jenkins, 1991) addressed the issue of theory, and that, too, was only as a secondary focus.

Because there is only one study discussed in this section, Research Questions 6, 7, and 8 have, once again, not been formally addressed. As with all the previous sections, the information cited in this section was identified through thematic content analysis and has been analyzed through listing factors.

According to Shakeshaft (1980), there are two categories of theory literature: literature that debunks current theory and literature that includes the contributions of women in management/administrative thought.

In his summary and conclusions, Jenkins (1991) identified the contributions of women superintendents as one of the most important purposes of his study. Unfortunately, the only attention given to this goal was a three and one-half page list of accomplishments, achieved within their current school districts, that the 175 subjects in his national study provided. While it was a rather weak attempt to bring recognition to a population of women superintendents, his was the only study that attempted to even do that much.
Unfortunately, Jenkins (1991) did nothing to connect his list of women superintendents' contributions to the existing body of education administration theory. As a result, his list provided little more than anonymous recognition of internal achievements.

Summary

Chapter VI has presented a summary and synthesis of the women superintendent dissertation research on leadership characteristics, profiles, communication, and theory. Thirty leadership studies were discussed, 79 studies with profile information, 1 communication study, and 1 theory study.

In Chapter VII the results of this research synthesis are compared with Shakeshaft's (1980) and Motaref's (1988) previous syntheses of women in educational administration research.
CHAPTER VII

COMPARISONS TO PREVIOUS WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATION SYNTHESSES

Chapter VII compares the results of this research synthesis to the findings of Shakeshaft's (1980) and Motaref's (1988) syntheses of the general women in educational administration literature. Only these three syntheses are considered in the comparisons. Two research questions serve as the foundation for these comparisons:

**Research Question 9:** In what ways are the findings of this research synthesis similar to previous research syntheses on women in educational administration?

**Research Question 10:** In what ways are the findings of this research synthesis different from previous research syntheses on women in educational administration?

In order to focus the direction of the comparisons, each of the major themes that are common to the three syntheses is addressed in terms of similarities and differences. Rather than create two separate sections, similarities and differences are considered at the same time. The common themes compared are: characteristics of the research, the quality of the research, and each of the eight categories of research issues: attitudes, barriers, status, structural determinants, leadership characteristics, profiles, communication, and theory.
Research Question 9

Research Question 9: In what ways are the findings of this research synthesis similar to previous research syntheses on women in educational administration?

Research Question 10

Research Question 10: In what ways are the findings of this research synthesis different from previous research syntheses on women in educational administration?

Characteristics of the Research

Shakeshaft's (1980) synthesis and this synthesis were limited to dissertation research only. Motaref's (1988) synthesis reviewed published and unpublished research that included, but was not limited to, dissertation research. All three syntheses found that the majority of researchers were females who were working toward an Ed.D. in educational administration under the direction of a male faculty advisor.

Regionally, Motaref (1988) found that the largest percentage (36.3%) of the universities that conducted her included research were located in the East. This synthesis found that the largest percentage (42%) of the affiliated universities were located in the Midwest, and the state with the most women superintendent dissertations was Ohio.

Shakeshaft (1980) found that 44% of the universities at which the dissertations she synthesized were completed were members of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), while only
36% of the institutions from this synthesis were UCEA members.

All three syntheses found that the majority of studies were survey research that most frequently used questionnaires to gather data. Motaref (1988) found that there was not one most commonly researched issue. Instead, she found that the focus of her selected studies was evenly distributed among behaviors (18%), attitudes (20%), barriers (19%), and profiles (9%). Shakeshaft (1980) found that profiles was the dominant research issue in her synthesis at 34%, while this current synthesis found that 58% of the dissertations focused primarily on the development of profiles.

This current synthesis found that 75% of the included dissertations were written using the style of the American Psychological Association (APA), while Shakeshaft (1980) found that only 16% of the dissertations she synthesized were written using APA style.

Finally, Motaref (1988) found that a majority of her studies tested hypotheses and used univariate statistics, while Shakeshaft (1980) and this synthesis found that the majority of studies did not test hypotheses and analyzed data using descriptive statistics. This variance is not remarkable, however, in that Motaref specifically limited her synthesis to empirical studies only.

Quality of the Research

This synthesis used 13 quality assessment categories and a 5-point Likert scale range similar to that of Motaref (1988). Shakeshaft (1980) used a 3-point Likert scale to assess quality, and she did not include the following assessment categories that were included in this
synthesis and Motaref’s: title, statement of the problem, definition of terms, hypotheses, and scope of the problem. However, she did include two categories that Motaref and this synthesis did not consider: sexist content of the dissertations and contribution to the literature.

In general, all three syntheses reported mean quality ratings for the studies they assessed that fell within the mediocre range. However, the 3.96 mean rating found in this synthesis reflected a higher level of quality than found in both the Shakeshaft (1980) and the Motaref (1988) syntheses; and this study’s 4.18 median rating reflected definite movement into the range of good.

Primary criticisms that surfaced in all three syntheses were that there was too much dependence on survey research, most specifically, on the use of questionnaires; that sampling procedures were weak; and that the selection and use of data collection instruments were not well documented or well defined.

Each of the three syntheses used an analysis of variance to determine the impact that selected independent variables had on the quality of the research they synthesized. Shakeshaft (1980) found that the type of research issue studied, the feminist standing of the researcher, and the data collection method utilized had a statistically significant relationship with the quality of the studies in her synthesis. Tests of practical significance, however, revealed that only the feminist standing of the researcher was practically significant (eta squared = .22276) with a moderately high level of significance that indicated that the feminist standing of the researcher accounted for approximately 22% of the overall variance in quality.
Motaref (1988) found that the type of research conducted and the sex of the researcher had a statistically significant relationship with the quality of the research included in her synthesis. However, neither of her independent variables showed a practically significant relationship with the quality of the studies examined.

This research synthesis found that whether or not a hypothesis was tested was the only independent variable that had a statistically significant relationship with the quality of the included studies. The eta squared statistic of .0506, however, did not support practical significance.

Research Issues: Attitudes

One very distinct difference between this research synthesis and the Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988) syntheses is that this synthesis focused very directly on attitudes and opinions of women superintendents, not on attitudes and opinions about women superintendents. Although a number of studies included the attitudes and opinions of other groups, and some of those attitudes and opinions were about women superintendents, the attitudes and opinions were treated strictly as they compared to the attitudes and opinions of the women superintendents in the same data set.

Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988) both included attitude and opinion studies in their syntheses in which the attitudes and opinions of various groups relative to women in educational administration were considered without comparison data from women administrators. Members of these various groups included teachers, school board
members, and varying populations of male and female administrators.

Regarding attitudes toward women administrators, both Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988) reported that females in all positions surveyed tended to have more positive attitudes toward women in administration than the males surveyed. In general, Shakeshaft, through taking a vote, concluded that the trend in attitudes towards women in administration was essentially negative.

Motaref (1988), on the other hand, indicated that her findings were mixed. She found that females overall were more positive toward women administrators, teachers of both sexes were mixed in their attitudes, superintendents were more positive than school board members, and certified staff had negative attitudes toward women in administration.

This current synthesis found that although women superintendents tended to have more positive attitudes toward women in administration than the males to which they were compared, the attitudes of both groups were, in most cases, moderately to highly positive and, therefore, not significantly different.

Research Issues: Barriers

All three syntheses discussed the issue of barriers from the perspective of identifying the types of barriers facing women in educational administration--both internal and external--and exploring strategies for overcoming the identified barriers.

Shakeshaft (1980) indicated that in the studies she reviewed, only two perceived barriers--sex discrimination and levels of aspiration--had
actually been investigated to determine whether they truly were barriers. And even those investigations were based primarily on gathering perceptions relative to the impact of the two factors on opportunity and access. Her findings indicated that males tended to see sex discrimination as less of an issue than women, and women tended to have lower levels of administrative aspirations than males.

Both Motaref (1988) and the current synthesis found evidence of agreement with these findings. A commonly found response in the current synthesis was that promotions into superintendency positions were not necessarily planned by the female respondents, but rather, happened as a result of "being in the right place at the right time." Male respondents, on the other hand, tended to have more formalized career plans.

Relative to sex discrimination, Motaref (1988) found that 25 of 61 studies that treated barriers as a primary focus discussed gender bias. Fifteen of those studies found evidence or perceptions of sex discrimination, while 10 studies found either no discrimination or inconclusive results.

The current synthesis found sex discrimination discussed in 26 studies with males and school board members seeing it as less of a barrier than women superintendents.

**Research Issues: Status**

Both Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988) identified a significantly higher number of status studies, 71 and 12, respectively, than the current synthesis (3).
In all three syntheses, the overwhelming conclusion was that women are severely underrepresented in all areas of educational administration.

**Research Issues: Structural Determinants**

Shakeshaft (1980) found only two studies that explored structural determinants. Motaref (1988) and the current synthesis each found three studies.

While Shakeshaft (1980) reported no significant or conclusive findings from the two studies she reviewed, Motaref (1988) found that the three studies she reviewed suggested that the organizational climate in schools that have female administrators is different from others in trust, aloofness, and intimacy.

This finding was supported in the current synthesis. Garfinkel (1989) found in his study of the way male and female superintendents conceptualize the administrative team, that there was a major difference in the way that male and female superintendents defined trust. Male superintendents defined it more in terms of comfort and loyalty, while female superintendents defined it more in terms of competence.

**Research Issues: Leadership Characteristics**

For all practical purposes, the content of the three syntheses were very similar relative to their findings regarding leadership characteristics. In general, they each reported that:

1. Women had their own distinctive leadership styles.
2. Women educational administrators were consistently found to
be as effective, if not more effective, than their male counterparts.

3. Women leaders were generally perceived as possessing strong curriculum and communication skills, and weak budget and finance skills.

The differences that emerged tended to reflect the semantics of the ongoing evolution of educational administration theory. Shakeshaft (1980) indicated in her synthesis that women administrators preferred Theory Y leadership. The terms that appeared in at least one of the more recent women superintendent dissertations (Rosen, 1993), and in the text of the current synthesis, were the more current descriptors: transformational and transactional leadership styles and characteristics.

Research Issues: Profiles

In general, all three syntheses found that the women administrators that they investigated (a) were in their late 40s at the time they were studied, (b) were married and had between 1 and 2 children, (c) tended to be first born or only children, (d) had three or fewer siblings, (e) held master's degrees or higher in education administration, (f) were more likely to hold a doctorate than their male counterparts, (g) most frequently had majored in and taught elementary education, (h) had more teaching experience than their male counterparts, (i) were in their mid-30s when they obtained their first administrative position, and (j) were employed in rural school districts.

Although there were no appreciable differences between the profile characteristics identified in this research synthesis and those identified by Shakeshaft (1980), one difference surfaced between this
synthesis and Motaref's (1988) findings. Motaref found that the average pupil enrollment in districts that employed female administrators was more than 10,000. This synthesis found that women superintendents were most frequently employed in districts of 3,000 students or less.

Research Issues: Communication and Theory

Since neither communication nor theory were addressed in the syntheses by Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988), no comparisons could be made.

Summary

The findings of this research synthesis and the findings of two previous syntheses of the women in educational administration research by Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988) were compared.

Similarities and differences were found in the characteristics of the research, the quality of the research, and six of the eight categories of research issues: attitudes, barriers, status, structural determinants, leadership characteristics, and profiles. The two remaining categories of research issues—communication and theory—were not addressed by Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988) and, therefore, could not be compared.

Noteworthy similarities included:

1. All three syntheses found that the majority of researchers were females who were working toward an Ed.D. in educational administration under the direction of a male faculty advisor.

2. All three syntheses found that the majority of studies were
survey research that most frequently used questionnaires to gather data.

3. All three syntheses gave the research included in their studies an overall mean quality rating that fell within the mediocre range. However, the median quality rating reported in the current synthesis was good and suggests a higher quality of research than that found in the studies included in the previous syntheses.

4. All three syntheses found that their findings overwhelmingly documented the underrepresentation of women in educational administration.

5. With some minor exceptions and slight variations in numbers and percentages, the profile data trends reported in each of the three syntheses were almost identical.

   Noteworthy differences included:

   1. Motaref (1988) found that the region of the United States that contributed the most studies to her synthesis was the East; this synthesis found it to be the Midwest.

   2. The current synthesis found considerably more dissertations written in APA style (75%) than Shakeshaft (1980) found (16%).

   3. The current synthesis found that whether or not a hypothesis was tested was the only variable that had a statistically significant relationship with the quality of the dissertations studied. Motaref (1988) found the type of research conducted and the sex of the researcher to have a statistically significant relationship with the quality of the research. And Shakeshaft (1980) found the research issue, the feminist standing of the researcher, and the data collection method to have a statistically significant relationship with the quality of the research.
4. Motaref (1988) and Shakeshaft (1980) found the attitudes toward women in administration to be negative or mixed. The current synthesis found the attitudes of all groups to be generally positive.

5. Motaref (1988) and Shakeshaft (1980) found a larger proportion of studies examining the status of women in educational administration than the current synthesis found regarding women superintendents.

6. The terminology to describe leadership reflected the evolution of educational administrative theory across studies. That is, Shakeshaft (1980) spoke in terms of Theory X and Theory Y styles of leadership; the current synthesis used terms such as transformational leadership and transactional leadership.

7. Motaref (1988) found the mean pupil enrollment of districts employing women administrators to be more than 10,000. The current synthesis found the mean pupil enrollment of districts employing women superintendents to be less than 3,000.

Chapter VIII collectively summarizes all findings, posits new research directions and implications, and offers insights into career and employment strategies for both incumbent and aspiring women superintendents.
CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY, NEW DIRECTIONS, AND INSIGHTS

Chapter VIII provides a general overview of the study, summarizes all findings, posits new research directions and implications, and offers insights into career- and employment strategies for both incumbent and aspiring women superintendents.

Overview of the Study

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to prepare a comprehensive summary, evaluation, and synthesis of the dissertation research that was produced on women public school superintendents from 1970 to 1994.

Population

A total of 79 dissertations were selected for inclusion in this research synthesis based on the following criteria. Each study had to (a) have been completed through a college or university in the United States between 1970 and 1994; (b) have used women who were currently, or recently, serving as a public school superintendent as the sole, or a primary, population/sample in the data set; (c) have included a hypothesis or research question specifically identifying women public school superintendents as a primary focus of the inquiry; (d) have been a primary research study; and (e) have included a minimum of five subjects in
each sample or population considered in the data set if the study was empirical.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the overall characteristics of the included dissertation research?

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between identified research issues and selected time periods?

Research Question 3: What is the quality of the included dissertation research?

Research Question 4: Are there relationships between the quality of the research, the research design, the issues addressed, and/or selected researcher characteristics?

Research Question 5: What are the findings of the dissertation research regarding women superintendents?

Research Question 6: In what ways can the research findings be reexamined and integrated?

Research Question 7: What patterns or trends does the research identify?

Research Question 8: What is the direction of the identified patterns or trends?

Research Question 9: In what ways are the findings of this research synthesis similar to previous research syntheses on women in educational administration?

Research Question 10: In what ways are the findings of this research synthesis different from previous research syntheses on women
in educational administration?

Research Question 11: What recommendations regarding future research can be offered?

Research Question 12: Can changes or additions to existing theory or understandings be proposed from summarizing and synthesizing this research?

Research Question 13: Can new or modified methodological and/or research design procedures be proposed from this research?

Research Question 14: What recommendations to aspiring women superintendents can be made from this research?

Research Question 15: What recommendations to incumbent women superintendents can be made from this research?

Research Methodology

Research synthesis, or integrative research review, was the research methodology used to conduct this investigation. A research synthesis is the process through which the accumulated findings of a number of research studies are collectively summarized and analyzed.

To complete this synthesis, six basic tasks, developed by B. G. Jackson (1980), formed the foundation upon which this study was built. The six tasks included: (1) selecting the questions or hypotheses for review, (2) sampling the research studies that are to be used, (3) representing the characteristics of the studies and their findings, (4) analyzing the findings, (5) interpreting the results, and (6) reporting the review. All accumulated findings were analyzed and synthesized using content analysis, frequency distributions, and descriptive statistics.
Summary of the Findings

Ten of the 15 research questions posed in this synthesis were answered in Chapters IV-VII. A summary of the findings relative to those 10 questions are summarized at this time. The remaining five research questions will be addressed later in this chapter.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1: What are the overall characteristics of the included dissertation research?

In general, these dissertations were written by a female researcher who was advised by a male faculty member in an educational administration or educational leadership department of a college or university in the Midwestern third of the United States.

The average dissertation was 192 pages long, was written in the style of the American Psychological Association, and used survey research techniques to develop a profile of women superintendents in the United States.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between identified research issues and selected time periods?

The year 1985 emerged as pivotal to the understanding of the body of dissertation research included in this research synthesis. Prior to 1985, the women superintendent research generally represented a traditional, quantitative approach to research with a basic focus on
identifying and describing the women who had succeeded in obtaining public school superintendencies.

Beginning in 1985, the scope, focus, and procedures of the included studies began to change. First, the interest in women superintendent research grew significantly with 70% of the included studies being completed between 1985 and 1994. Second, the domination of profile studies dropped from 71% prior to 1985, to 49% during and after 1985. Themes that emerged with greater emphasis were attitudes, barriers, and leadership characteristics. Third, prior to 1985, 75% of the included studies used a national sample. During and after 1985, 64% of the studies used state, regional, or local samples. Finally, 1985 was the beginning of a significant increase in the use of qualitative research methodologies. This methodology went from negligible use prior to 1985, to being the methodology of choice in 35% of the included studies completed during and after 1985.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3: What is the quality of the dissertation research?

The quality of each of the dissertations was analyzed using a 75-point evaluation instrument that was developed by this researcher and was based on instruments used by Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988). The overall mean quality rating of the 79 included dissertations was mediocre; however, the overall median quality rating was good. The highest ratings were given for the scope and the summary/
conclusions sections of the dissertations. The lowest ratings were given for the instrumentation and the overall form and style of the studies.

Research Question 4

**Research Question 4:** Are there relationships between the quality of the research, the research design, the issues addressed, and/or selected researcher characteristics?

An analysis of the impact on the quality of the dissertations of eight independent variables related to the research design, the research institution, and the researchers themselves found that the dissertations that tested hypotheses had a higher overall quality score than those that did not test hypotheses. While the relationship between the quality of the research and whether or not a hypothesis was tested was statistically significant, it was not practically significant.

Research Question 5

**Research Question 5:** What are the findings of the dissertation research regarding women superintendents?

Through content analysis, the basic research issue, or issues, of each included dissertation was identified and used to sort the dissertations into one of eight thematic categories originally posited by Shakeshaft (1980): attitudes, barriers, status, structural determinants, leadership characteristics, profiles, communication, and theory.

Research Questions 6, 7, and 8

Research Questions 6-8 were used repetitively to analyze and synthesize the dissertations in each of the eight thematic categories.
within the context of Research Question 5. For the sake of brevity, Research Questions 6-8 are not repeated during each of the following summaries of each theme. Rather, each of the questions has been restated once for reference purposes, and the summaries reflect both a brief statement of the procedures used to classify and synthesize the data and a brief description of each theme’s findings and their direction.

**Research Question 6:** In what ways can the research findings be reexamined and integrated?

**Research Question 7:** What patterns or trends does the research identify?

**Research Question 8:** What is the direction of the identified patterns or trends?

**Attitudes**

Data included in the attitudes category were synthesized by listing factors and taking a vote. Five themes were identified and used to classify and present the information in the attitudes category: (1) attitudes/perceptions about self, (2) attitudes/perceptions regarding women in administration, (3) attitudes/perceptions regarding the superintendent, (4) perceptions of the characteristics of success, and (5) job satisfaction.

Significant attitudes findings included:

1. A composite personality portrait of women superintendents revealed hard working extroverts who have generally succeeded through intense commitment, the use of common sense, and a high value on order and harmony.
2. Male and female superintendents tended to view women as managers very positively, with female superintendents viewing them slightly more positively than male superintendents.

3. Some women superintendents felt that boards of education do not give women superintendents as much latitude as they give male superintendents.

4. Male and female superintendents both felt that being able to organize and having a balance between task-oriented skills and relationship-oriented skills was critical to a successful superintendency.

5. Female superintendents expressed moderate to high levels of job satisfaction. Strong satisfiers included achievement and successful interpersonal interactions. Dissatisfiers included compensation, lack of recognition, and unsuccessful interpersonal interactions.

Barriers

Data included in the barriers category was synthesized by listing factors and taking a vote.

Three themes were identified and used to classify and present the information in the barriers category: (1) internal barriers, (2) external barriers, and (3) strategies for overcoming barriers.

Significant barriers findings included:

1. The most commonly cited internal barriers were mobility; limitations within the self, such as a lack of confidence and a lack of assertiveness; and family responsibilities.

2. Family responsibilities were most frequently a concern for those women superintendents that had dependent children at home.
3. The most commonly cited external barriers were gender bias, hiring and recruiting practices, myths and stereotypes, professional experience and training, networks, and mentorship/role models.

4. In those studies that considered both racial and gender bias, black superintendents--male and female--felt that racial bias was equal to or greater than gender bias.

5. A commonly cited external barrier was the perception that women are not as well-trained in and as skilled in school finance as males.

6. Male and female mentors have different styles of mentoring.

7. The most commonly suggested strategies for overcoming the barriers to women superintendents were mentoring and networks.

**Status**

Because there were only three studies presented in this category, there was no need to sort the data into theme categories and the findings were synthesized in only one way: listing factors.

Significant status findings included:

1. Women are underrepresented in the public school superintendency in comparison to the number of women employed in public school education.

2. The percentages of women in the public school superintendency were at their highest point in the 1930s.

3. The percentages of women in the public school superintendency were at their lowest point in the early 1970s.
4. The percentages of women in the public school superintendence have been increasing since the 1970s.

**Structural Determinants**

Because there were only three studies presented in this category, there was, once again, no need to sort the data into theme categories and the findings were synthesized in only one way: listing factors.

Significant structural determinants findings included:

1. Women's career experiences relative to men's experiences prior to reaching the superintendency were longer and at lower levels of management.

2. Women's access to advanced degree programs and the resulting sponsorship that comes with them had, until recently, been very limited.

3. There is strong evidence that women have faced discrimination in gaining access to the superintendency at the hands of male university gatekeepers through a lack of sponsorship.

4. More female superintendents were likely to share policy development and preparation of the board agenda with the board than males.

5. Superintendents and board presidents, regardless of sex, did not agree on who is responsible for administration and policy functions—both perceived more responsibility in these areas than the other said they had.

6. Female superintendents perceived relations between the board and superintendent to be more informal than male superintendents did.
7. Female and male superintendents defined trust differently. Female superintendents tended to define trust in the context of competence, while male superintendents tended to define it in the context of comfort or loyalty.

Leadership Characteristics

Data included in the leadership characteristics category were synthesized by listing factors and taking a vote. Three themes were identified and used to classify and present the information in the leadership characteristics category: (1) leadership style, (2) leadership effectiveness, and (3) leadership behavior.

Significant findings relative to leadership characteristics included:

1. Male and female superintendents consistently rated themselves as more people-oriented than task- or production-oriented.

2. Both male and female superintendents favored left-brain functioning over right-brain functioning; however, women demonstrated more holistic leadership qualities than men.

3. Both male and female superintendents tended to rate themselves as highly effective.

4. The larger and more complex the district, the more women superintendents felt the need to have specific skills in planning, resolving conflict, motivating others, and inspiring shared vision.

5. Women superintendents in rural districts and districts with ethnically-diverse student populations found financial management skills to be more important than those women superintendents in comparison districts. The reason cited for this priority was that these women felt
that rural and ethnically-diverse districts tended to have histories of financial difficulties and, therefore, presented ongoing and unique requirements for strong financial management skills.

6. While female superintendents tended to be slightly more involved in instructional leadership activities than their male counterparts, the level of involvement for both males and females diminished as their years of experience increased.

7. When surveyed, women superintendents generally felt that the principles of Management by Objectives (MBO) were compatible with leadership activities and daily routines of school superintendents.

8. Due to inexperience, female superintendents were more likely to experience negative critical incidents in the first 3 years of assuming their position than at any other time. Likewise, the longer a female superintendent was employed, the less it was likely that critical incidents would affect her subsequent job performance.

Profiles

Data included in the profiles category were synthesized by averaging statistics, listing factors, and taking a vote. Five themes were identified and used to classify and present the information in the profiles category: (1) personal characteristics, (2) educational characteristics, (3) professional characteristics, (4) school district characteristics, and (5) biographical profiles.

Significant profiles findings included:

1. The mean age for female superintendents tended to be slightly higher than the mean age for male superintendents for all age
variables.

2. A majority of female superintendents were married and had between one and two children.

3. A very slight minority of female superintendents (47%) indicated that they had been a first born or only child in their families of origin.

4. A majority of the parents of female superintendents had a high school diploma or less.

5. The majority of women superintendents' highest degree earned was a master's or specialist degree.

6. A majority of the dissertations that compared male-female highest degrees earned found that women superintendents held doctorates more often than male superintendents.

7. Although the total number of years in education was very similar for males and females (both 20+), women superintendents had more classroom teaching experience than male superintendents.

8. The most commonly identified grade level taught was elementary for female superintendents and secondary for male superintendents.

9. Male superintendents generally had more years of experience in administration than female superintendents had.

10. While the most common career path for the male superintendents studied was teacher-principal-central office-superintendent, there was no single career path that was most common among female superintendents.

11. The majority of female superintendents were employed in K-12 school districts.
12. The majority of female superintendents studied were employed in districts of less than 3,000 students.

13. A higher percentage of male superintendents than female superintendents were employed in rural school districts.

**Communication**

Only one study was identified for this category (Dopp, 1986). Noteworthy findings from this study indicated the following:

1. Women superintendents generally perceived their communication style to be more informal than their subordinates perceived it to be.

2. The patterns of communication used by women superintendents were generally considered to be appropriate for their community and school district.

**Theory**

Only one study was located that was applicable to this category (Jenkins, 1991). A lengthy list of contributions that the 175 women in his national sample made within their school districts was included in this dissertation.

**Research Questions 9 and 10**

**Research Question 9:** In what ways are the findings of this research synthesis similar to previous research syntheses on women in educational administration?

**Research Question 10:** In what ways are the findings of this research synthesis different from previous research syntheses on women
in educational administration?

The findings of this research synthesis were compared to the findings of two previous syntheses of the research on women in educational administration (Motaref, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1980).

Noteworthy similarities included:

1. All three syntheses found that the majority of researchers were females who were working toward an Ed.D. in educational administration under the direction of a male faculty advisor.

2. All three syntheses found that the majority of studies were survey research that most frequently used questionnaires to gather data.

3. All three syntheses gave the research included in their studies an overall mean quality rating that fell within the mediocre range. However, the median quality rating reported in the current synthesis was good and suggests a higher quality of research than that found in the studies included in the previous syntheses.

4. All three syntheses found that their findings overwhelmingly documented the underrepresentation of women in educational administration.

5. With some minor exceptions and slight variations in numbers and percentages, the profile data trends reported in each of the three syntheses were almost identical.

Noteworthy differences included:

1. Motaref (1988) found that the region of the United States that contributed the most studies to her synthesis was the East; this synthesis found it to be the Midwest.
2. The current synthesis found considerably more dissertations written in APA style (75%) than Shakeshaft (1980) found (16%).

3. The current synthesis found that whether or not a hypothesis was tested was the only variable that had a statistically significant relationship with the quality of the dissertations studied. Motaref (1988) found the type of research conducted and the sex of the researcher to have a statistically significant relationship with the quality of the research in her study. And Shakeshaft (1980) found the research issue, the feminist standing of the researcher, and the data collection method to have a statistically significant relationship with the quality of the research in her study.

4. Motaref (1988) and Shakeshaft (1980) found the attitudes toward women in administration to be negative or mixed. The current synthesis found the attitudes of all groups to be generally positive.

5. Motaref (1988) and Shakeshaft (1980) found a larger proportion of studies examining the status of women in educational administration than the current synthesis found regarding women superintendents.

6. The terminology to describe leadership reflected the evolution of educational administrative theory across studies. That is, Shakeshaft (1980) spoke in terms of Theory X and Theory Y styles of leadership; the current synthesis used terms such as transformational leadership and transactional leadership.

7. Motaref (1988) found the mean pupil enrollment of districts employing women administrators to be more than 10,000. The current synthesis found the mean pupil enrollment of districts employing women superintendents to be less than 3,000.
New Research Directions and Implications

Research Question 11

Research Question 11: What recommendations regarding future research can be offered?

Not only has this research synthesis documented that most of the research on women superintendents has been survey research using questionnaires to conduct profile studies, but the two previous syntheses by Shakeshaft (1980) and Motaref (1988) have documented that this is true for a major component of the women in educational administration research in general. As a result, it would not seem unreasonable to conclude that enough profiles have been done, and it is time to move on to some other areas of study. In other words, enough is enough!

Based on the accumulated findings of the 79 dissertations included in this synthesis of the women superintendent research, further research into the following topics, or from the following perspectives, are recommended:

1. Because this synthesis was limited to the study of women superintendents, there is an entire body of research about women superintendents that was not included. A synthesis of this research would extend the findings of the current synthesis and provide an even more complete summary of the women superintendent literature.

2. To this point most of what is known and written about the leadership styles and behaviors of both male and female superintendents has been based on self- or other-perceived analyses of the superintendents' styles and behaviors. Further research into actual observed
behaviors and styles of superintendents would bring not only new insights to the literature but also serve to measure the credibility of previously-used, perception-based measures.

3. Further study into structural determinants is a significant area of need. This synthesis has documented that well-trained, competent female administrators are out there and being successful, yet women continue to be seriously underrepresented in all levels of educational administration. If women are preparing themselves for leadership roles, and the ones who are finding positions are being successful, then aspiration and competence are not proving to be barriers. If not, then what are the observed, rather than perceived, organizational structures that are limiting women's access?

Research Question 12

Research Question 12: Can changes or additions to existing theory or understandings be proposed from summarizing and synthesizing this research?

Because of the preponderance of profile research, very little new thought seems to have lifted itself from the depths of this body of literature. However, there are a few prevailing thoughts, or myths, that were consistently mentioned in a number of the reviews of literature that do not appear to have been substantiated in this accumulation of findings.

The first myth is that women tend to be most frequently hired as superintendents in K-8 districts. While the results of this synthesis did find that women are more frequently the superintendents in K-8, or elementary districts than men, the majority of women superintendents
studied were found to be leading K-12 districts.

The second myth is that because more women have backgrounds in elementary education and, thus, do not fit into the "typical" career path of secondary teacher-secondary principal-superintendent, they are not often considered for K-12 superintendencies. The data accumulated through this synthesis documented two things. First, the majority of the women superintendents studied did, indeed, come from elementary education teaching backgrounds. However, and secondly, the majority of these women were superintendents in K-12 districts.

While it is important to remember that women are seriously underrepresented in the public school superintendency and the few women studied through this synthesis do not represent all those women who have "tried and failed," it also cannot be forgotten that most of the women superintendents studied were leading K-12 school districts and they got there from an elementary background. In other words, non-traditional routes do work, yet the impression given seems to be that they do not.

As stated earlier, neither of these observations are startling nor new, but hopefully they will cause at least some readers to give pause to preconceived notions of obstacles that really are not borne out in the literature.

**Research Question 13**

Research Question 13: Can new or modified methodological and/or research design procedures be proposed from this research?
While a proposal of new methodologies and procedures cannot be made, there are two shifts in research trends that bear mentioning.

The fact that there were two of the more recent studies in the women superintendent literature (Adams, 1990; Sherman, 1993) that included participant observations in their data collection, provides a spark of hope that more of this type of research will begin to see its way into the educational administration research.

Additionally, the increase in the use of qualitative and case study research methodologies over the past 10 years may also be an indication that more in-depth, behavior-focused research is beginning to emerge as a dominant force in the educational administration literature, and the much overused focus on profiles and attitudes/opinions will begin to diminish.

Insights

Research Question 14

Research Question 14: What recommendations to aspiring women superintendents can be made from this research?

Although none of the 79 dissertations specifically studied the topic of advice to aspiring superintendents, nine researchers asked their subjects what advice they would offer aspiring women superintendents (Dopp, 1986; C. B. Jackson, 1981; Leedy, 1993; McDade, 1981; Miracle, 1987; Postlewait, 1990; Revere, 1986; Senyk, 1988; Stepherson, 1981). What follows are the comments and suggestions made by those practicing women superintendents who responded. No
analyses of the suggestions have been attempted, because the women who have made them have been in a superintendency and this researcher has not.

The following suggestions represent a compilation of the context of what has been offered and are presented simply as a "window" into the minds and experiences of women who "have been there": (a) have lots of energy (Dopp, 1986), (b) be thick-skinned (Dopp, 1986; Miracle, 1987), (c) be willing to work very hard (Dopp, 1986; C. B. Jackson, 1981; Miracle, 1987; Senyk, 1988), (d) know what you are getting into (Dopp, 1986; Leedy, 1993; Senyk, 1988), (e) have varied professional experiences (Dopp, 1986; C. B. Jackson, 1981; Leedy, 1993; Revere, 1986), (f) prepare academically (Dopp, 1986; C. B. Jackson, 1981; Leedy, 1993; Miracle, 1987), (g) have self-confidence (C. B. Jackson, 1981; Miracle, 1987; Revere, 1986), (h) be certain your family understands and is willing to accept the resulting time commitments (C. B. Jackson, 1981), (i) be aggressive in pursuing career goals (C. B. Jackson, 1981; Postlewait, 1990; Revere, 1986; Senyk, 1988), (j) be willing to be involved in all aspects of district operation (C. B. Jackson, 1981), (k) hone interview skills (C. B. Jackson, 1981), (l) view interviews as learning experiences (C. B. Jackson, 1981), (m) be mentored (C. B. Jackson, 1981; Postlewait, 1990; Stepherson, 1981), (n) be willing to relocate (C. B. Jackson, 1981), (o) be visible (Leedy, 1993), (p) find a role model (Leedy, 1993), (q) develop a personal support system (Leedy, 1993), (r) hone people skills (Leedy, 1993), (t) no one is prepared in all areas (Leedy, 1993), (u) be determined (Leedy, 1993; Senyk, 1988), (v) do not make gender an issue (Leedy, 1993; McDade,
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As with the suggestions to aspiring women superintendents, the following offers the context of suggestions and characteristics of success that incumbent superintendents cited as helpful or important in their own superintendencies: (a) be willing to be a role model or mentor (McDade, 1981), (b) be willing to be a risk taker (Postlewait, 1990), (c) be decisive (Postlewait, 1990), (d) be a good listener (Micas, 1982), (e) be flexible (Leedy, 1993), (f) have good organizational skills (Postlewait, 1990; Williams, 1983), (g) develop good people skills (C. B. Jackson, 1981; Leedy, 1993; Williams, 1983), (h) develop strong communication skills (Leedy, 1993; Postlewait, 1990; Williams, 1983), (i) have a positive attitude (C. B. Jackson, 1981; Postlewait, 1990), and (j) develop the ability to see the big picture (Postlewait, 1990).

Summary

Seventy-nine dissertations that investigated women and the public school superintendency between 1970 and 1994 were summarized and synthesized in this integrative research review. Each of the included dissertations were thematically sorted into one of the following categories that were based on those originally posited by Shakeshaft (1980): attitudes, barriers, communication, leadership characteristics, profiles, status, structural determinants, and theory.

From this categorization it was found that 27 dissertations explored attitudes as a primary or secondary focus, 47 explored barriers, 1 explored communication, 30 investigated leadership characteristics, 79 compiled profile information, 3 examined the status of women superintendents, and 3 investigated structural determinants.
When compared to two previous syntheses of the women in educational administration literature (Motaref, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1980), the findings of this synthesis revealed both similarities and differences. In general, women superintendents were found to display similar characteristics to other women in educational administration in terms of background, attitudes, and the challenges that face them both in obtaining positions and performing successfully once in them. Additionally, the quality of the studies evaluated in all three syntheses was similar, although the overall quality of the studies included in the current synthesis was found to be higher than the quality of those included in the previous syntheses.

Relative to differences among the three syntheses, the current synthesis found that the bulk of women in educational administration research was not conducted strictly in the Eastern third of the United States, as had been previously reported; that the number of researchers using the style of the American Psychological Association (APA) has increased since the Shakeshaft (1980) synthesis; and that attitudes toward women in educational administration were more positive in this synthesis than in the two previous syntheses.

When asked for their perceptions of what personal and professional characteristics are necessary to be a successful public school superintendent, the women superintendents included in this synthesis repeatedly emphasized a number of traits that all incumbent superintendents could use to measure the effectiveness of their leadership or their work performance. Some of the more commonly mentioned traits included the need to be highly organized, the need to have good people
skills, the need for good oral and written communication skills, and the need to maintain a positive attitude.

When asked what advice they could give women aspiring to the public school superintendency, the women superintendents included in this study were very emphatic about their belief in the importance of being willing to work hard; having varied professional experiences; preparing academically; being aggressive in the pursuit of career goals; and somewhat collectively, in simply persevering. As one researcher reported (Senyk, 1988), "You only need one board of education to love you."

Finally, the purpose of this study was to summarize and synthesize the dissertation research that studied women public school superintendents, so that more could be learned not only about women who have achieved public school superintendencies, but also from women who have achieved public school superintendencies.

From this integrated body of research it is hoped that a clearer picture of women in the public school superintendency has been established, not only in terms of who they are and how they behave, but also in terms of what they think and what each one has to say about her experiences.
APPENDICES

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Appendix A

Dissertation Data Coding Form
### DISSERTATION DATA CODING FORM

1. **UMI I.D. NUMBER**: 

2. **TITLE**: 

3. **AUTHOR**: 

4. **DAI SOURCE INFORMATION**: 

5. **NUMBER OF PAGES**: 

6. **RESEARCH ISSUE**:  
   - A. **PROFILES**  
   - B. **ATTITUDES**  
   - C. **STATUS**  
   - D. **BARRIERS**  
   - E. **LEADERSHIP STYLE/EFFECTIVENESS**  
   - F. **STRUCTURAL EFFECTS**  
   - G. **THEORY**  
   - H. **COMMUNICATION**  
   - I. **OTHER**: 

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<th>Options</th>
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<td>7. SEX OF RESEARCHER</td>
<td>A. FEMALE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. MALE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. SEX OF ADVISOR</td>
<td>A. FEMALE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. MALE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. DISCIPLINARY AFFILIATION OF RESEARCHER</td>
<td>A. EDUCATIONAL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ADMINISTRATION</td>
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<td>B. OTHER EDUCATION</td>
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<td>DISCIPLINE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. OTHER DISCIPLINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. DEGREE GRANTED TO RESEARCHER</td>
<td>A. PH. D.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B. ED. D.</td>
</tr>
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<td>12. DATE DEGREE GRANTED</td>
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<td>13. UCEA INSTITUTION?</td>
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<td>B. NO</td>
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<td>14. APA STYLE USED?</td>
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<td>B. NO</td>
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15. DEPENDENT VARIABLES EXAMINED

16. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES EXAMINED

17. RESEARCH STRATEGY USED
   A. SURVEY
   B. EXPERIMENTAL
   C. OBSERVATIONAL
   D. HISTORICAL
   E. SECONDARY ANALYSIS
   F. CASE STUDY
   G. BIOGRAPHY
   H. OTHER
   I. MORE THAN ONE
18. DATA COLLECTION
   METHOD
   A. PERSONAL INTERVIEW
   B. TELEPHONE INTERVIEW
   C. QUESTIONNAIRE
   D. OBSERVATION
   E. OTHER
   F. MORE THAN ONE

19. DATA SOURCES
   A. WOMEN SUPERINTENDENTS
   B. SUPERINTENDENTS
   C. SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS
   D. ADMINISTRATORS
   E. TEACHERS
   F. STUDENTS
   G. DOCUMENTS
   H. B AND C
   I. C AND D
   J. C-E ABOVE
   K. D AND E
   L. B AND G
   M. OTHER

20. SAMPLE LEVEL
   A. K-6
   B. 7-12
   C. K-12
21. HYPOTHESIS TESTED?  
   A. YES  
   B. NO  

22. IS DATA COLLECTED MORE THAN ONCE?  
   A. YES  
   B. NO  

23. IF SO, HOW OFTEN?  

   ________________  

24. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES USED  
   A. NO STATISTICS  
   B. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (percentages, frequency distributions, central tendency, etc.)  
   C. UNIVARIATE STATISTICS (t-test, one-way ANOVA, ANOVA variations, simple regression, etc.)  
   D. BIVARIATE STATISTICS (pearson correlation, Spearman rho, chi-square)  
   E. MULTIVARIATE STATISTICS (multiple regression, canonical correlation)  
   F. UNIVARIATE AND BIVARIATE  
   G. UNIVARIATE AND MULTIVARIATE  
   H. BIVARIATE AND MULTIVARIATE  
   I. UNIVARIATE, BIVARIATE, AND MULTIVARIATE
25. FINDINGS?

SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL
Appendix B

Dissertation Quality Assessment Form
DISSERTATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

RESEARCHER ________________________ DISS. DATE_______

Rating Scale:  N/A = Not Applicable
               1 = No or Not Included But Should Be
               2 = Poor
               3 = Mediocre
               4 = Good
               5 = Yes or Excellent

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH

1. The title is related to the content of the research? NA 1 2 3 4 5

2. The area of the problem is identified? NA 1 2 3 4 5

ABSTRACT

3. Goodness of fit between the abstract and the problem statement? NA 1 2 3 4 5

4. Goodness of fit between the abstract and the research design? NA 1 2 3 4 5

5. Goodness of fit between the abstract and the sample? NA 1 2 3 4 5

6. Goodness of fit between the abstract and the data analysis? NA 1 2 3 4 5

7. Goodness of fit between the abstract and the findings? NA 1 2 3 4 5
Rating Scale:  N/A = Not Applicable
1 = No or Not Included But Should Be
2 = Poor
3 = Mediocre
4 = Good
5 = Yes or Excellent

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

8. The problem is stated clearly?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
9. The problem is stated early in the study?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
10. The statement of the problem encompasses all of its elements, and is in agreement with all of them?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

11. Uses mostly primary sources?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
12. Reviews research on methods and measures as well as on research findings (here or elsewhere)?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
13. Coverage of the literature is adequate for all major themes or concepts?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
14. Is well organized?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
15. Sources are listed correctly in the bibliography?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
16. Sources other than educational journals are used?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
Rating Scale:  N/A = Not Applicable  
1 = No or Not Included But Should Be  
2 = Poor  
3 = Mediocre  
4 = Good  
5 = Yes or Excellent  

DEFINITION OF TERMS

17. Important terms are defined?  NA 1 2 3 4 5  
18. Important terms are defined early in the study and are clearly labeled?  NA 1 2 3 4 5  

HYPOTHESES

19. Hypotheses are clearly stated?  NA 1 2 3 4 5  
20. Hypotheses are followed immediately by refinements of the problem?  NA 1 2 3 4 5  
21. Hypotheses are predicated on assumptions that are clear?  NA 1 2 3 4 5  
22. Hypotheses offer adequate explanations for the problems they propose to explain?  NA 1 2 3 4 5  
23. Hypotheses are testable?  NA 1 2 3 4 5  

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

24. The delimitations of the study are identified?  NA 1 2 3 4 5  
25. The scope of the problem is large enough to be significant, but narrow enough to permit careful treatment?  NA 1 2 3 4 5  

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**SAMPLING**

26. Sampling procedures/ criteria are explained?  
   NA 1 2 3 4 5  
27. Target population is identified?  
   NA 1 2 3 4 5  
28. Sample is sufficiently large/representative enough to permit generalizations to target population?  
   NA 1 2 3 4 5  
29. Sample is large enough to permit statistical analysis of interesting sub-groups?  
   NA 1 2 3 4 5  
30. Limitations of the sampling procedure(s) are discussed?  
   NA 1 2 3 4 5  

**INSTRUMENTATION**

31. Researcher uses instrument that is appropriate for subjects and study?  
   NA 1 2 3 4 5  
32. Researcher evaluates instrument(s) thoroughly for validity, reliability, biases, etc.  
   NA 1 2 3 4 5  
33. Researcher documents that proposed instrument is best measure available?  
   NA 1 2 3 4 5  
34. Instrument is pre-tested on pilot population?  
   NA 1 2 3 4 5
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### DATA/STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

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<td>36. Analysis method(s) are appropriate for research questions and methodology?</td>
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<td>39. Tables and graphs are used effectively?</td>
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### RESEARCH DESIGN - EXPERIMENTAL

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44. Limitations of experimental design are considered in generalizing findings?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

45. Steps are taken to reduce biases?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

46. Concepts of random selection and random assignment have not been confused?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

RESEARCH DESIGN - HISTORICAL

47. Scope of the problem is adequately limited to allow a thorough investigation?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

48. Sources to solve the problem are available?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

49. Primary sources are used more than secondary sources?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

50. Research indicates cause and effect relationship(s)?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

51. Findings are not generalized to a larger set of people, places, or institutions than are warranted?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

52. Problem lies within the commonly accepted realm of history?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
Rating Scale:  N/A = Not Applicable
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RESEARCH DESIGN - SURVEY

53. Random, not convenience sample used?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
54. Documents why questionnaire(s) best way to gather data?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
55. Analyzes relationships, longitudinal changes, and comparisons between groups rather than relying only on single/demographic variables?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
56. Sample checked for possible bias(es)?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
57. Grammar, format, appearance of survey document(s) are acceptable?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
58. Follow-up contacts are made with non-respondents?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

RESEARCH DESIGN - INTERVIEW

59. Random, not convenience sample used?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
60. Analyzes relationships, longitudinal changes, and comparisons between groups rather than relying only on single/demographic variables?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
Rating Scale:  N/A = Not Applicable
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61. Interview guide used? NA 1 2 3 4 5
62. Practice interviews done? NA 1 2 3 4 5
63. Asks questions to which respondents can reasonably be expected to know the answers? NA 1 2 3 4 5

RESEARCH DESIGN - OBSERVATION

64. Takes precautions to avoid having observer disturb or change situation being observed? NA 1 2 3 4 5
65. Uses at least two observers to determine interrater reliability? NA 1 2 3 4 5
66. Does not allow contamination of data collection? NA 1 2 3 4 5
67. Random sampling used where appropriate? NA 1 2 3 4 5
68. Does not have unrealistic of expectations of observers abilities to discriminate among behaviors? NA 1 2 3 4 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

69. Conclusions are clearly stated? NA 1 2 3 4 5
70. Conclusions are substantiated by the data and findings? NA 1 2 3 4 5
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71. Conclusions are relevant to the problem?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
72. Generalizations are limited to the population sampled?  NA 1 2 3 4 5

FORM AND STYLE

73. Report is clearly written?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
74. Report is logically organized?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
75. Report displays an unbiased, impartial, scientific attitude?  NA 1 2 3 4 5
Appendix C

Primary Research Issues Addressed by Dissertations
## Primary Research Issues Addressed by Dissertations

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