The perceptions of African-American female superintendents' career ascendency patterns in the United States from 2000-2001

Cynthia Y. Williams Winthrop
Clark Atlanta University

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

WILLIAMS WINTHROP, CYNTHIA Y.  
B.A. OAKWOOD COLLEGE, 1984  
M.ED. ANDREWS UNIVERSITY, 1992

THE PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS’
CAREER ASCENDANCY PATTERNS IN THE UNITED STATES
FROM 2000-2001

Advisor: Dr. Melanie Carter

Dissertation dated May, 2002

This study chronicled the perceptions of African-American female superintendents about their career ascendancy. This study identified factors that impact career ascendancy patterns as identified by African-American female superintendents. These factors included personal factors, educational factors, career factors, sociopolitical factors, and mentoring.

The study created a linkage between African-American female administrators and the factors involved in the ascension to the superintendency. The research design selected for this study was a qualitative, descriptive design to identify the experiences and perspectives of African-American female superintendents. The Robison (1992) interview guide and Winthrop 2001 interview guide were the primary instruments.
The researcher found that there are some important elements in the ascendancy pattern of African-American females to the superintendency: African-American female superintendents persevered through problems that related to their gender and race, educational factors, occupational factors, and sociopolitical factors.

The conclusions drawn from the findings suggest that African-American female superintendents were more likely to be between the ages of 50-59, married, Protestant, hold a terminal degree, and were more likely to be appointed rather than elected to a district with 1,001 to 3,000 students. African-American female superintendents were more likely to choose a male mentor over a female mentor, who as it appears, was largely influential for the success of the African-American female superintendent. The majority of African-American female superintendents viewed their leadership role as a service. The majority of African-American female superintendents spoke about the role of private life versus career. This is consistent with traditional gender socialization. Many African-American female superintendents perceive it difficult to ascend in the superintendency if they are confronted with the problem of mobility.
THE PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS' CAREER ASCENDANCY PATTERNS IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 2000-2001

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

CYNTHIA Y. WILLIAMS WINTHROP

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2002
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank all of the African-American female superintendents who participated in this study. I appreciate your willingness to support research and your consideration to find time to complete the questionnaire and to answer questions via phone, fax, and e-mail.

I would like to thank Dr. Carter, whose dedication for teaching has gone beyond the title of “professorship.” I sincerely thank Dr. Carter for never giving up on me.

I would like to thank my husband, Edward Francis Winthrop, for constantly loving me. I would like to thank my niece, Joy, for her financial support during my last semester in school. I would like to thank Dr. Susan Jacob for guiding my dissertation. You are a true blessing. I would like to thank my sister, Dr. Shiprah Evans, for supporting me through the rough times. I would like to thank all of my siblings: Juanita Williams, Dr. Joe L. Williams, Harold Williams, Kenneth Williams, and Nathan Williams for always believing in me.

I am thankful to my parents, the late Joe and Thelma Williams, for instilling perseverance and determination in my spirit. I would like to say “press on” to all of my nieces and nephews: Rodney, Harold, Dwayne, Joy, Tynisha, Patrice, Erin, Nathan, Mason, Kristen, Joshua, and Alexis.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The United States (U.S.) Department of Education's (2000) National Center for Education Statistics reports that there are approximately 15,000 men and women across the United States who hold positions as public school district superintendents. Traditionally, nearly all superintendents begin their careers as teachers, later serving as principals. They are more often elementary school principals rather than secondary and hold other jobs in the central administration before arriving at the top job. Less than 1% had careers in fields other than education (Glass, 2000).

In 2000, approximately 1,200 women guided public school districts, of which 54 were African American (Glass, 2000). According to Keller (1999), the number of African-American superintendents are not reflective of the minority population of American schools. Minorities account for one-third of the student population. These minorities include African American, Hispanic, Latino, and Asian cultures. In addition, experts project that the proportion of minority students will continue to climb for decades.

Yet by 2025, only about 3% of public school teachers (the pool from which most superintendents are drawn) will belong to a minority group (Glass, 2000; Fenwick & Pierce, 2001). These projected statistics are important because they suggest a decrease in the minority superintendent applicant pool. Additionally, a review of K-12 public school
district administration reveals scarce distribution of female superintendents despite the fact that females occupy most of the administrative positions at the lower levels. In short, the nation's superintendents are overwhelmingly male and white (Glass, 2000).

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA, 2000) further states that over the next five years, nearly 6,000 school superintendents (about 40% of the nation's total) will face retirement and leave for new careers. This phenomenon represents tremendous opportunity for aspiring superintendents. Yet females who aspire for the superintendency face a bleak outlook (Grogan, 1996). The applicant pool from which the applicants for superintendency are recruited is not diverse; female applicants are uncommon (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001). The road ahead for female aspirants is lined with compromises and inequalities that must be met head on.

According to recent research (Alston, 2000; Alston, 1996; Shepherd, 1996; Keller, 1999), gender and race are important factors in superintendent placement. Females are more likely to hold the top job in urban and suburban districts rather than in rural ones. These areas are usually small in number, with very difficult caseloads (Jackson, 1996). Although these districts are where most female superintendents are assigned, women superintendents are more likely to be located on the West Coast/New England area, as can be seen in Table 1.

Several recent studies focus specifically on women whose career aspirations are to become superintendents (Alston, 2000; Ortiz, 2000; Grogan, 2000; Brunner, 2000; Tallerico, 2000; Blount, 1998; Grogan, 1996). Although females occupy most of the
Table 1

Comparison of School Districts and American Public Schools' African-American Female Superintendents (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of School Districts</th>
<th>Number of Female Superintendents</th>
<th>Number of African-American Female Superintendents</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Arizona</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>377</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
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<th>State</th>
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<th>Number of Female Superintendents</th>
<th>Number of African-American Female Superintendents</th>
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<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Mississippi</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Missouri</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Nevada</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>30</td>
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teaching positions, most of the decision-making administrative positions in education are held by men. Glass (2000) notes that while the representation of females in jobs that typically lead to the superintendency has increased over the past decade, the proportion of minorities in those positions has remained the same (see Table 2).

Table 2

Demographics of African-American Female Superintendents 1910-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Superintendents</th>
<th>*Total Number of Female Superintendents</th>
<th>Number of African-American Females</th>
<th>Percent of African-American Female Superintendents</th>
<th>Study Done by Whom</th>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>5,254</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>10,380</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>13,715</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Arnez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Revere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>11,007±</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>Bell &amp; Chase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Superintendents</th>
<th>*Total Number of Female Superintendents</th>
<th>Number of African-American Females</th>
<th>Percent of African-American Female Superintendents</th>
<th>Study Done by Whom</th>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>10,683±</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>Bell &amp; Chase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>14,000*</td>
<td>800*</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>14,000*</td>
<td>800*</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Alston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>14,000*</td>
<td>800*</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>1,263</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>Winthrop</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*All non-African-American female superintendents included (Jackson, 1996)

*Approximate figures from AASA

± Bell and Chase (1993) used only K-12 districts in their studies

African-American female superintendents have been few in number. There is scant literature about their administration, professional goals, the obstacles confronted while pursuing their goals, and the roles of mentors and sponsors in advancing their careers. As documented in Table 1 and Table 3, research demonstrates that although African Americans heavily populate and make up one-third of the public school population, there is still little representation in the highest rank of K-12 education – the superintendency. Again, only about 5% of superintendents are members of minorities, an increase of only one percentage point from 1993-1998 (Keller, 1999). Of this 5%, about 3% are African-American males, and less than 2% are African-American females.
Table 3

Top 10 States Heavily Populated by African Americans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Number of Female Superintendents</th>
<th>Number of African-American Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Alston (1996) notes that although females are few in number, today’s African-American female school superintendents have coupled courage and determination in order to become some of the most successful women in educational leadership. From 1971 to 1996, studies placed the number of African-American female superintendents from 1 to 32 (Moody, 1971; Hudson, 1991; Shepherd, 1996; Revere, 1985). More recent studies have placed the number of African-American female superintendents at 54 (State Departments of Education, 2000-2001). This study seeks to look beyond the mere numbers. Instead, the focus of this research is to use as an analytical tool the social, historical and political context of the African-American female that perpetuates an
exclusive rather than an inclusive path toward the superintendency. This approach is necessary in order to examine the way in which issues of professional development, mentoring and career ascension play out for the African-American female superintendent.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to chronicle the perceptions of African-American female superintendents as they relate to their career ascendency. This study examined essential factors of career ascendency patterns as identified by African-American female superintendents. Keller (1999) states that African-American female representation in educational administration positions is inconsistent with the extent of their employment in education. Specifically, the study explores the success patterns of African-American females as chief administrators of public school districts. This description serves to form a basis to gain insight into the typical African-American female superintendent, her struggles, and her victories.

Background of the Problem

The term school superintendent has come to mean the chief administrative officer of a local school district; however, the origin of the term school superintendent is uncertain. Of the many possibilities surrounding its earlier usage, the one which seems the most plausible has its roots in the early period of industrialization. Cuban (1988) offers two possibilities. First, it evolved from the industrial revolution; “managers of early 19th-century mills were called superintendents” (p. 111). The admiration that Americans felt for the economic benefits generated by factories may have best fit what
they wanted from their schools: "To produce children who were obedient, punctual, and hard-working" (p. 111). Second, the term superintendent is derived from church history. As early as 1560 in Europe, superintendent referred to the official in charge of a group of parishes within the Lutheran Church (p. 111).

The unofficial position of superintendent of schools has existed in American public education since the mid-1800s, when many school districts located in larger cities appointed an individual responsible for the day-to-day operations of a number of schoolhouses. By 1860, 27 cities with school districts had created superintendencies. During the next century, the growth of the superintendency paralleled the growth of the public schools (Callahan, 1966, p. 560) and was inextricably linked to the evolution of school boards.

Campbell and Cunningham (1975) also speculated about four possible stages in the emergence of the superintendency: (1) members of the clergy and board members needed someone to attend to clerical details, (2) increased problems with curriculum brought about the need for an educator, typically of scholarly stature, (3) continued population growth called for a businessman to handle budgetary affairs for the board, and (4) the last stage called for the superintendent to be the Chief Executive Officer and chief advisor to the board.

The superintendency evolved as a product of growth in the public education arena. It was not a carefully orchestrated and planned addition to education. It was created in recognition that the education enterprise had become too demanding for a board of education composed of volunteers who donated part of their time to public service. A
full-time leader was needed to carry out the policies initiated by the board, which met only occasionally.

According to Carter and Cunningham (1997), the first official school superintendents were appointed in Buffalo, New York, on June 9, 1937. Soon after, the mayors and aldermen of Louisville, Kentucky, and Providence, Rhode Island, also appointed superintendents of public schools (AASA, 2000). In some respects, many early superintendents were like secular clergy. They served as moral role models, spreaders of the democratic ethic, and, most importantly, builders of the American dream.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the “modern” superintendent was likened to the new executive in peacetime America. Wordage such as “The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit” or the “Organization Man” characterized the image that the “modern” superintendent presented to the public (Grogan & Henry, 1995). This male image shaped the public’s image about who should lead their schools. A woman might be trained, but her training did not necessarily prepare her to enter school leadership. Instead, her training led to teaching, a position for which no means of professional advancement was constructed. She was denied promotion. Male-dominated activities directed a woman’s potential administrative advancement (Blount, 1998).

An historical overview of the African-American female and the superintendency has revealed that the superintendency is an elusive goal for African Americans, especially African-American females. Researchers agree (Collins, 1990; Alston, 2000; Revere, 1985; Jackson, 1996) that generally African-American females as a group, experience a world different from those who are not African American or female. For purposes of this

The Changing American Landscape: African-American Females, Schools, and the Superintendency, 1870-1930

The primary educational importance of this period was the instructional assistance given to students (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). In addition, the African-American female was emerging in society during this period of time called “black intellectualism.” According to Williams (1993), the education of blacks during the era of slavery was limited and rarely acknowledged, resulting as it did from many forms of self-help and some surreptitious or inadvertent help from whites. A small number of blacks, for very individualistic reasons or unique circumstances, received some of the classical education of the day (Williams, 1993).

The first schools for blacks were established in New York in the 1700’s. The first free secular school was begun in 1787 (Williams, 1993). Most historians report that at the outbreak of the Civil War (1861), 90% of slaves and approximately half of freed blacks were illiterate. According to Williams (1993), the vast majority of whites were fearful of educated slaves, and punishment was meted out to those who were caught
learning to read or write or who exercised literacy skills without permission. By the end of 1865, there were nearly 600 freedmen's schools in the South, mostly supported by the combined efforts of churches and organizations from the North and South. Southern black colleges were founded during the Reconstruction Era. These schools provided formal instruction to blacks who yearned to be educated. Because of the almost total absence of secondary schools for black youngsters, all these colleges had to include high schools or academies to prepare their own students for entrance. Most of the early schools, Williams (1993) further states, were designed to train religious leaders.

It is important to note the African-American female educators during this period. Four prominent African-American women founded elementary and secondary preparatory schools for black youths. The schools existed over long period of time and successfully educated generations of black students.

The Haines Normal and Industrial Institute were chartered in 1886 by Lucy Craft Laney. Lucy Craft Laney (Asante & Mattson, 1992) opened a school in a lecture room of the Christ Presbyterian Church in Augusta. In 1886, the school was chartered by the state of Georgia (Bullock, 1967). Charlotte Hawkins Brown was another educator and civil rights activist, who founded the Palmer memorial Institute in 1902. Charlotte Hawkins Brown also started the movement to establish the State Training School for Negro Girls in Rocky Mount, North Carolina (Anderson, 1988). The National Training School for Girls was founded by Nannie Helen Burroughs in 1909. As a tireless advocate of the education of African Americans, especially women, Burroughs also worked toward securing equality in the workplace for black women. She was a member of the National
Association of Colored Women, which later became known as the National Council of Negro Women, under the leadership of Mary McLeod Bethune (Asante & Mattson, 1992).

Mary McLeod Bethune founded the Daytona Normal and Industrial School in Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1904. The school is now called Bethune-Cookman College (Asante, 1992). After serving in national positions under the tutelage of many Presidents, including Coolidge and Hoover, Bethune became best known as an adviser to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, and President Harry Truman. Bethune was appointed by President Roosevelt to the directorship of the National Youth Administration. Well-known for her forceful speaking style, she became one of the most sought-after speakers of her day (Williams, 1993).

Not only educators were committed to black access and black opportunity. Women such as Maria Stewart and Fannie Barrier Williams insisted that African-American women are intellectuals. These women possessed a vital analytical foundation for a standpoint on self, community, and society (Collins, 1990). In 1905, Fannie Barrier Williams expressed the societal view of black females: “the colored girl [. . .] is not known and hence not believed in; she belongs to a race that is best designated by the term ‘problem,’ and she lives beneath the shadow of that problem which envelops and obscures her progress” (Williams, 1987, p. 150). Collins (1990) states that increasing visibility of African-American females and their ideas is critical in restructuring patterned relations of race, gender, and class inequality that pervade the entire social structure.
In 1850, the number of children attending school was 3,350,000. In 1900, there were 250,000 schools with an enrollment of 15,500,000 (Williams, 1993). The increase in the number of children attending schools rapidly spread. The superintendent’s role was changing, and a need to plan and prepare for stronger curriculum needs was evident. Formal education during this era consisted of disciplining the mind. According to Cocking and Gilmore (1938), the beginning of what Americans know as “high school” and the development of professional schools of law, engineering, medicine, and agriculture were initiated during this era. The vast expansion of the new educational opportunities allowed larger numbers of students to attend school.

Around 1865, following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, a small group of men formed a meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and organized the National Association of School Superintendents. Five years later, this group merged with others to form the National Educational Association and thereafter, changed its name periodically until 1937 when its present name was adopted by the membership. This organization for superintendents has molded and enhanced educational policy for many decades and has been instrumental in the development of the superintendency over the years. The superintendent during this era was characterized as a scholar, concerned with the educational matters of the school district (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).
The primary educational importance during this period was school budgets and business interests, which replaced instruction as the primary concern for the superintendent (Callahan, 1975). During this era, the African-American female was now known as a mother in society. Hooks (1989) shares a special vision of the tradition of this era and coins the “mothering of the mind” relationship that existed between African-American women teachers and their African-American women students:

I understood from the teachers in those segregated schools that the work of any teacher committed to the full self-realization of students was necessarily and fundamentally radical, that ideas were not neutral, that to teach in a way that liberates, that expands consciousness, that awakens, is to challenge domination at its very core. (Hooks, 1989, p. 50)

The “mothering of the mind” moved the African-American female on to a new type of sisterhood. African-American females were challenged to change social rules. In many cases, African-American females engaged in individual protests against unfair rules and practices.

There was a need for more extensive education during this era because of societal changes. The era that began with the Great Depression was a time of unprecedented uncertainty, which left a mark on the schools. Superintendents during this era were
caught between the movement of business ideology and the scientific management principles proposed by Frederick W. Taylor. Callahan (1975) states that superintendents turned to the “science” of business-industrial management, as they understood it, for the solution to their problems.

The superintendent during this era also took on more responsibilities regarding finance, accounting procedures, facilities, and the management of school districts. As the superintendent moved from scholar to businessman, he was truly marketing an entrepreneurial assignment that related to school governance and was more opposed to a direct focus on instructional agendas.

Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) hailed John Dewey to be one of the greatest writers of this era. John Dewey was widely respected in the field of education and was partly instrumental in blending the scientific principles into the schools. Dewey’s former student, William Wirt, introduced the “platoon” system within the educational realm. When Wirt became superintendent of the Gary, Indiana, schools in 1907, he introduced a plan that had considerably departed from tradition. Instead of using a rigid schedule by matching each child to a desk, he used other facilities such as gymnasiums, auditoriums, shops, laboratories, and playgrounds as the most integral parts of the entire school. This allowed for more flexibility in instruction.

A superintendent’s effectiveness during this era in public schools was based on one’s ability to demonstrate the skills of effective management. Concepts and practices influenced the leadership role of administrators during the first part of the twentieth century in business, industry and the military. Callahan (1975) cites that superintendents
were greatly concerned with keeping their jobs by placating their critics, and as a result, they made decisions related to school needs.

Professionalizing the Superintendency: Exemplars of African-American Female Forerunners (1960-present)

The superintendent during this period was described as a professional administrator (Callahan, 1975). African Americans moved to southern and northern cities from the early 1900s until after World War II. Migration caused shifts in African-American female labor market activities as well as changes in the African-American family patterns and community organization (Higginbotham, 1989). While racial segregation limited African Americans from white physical environments, gender relations within the African-American communities limited females from male space. Male space included barbershops, pool halls, and the street, while female space consisted of households and churches. Women who confused the physical environments of gender did so at the jeopardy of respect within their own communities (Higginbotham, 1989).

Dramatic changes came about in the mid-twentieth century post-World War II era in the relationship between work and family. The African-American community was evidenced by a high number of unemployment, divorce rate, single-parent households, and out-of-wedlock births for all groups in the society. The social class of African Americans left a dramatic distinction in the post-World War II period, as a welfare status (Collins, 1990). Throughout this era, African-American women began to succeed in leadership roles. From 1973-1975, Barbara Sizemore, the first black female superintendent of a large
urban school system (Washington, D.C.), successfully managed a student population of over 136,000. Sizemore’s budget was approximately $150 million annually (Arnez, 1981). Sizemore wanted to be a superintendent of a public school system so that she could bring about educational justice for all children:

Our public school system must be designed so that educational justice is afforded each child irrespective of ethnic, social, economic background – irrespective of physical and/or emotional, and/or intellectual handicaps. Every child must be provided equal access to learning situations which build and/or enhance the unique talents, cultures, languages, which he or she brings. (Sizemore, 1974, p. 9)

Sizemore believed that change was inevitable and was necessary in order for a school to be compatible with the way that human beings grow and develop. In short, all human beings are special and schools should accommodate student differences.

Ruth B. Love is another outstanding black female educator who had a meteoric educational administrator career. According to the Who’s Who Among Black Americans (1980-1981), Ruth B. Love Holloway was the first black and the first female general superintendent of the Chicago Public School system. She is a native of Lawton, Oklahoma, and was an outstanding teacher. Love’s accountability rose as she directed the Right to Read Program in the U.S. Office of Education (Holloway, 1973). Love served in the field of education for 26 years, 21 of which were spent in California. In 1980, she
became the controversial General Superintendent for the Chicago Public Schools. In this position, she managed a 450,000-student population, a staff of 45,000 persons, 17,000 of whom were teachers in over 550 schools, and an annual budget of $1.3 billion (Holloway, 1982).

This era heralded in the superintendent as a professional administrator. The superintendent was considered professional because of the nature of the job. Many training programs in educational administration originated during this period. These programs afforded increased opportunities. Women were available and prepared to fill the vacant superintendencies because of the shortage of qualified men as a result of the war. In regards to administrative certification, some states required a master’s degree, while others required no further certification beyond the teaching credential.

During the Post World War II Era, an African-American woman believed to be a forerunner for African-American female superintendents was Velma Dolphin Ashley. Ashley began her career as a superintendent on July 1, 1944, at 32 years of age. According to Shepherd’s (1996) study and Alston’s (1996) study, Ashley’s husband, Lillard Ashley, is documented in history as a forerunner. However, Mr. Ashley actually served after his wife and with her assistance (Lee, 2000).

According to Revere (1989), from 1944 to 1956, Velma Dolphin Ashley was responsible for instructional activities in a correctional institution for delinquent African-American youths, as well as for administering the all-African-American school district of Boley, Oklahoma. Velma Dolphin Ashley lived in the all-African-American town of
Boley, Oklahoma, most of her long life (1910-1998). Most of the town of Boley’s children was at some point educated in Mrs. Ashley’s classroom.

In each era, the African-American female has figured prominently in the field of leadership. As an intellectual, her voice was being heard in the community. As a mother, she was influencing young minds to social and political awareness. In the aftermath of the war, she labored to change discriminatory laws that hindered African-American success.

Statement of the Problem

African-American female superintendents constitute only 1.7% of the 15,000 superintendents in school districts throughout the United States. Yet, the total population of African Americans in the U.S. is approximately 34 million or 12% of the population. The contrast of these startling statistics give rise to concerns about the future of black females as superintendents. This study was undertaken to examine the perceptions of key factors of the ascendency patterns of African-American female superintendents.

Since the 1980s, much time has been spent to reform inner-city schools and to promote excellence in student achievement. Although billions of dollars have been spent towards school improvement, children are still experiencing unfortunate situations in American public education (AASA, 2000). Keller (1999) states that American public schools need new direction in order to deliver quality education to their children. An essential strategy for increased improvement in education is new leadership. What does new leadership mean? Leadership might require alternative administrative educational
approaches that could inspire both teachers and students toward a true sense of achievement. Historically overlooked for the top local school position, African-American females potentially represent this new wave of leadership in K-12 education. According to Montenegro (1993), leadership positions should represent diverse leadership, reflecting the majority of the student population. The African-American female represents diversity, and although African-American female superintendents have been emerging as prominent figures in selected school districts in recent years, their ascension has not been a smooth one. Therefore, given the dearth of descriptive data about this phenomenon, the study sought to critically examine in a logically related sequence the perceived factors that influence the career ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents. The qualitative nature of the study is primarily concerned with the voices of African-American females who currently or have recently (2000-2001) served as superintendents.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. How do African-American female superintendents perceive the influence of selected personal factors on their career ascendancy?

2. How do African-American female superintendents perceive the influence of selected educational factors on their career ascendancy?

3. How do African-American female superintendents perceive the influence of selected career factors on their career ascendancy?
4. How do African-American female superintendents perceive the influence of selected sociopolitical factors on their career ascendancy?

5. How do African-American female superintendents perceive the influence of selected mentoring factors on their career ascendancy?

Significance of the Study

The study explores African-American female superintendents and the factors involved in their ascension to the superintendency. The study provides a voice for African-American female superintendents to be documented and understood regarding their personal characteristics, their educational achievements, and their philosophies. It is also relevant for African-American female applicants in administration as they pursue the top position in school administration (Grogan, 1996).

Summary

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2000), African-American females are not being afforded equal opportunities to become superintendents. This study examined the careers of several African-American female superintendents in order to expose the intricacies of their career paths. This insight is helpful as the researcher considers: (1) how African-American females have ascended and (2) how more African-American females can be prepared as superintendents. Research in studying the patterns
of career ascendancy of African-American female superintendents is needed to better understand this phenomenon.

This study linked different opinions, interests and perspectives of African-American female superintendents. The study's intent was to identify recurring factors that selected African-American females experienced in their pursuit of the superintendency.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Organization of the Review

The problem of this study was to determine the perceived influence, if any, of selected factors on the career ascendancy patterns to the superintendency for African-American females. In examining the educational and career ascendancy of African-American female superintendents, the review of the literature focused on four areas: (1) The Historical Perspectives of the Superintendency, (2) The African-American Female in School Administration, (3) Ascendancy Patterns of African-American Females in Education, and (4) Emerging Themes Impacting Ascendancy. In order to introduce the African-American female’s progression and integral movement in society and her subsequent role in education, it is necessary to reveal the characteristics of the social fibre of the day.

The Historical Perspectives of the Superintendency

The knowledge of history helps one understand the present. This adage is true of the superintendency. According to Borg and Gall (1983), the historical study of an educational idea or institution gives perspective that can do much to help one understand our present educational system, and this understanding, in turn, can help to establish a
sound basis for further progress and improvement. Contemporary attitudes towards and expectations of the superintendent are products of the history of the superintendency.

Traditionally the superintendency has been held by white males, preserved primarily through the "old boys' network" (Hudson, 1991). The office of the superintendency has been attained throughout history by election or appointment. The position was one of power and great decision making skills. In the male-dominated network, the last word rested with the superintendent. Only within the past 20 years has attention been directed specifically to female superintendents or superintendents of color (Tallerico, 1993). Early in the 20th century, females seeking school administration positions briefly enjoyed broad-based and enthusiastic support from a powerful emerging political constituency of females (Blount, 1998). White female school superintendents emerged as part of the broad-based women's movement of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The discrimination females faced as they attempted to expand their sphere of influence into public service and even into school leadership was generally too great for them to conquer alone. However, the strong, supportive constituency provided by the women's movement gave many aspiring female administrators the boost they needed to win their positions. In turn, some argue that white female superintendents endeavored to uphold the moral ideals of women's activism (Blount, 1998).

The most recent data reported in a 2000 study of the American School Superintendency, a survey of 2,536 superintendents conducted for the American Association of School Administrators, revealed that 94.9% of all superintendents were white, 86.6% were male, and the median age was 52.5. It was not likely that a significant
change was on the horizon. In fact, Carlson (1972) claims that in preparing for the
superintendency, the chances of movement to administrative posts is seven to ten times
greater for males than for females.

White females and African-American females do not have a shared history in their
movement toward the superintendency. Southern and Northern societal dictates relegated
African Americans to a special category of leadership in schools. Traditionally, the white
female has been able to move professionally when the white male moves professionally.
Similarly, the African-American female has been able to move professionally when the
African-American male moves professionally. Given the research that denotes that white
males experience the most professional growth, followed by white females, then African-
American males, then African-American females, it explains that the black female trails
at the end of all progression (Alston, 2000; Jackson, 1996; Brunner, 2000; Glass, 2000).

The African-American Female in School Administration

The struggle in education for the African-American female educators exhibits
great perseverance. From the time of her involuntary entrance into the United States,
African-American females have utilized whatever resources they could command in
pursuit of education. In the years after the Civil War, African Americans saw education
as their ticket out of poverty and into the American dream (Brunner, 2000).
Unfortunately, the dream was not realized for many years.

In the South, newly freed African Americans, with the support and encouragement
of the Freedman's Bureau and northern industrialists, founded schools in nearly every
community. The realization of universal education in the South where the vast majority of African Americans lived was, in a large part, due to these efforts. However at the end of Reconstruction, the power shifted back to southern whites who did not value education for the masses. Within a few years, they drastically cut state spending for education and nearly eliminated state supervision of schools. Philanthropic help to the African-American schools was not enough to equalize African-American and white education spending throughout the South (Botsch, 2001).

Despite these challenges, African Americans segregated in separate and unequal schools continued to educate children. The leadership of these schools represented the beginning of a loosely organized African-American school leadership. By the early 1900s, the federally sanctioned separate and equal doctrine permeated most public and private institutions. Dual school systems – African-American and white – were the order of the day. This Segregation Era (1900-1954) was a significant period for African-American education. It also provided a window to the development and cultivation of African-American school leadership.

During this era, Northern philanthropists were very involved with the education of African Americans. The Jeanes Fund the Peabody Fund, the Rosenwald Fund, the Slater Fund, the Phelps-Stokes Fund and the immensely powerful General Education Board (GEB) figured prominently in most areas of African-American schooling (Botsch, 2001).

For this study, the Jeanes fund was certainly one of the most significant. The Jeanes supervisors provided educational assistance to African-American schools and African-American students all over the South. Founded by Quaker Anna T. Jeanes in
1907, this fund sponsored more than African-American female teachers and supervisors during its 53-year existence. Ms. Jeanes wanted to provide supervisors for rural schools. These supervisors would serve as consultants and assistants to the teachers in those rural areas. Most of the teachers in the rural areas had little training. The Jeanes supervisors were sent to the traditionally African-American colleges such as Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes for in-service training for their jobs. The foundation set up at the request of Ms. Jeanes became known as the Negro Rural School Fund and lasted until 1936 and beyond (Botsch, 2001).

Jeanes supervisors were primarily African-American females. Why did so few men serve as Jeanes teachers? According to Botsch (2001), it all came down to power. There was no way that the white communities would have allowed African-American men to have so much power. Jeanes supervisors were seen as leaders in their communities, as people to whom one could turn for help. The state agents for the African-American schools, who were white men, supervised the Jeanes teachers who in turn worked with school principals. White superintendents did not always respect the African-American females they supervised. Jeanes supervisors faced many of the same problems that working females have always faced and that African-American females often face in their relationships with white men.

The program was modeled on the work of Virginia Randolph, an African-American educator in Virginia. Teaching in a small rural school, she began by beautifying and cleaning the building and grounds, and getting the families involved in fund-raising for the schools as well as beautifying their own homes. She demonstrated
the virtues of cleanliness and good sanitation by example. Randolph focused on providing a vocational education as well as academics, believing that a well-rounded child would be best prepared for the world of work. She became the first Jeanes supervisor, eventually working in Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia.

Historically, the word "teachers" was dropped from the title, "Jeanes teachers" as they became known as the Jeanes supervisors. Finally, by the 1950s they became the Jeanes Curriculum Directors. The title "Curriculum Director" was then interpreted as superintendent de facto. The Jeanes programs remained in its function until the 1960s, when schools following desegregation became more of a reality. The Jeanes supervisors will always be credited with being the educational pioneers in African-American educational leadership (Botsch, 2001). This was the beginning of an educational area of excellence and leadership in the African-American realm (Botsch, 2001).

According to Alston (2000) and Shakeshaft (1989), white male dominance prevailed in all positions except in the early days of the elementary school principalship. The history of women in school administration is extremely intertwined with the history of women in teaching. Although teaching is now known as a female profession, women have not always dominated the teaching profession. Research indicates that until the late 18th century, all teaching was done by men. According to Alston (2000), when women began teaching, white women took the positions. According to (Amott & Matthaei, 1991), many late 19th century black female leaders such as Fannie Coppin, Lucy Laney, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Fannie Williams, and Mary Bethune, began their careers as
southern elementary school teachers. From 1830 to 1900, black and white women were identified with teaching (Alston, 2000).

Females are still at a great disadvantage in the field of administration. For female superintendents, it was not until the 1970s that they began to be appointed in any number, and still the percentage is less than 5%. When attempting to ascertain the percentage for African-American females, it is almost too low to calculate (Jackson, 1996). According to Alston (2000), black women’s involvement in school administration was quite limited beyond the role of principal. Revere (1989) noted that before 1956, the fact that black female superintendents existed was obscure. One exception being Velma Dolphin Ashley, superintendent of the Boley, Oklahoma school district. By 1978, the ranks of black female superintendents had increased to five. In 1982, there were 11 black female superintendents, 16 in 1983, 29 in 1984, and 25 in 1985 (Arnez, 1981; Revere, 1985).

Depending on their social class, African-American females followed different routes to acquiring professional gain in the seventies and eighties (Grogan, 1996; Jackson, 1996).

The seventies was a time in which African-American females were active in movements for black civil rights (Giddings, 1984). African-American females have been workers for black community development throughout history. African-American females grew as spiritual leaders and believed that their strength was enough to combat the oppressive forces against their society (Collins, 1990). Throughout the eighties and nineties, African-American females have changed the social class structure of African-American families. As the dimensions of social structure continue to expand, African-American females face the challenge to strive, to lift, to climb, and to expand.
Ascendancy Patterns of African-American Females in Education

The path to the superintendency is difficult. Revere (1985) completed a comprehensive history of the black female superintendent. This study reported 32 black women superintendents in office and 41 identified as former superintendents.

Most studies of black women are focused on issues or problems. However, Revere’s study (1985), “A Description of Black Female School Superintendents,” was a comprehensive history. The study was an update on the African-American women superintendents in office in 1993-1994 and a compilation of as many former superintendents that could be identified. As in this study, there were difficulties in finding accurate data.

In Revere’s study (1985), the superintendents talk about doing service and caring for their district’s student population as “caring and trusting.” Bell and Chase (1989) also found that women superintendents talked about “trusting and investing in their staff members.” When they felt it necessary, they conformed to “bureaucratic norms, procedures, and language” but they also resisted “the dehumanizing aspects of bureaucracy” (p. 11). Bell and Chase (1991) found that “negotiating authority with one’s school board continued to be one of the most problematic issues for district leaders” (p. 11).

Jackson’s (1996) study gave an update of the description of the black female superintendent and identified four recurrent themes:

1. These women, as they grew up, had the support and experience, which, unknown to them, prepared them for leadership. When opportunity
knocked, they accepted the challenge, which was their due, only to find, like many white and male superintendents, that their time in power was limited and that turnover was high (p. 37).

2. Although they all discussed the difficulties of staying in the job, they believed that they had and were making a difference for students. Optimism was their sustaining attitude (p. 39).

3. All who survived came to realize that the superintendency is “life in a fishbowl” and accepted their new public persona (p. 40).

4. Thus bellying the popular misconception that African-American women were not as well prepared as others, their lives as young people and budding professionals amply demonstrated that they were ready for leadership (e.g. doctoral degrees, robust experience in the field, and good strong connections to their communities) and had meaningful life experiences as educators (p. 45).

Jackson’s (1996) study focused on African-American female superintendents, identifying a total of 32 African-American female superintendents in the United States during the period 1993-94. Jackson (1996) found that the majority of females had doctorates and were in their fifties or sixties. Personal factors were noted in Jackson’s study and are consistent, again, in this study.

Alston’s (1996) study concentrated on seeking to determine the reasons for the low number of African-American female superintendents. At the time of Alston’s (1996) study, only 2% of the total population of superintendents were African-American
females. There are many possibilities regarding the hindrances and entrance of African-American females into the top position in education. However, this study chose to chronicle the perceptions of the African-American females.

Carter, Glass, and Hord (1993) contend that prior to obtaining the superintendency, individuals go through a sequence of positions and experiences in a logical and ordered progression of increasing responsibility and complexity. For African Americans, specifically African-American females, the path is even more complex. Issues of racism, sexism, educational background, and mentoring are factors throughout their professional lives. Shepherd (1996) surveyed 215 African-American superintendents. His research data revealed that approximately 95% of the respondents were employed within the school district at the time of their hiring for the superintendent’s position. However, the 26.5% of African-American males and 38% of African-American females hired from within the school district sharply contrasted with Hudson’s (1991) study, which showed 51.2% males, and 33.3% females as hired from within the district. Shepherd (1996) further revealed that 97.4% of African-American superintendents were appointed by school boards in comparison with 2.6% who were elected. These ascension patterns note that social or political factors influence career ascendency patterns.

According to Shepherd (1996), political factors played an important role in the ascendency patterns of African Americans to the superintendency. Of the respondents who said that they were contacted for employment, 78% indicated that the contact person was male. When inquiring about the race of the contact person, the findings showed an
almost equal distribution between the races, with the job contact person being African American 50.6% of the time and Caucasian 49.4% of the time. This finding differs slightly from Hudson’s (1991) study which reported job contacts from African Americans at 56.3% and from Caucasians at 43.7%. This study indicates a great need for networking and an importance in having strong mentorship. Mertz and McNeely (1988) indicated that the way to the superintendent’s office is through the high school principalship, and the way to the high school principal’s office is through coaching. In an effort to examine the career paths of school superintendents in Tennessee, they posed the following questions: Is there a career path for superintendents? Do recent office-holders resemble long-standing office holders in their career paths? Do female superintendents follow the same career paths as male superintendents (p. 23)?

As a result of the study, Mertz and McNeely (1988) concluded that gender, rather than any other characteristic, was the determining factor for obtaining the superintendency. Additionally, Mertz and McNeely (1988) contended that coaching and the high school principalship provides perceived experiences that are advantageous in the selection process. Notably, 62% of the responding superintendents had coached interscholastic activities. There were 40 respondents who had not coached, and 9 of these were the female superintendents. The study further revealed that the preferred ascendancy route for females is through election rather than appointment. Finally, Mertz and McNeely (1988) noted that the Tennessee superintendents’ study suggested that there has been little change in the selection or election criteria for the superintendency.
Recurring Themes

A review of the literature on the perspectives of the career ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents reveals five recurrent themes: racism, sexism, educational background, mentoring, tenure, and the shrinking pool of aspirants. These themes express the culmination of struggles, hindrances and progress of the African-American female as she has made dynamic strides in leadership.

Racism

Racism is the notable subtle pressures of discrimination, while operating under difficult conditions. Jackson and Cibilka (1992) reported racial findings from historical case studies regarding African-American superintendents, reporting that African-American superintendents face extraordinary performance pressures for reform of school districts operating under very difficult conditions and with numerous political demands. Difficult conditions such as these are referred to as microinequities. Microinequities are the smaller injustices and sacrifices of career ascension.

According to Glass (2000), researchers say that much of the problem these days stems as much from subtle notions of gender and leadership as from outright discrimination. Alston (2000) further states that the African-American female entails a “double burden” and a world different than any of those who are not African American and female. According to Jackson (1996), African-American females inhabit a “micro” world living simultaneously within the larger macroculture, and theirs is a harder climb when compared to white men and women. Thus, racism in the arena of inequalities has
existed for decades, and a predominately known subtleness of racism in the field of superintendancy is the traditional “old boy” network.

Sexism

Sexism and gender discrimination are intertwined in definition. Gender discrimination is noted by some to be “A worry and by some not to be a problem” (Richard, 2000, p. 3). The worst thing that could possibly be said about a female administrator is that “a woman had the position the last time and it didn’t work” (Richard, 2000, p. 3). There are a lot of stereotypes ingrained in culture regarding the competency of gender ability.

According to Grogan’s (1996) research, gender was found to be a predominant factor in the female preparation for the superintendency. Grogan (1996) describes some of the conditions under which females ascend to the superintendency, including the white, gender nature of educational administration; longstanding structures of sponsorship and gatekeeping in the profession; and tensions involved in balancing personal and professional lives. These conditions make career ascension even more challenging for the African-American female superintendent.

Educational Background

African-American females are impacted with educational issues throughout their lifetime of “separate but equal.” As time progressed, African-American females struggled to identify themselves, sometimes through their work and their community. Teaching was a moral profession (Collins, 1990). In the African-American community
this meant being a visible community leader. African-American teachers bore the dual role of teaching in the classroom and teaching the African-American community.

African-American females have always found a way to integrate education and community with a spiritual connection (Collins, 1990). According to Harris (1982), African-American people define education of the oppressed and the oppressors as central tasks of Christian mission. African-American churches have been central in supporting a variety of social, political, and mentoring to the African-American community development.

**Mentoring**

According to Webster’s dictionary, a mentor is defined as “a wise and faithful teacher” (2000). African-American female superintendents are few in numbers, and mentors for the African-American females are few in numbers. Thus, the lack of “mentoring” or providing “faithful teaching” for upward mobility does not equate to what it would probably equate for their white male counterparts (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000).

Mentoring is an important aspect of any profession. As Shakeshaft (1989) notes, there is no underestimating the importance of mentors and sponsors in the socialization and success of aspiring female educational administrators. Unfortunately, the obverse also holds – that is, a lack of mentorship or sponsorship can stand in the way of promotion. Thus, because school administrators are predominantly white and male
(Jacobson, 1989), African-American females confront a "double bind" of race and gender bias as they seek mentors and sponsors from among the traditional "old-boy" network.

Tenure

Glass (2000) states that the average tenure of superintendents is five or six years, according to the Superintendents Prepared Report. The average contract salary of superintendents in 1997 was $98,100. The first is shorter tenure in urban districts—superintendent turnover is more frequent, averaging just 2.75 years, according to the Council of the Great City Schools. Fenwick and Pierce (2001, p. 30) also reports that various political dynamics of the superintendency, along with social and demographic changes, have curtailed the length of service. According to Fenwick and Pierce (2001, p. 30), various factors have contributed to the shortest superintendency terms and the need for temporary administrations at the district level of education.

Shrinking Pool of Aspirants

According to Fenwick and Pierce (2001, p. 30), fewer educators are pursuing the superintendency. Although superintendents have high salaries, assistant superintendents earn only slightly less than the superintendent does. Veteran teachers and principals are also making adequate salaries, without being in such a stressful role. Applicants weigh the stress-to-income proportion. State studies of superintendent succession indicate that professionals who would be in the superintendent applicant pool are not interested in these stressful high-ranking positions.
According to Blount (1998), white females now make up around half the ranks from which the vast majority of superintendents are drawn: central-office administrators and principals. In district central offices, 57% of the professionals are females, as are 41% of principals (Glass, 2000).

Summary

The literature review focused on four areas: Historical Perspectives of the Superintendency, The African-American Female in School Administration, Ascendancy Patterns of African-American Females, and Factors Affecting the Appointment of African-American Female Superintendents.

The following recurrent themes were identified in the literature: racism, sexism, educational background, mentoring, tenure, and the shrinking pool of aspirants. These themes were explored and provide a context for understanding the progress to the superintendency. The struggle for the African-American female superintendents have achieved some small measure of success, particularly in urban school districts. Nonetheless, she has been confronted by racism, sexism, and other hindrances along her career path. A contemporary understanding of the African-American female superintendency is predicated upon a comprehensive perspective of the historical and political context, which has shaped the role of African-American females in educational leadership. This chapter is a critical summary of research that chronicles the parallel evolution of the superintendency and African-American female educators.
CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"Called Matriarch, Emasculator and Hot Momma. Sometimes Sister, Pretty Baby, Auntie, Mammy and Girl. Called Unwed Mother, Welfare Recipient and Inner city Consumer. The Black American Woman has had to admit that while nobody knew the troubles she saw, everybody, his brother and his dog, felt qualified to explain her, even to herself." — T. Harris (1982, p. 4).

The Purpose of a Theoretical Framework

According to Myers (1996), the purpose of theory is an integrated set of principles that explain and predict observed events. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) further state that the purpose of theory provides an "inner perspective." This inner perspective is needed in this study to attempt to understand the African-American female superintendents perspective of her gender identity and ethnicity. The purpose of theory in administration and leadership in this study is not only to solve present problems in the field of education, but also to better understand the teaching, behavior, and learning perspectives of educators and, in the case of this study, leadership ascendancy patterns.

The theoretical framework for this study focused on the following theories: (1) Eagly’s (1987) Social Role Theory, (2) Myer’s (1996) theory of natural association versus networking, and (3) the researcher’s theory of "dual invisibility," which draws upon research on African-American female identity (Collins, 1990; Brunner, 1999;
Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000). These theories illustrate how mainstream knowledge excludes the female voice, especially the voice of black females.

**Dual Invisibility Theory**

The term “dual invisibility” begs and then answers the following question: Is there an African-American female superintendent identity? The African-American female’s professional identity is a paradox of visibilities and invisibilities. Her gender and race are visibly apparent externally. African-American female superintendents are rare. Therefore, she is physically visible as the school leader in a mere 54 school districts out of 15,000. Consequently it could be argued that her presence (at least numerically) is not significant. When a female possesses the position of superintendency, she is seen as invisible and powerless. Traditionally, the decision-making process and power of the position has been male-dominated. The last word spoken and the last decision made rested solely on the superintendent. Those surrounding her -- board members, staff, and the community -- seldom view her as capable.

It is apparent that skills and capabilities are needed to endure the position of superintendency, yet some see her as powerless and unable to make decisions. Consequently, African-American female superintendents have a *dual invisibility*. There is an external visibility and an internal invisibility. The dual invisibility (external and internal) is wrought because of the African-American female history of scarcity in the role of administrator.
African-American females ascend to the position of superintendency in order to make a difference or to make an impact in education. There is, nonetheless, power even in this type of role. Although she holds the position of superintendent, the traits usually ascribed to a male superintendent are the traits denied her. Whatever the reason for possessing the position, the African-American female’s role is seen as invisible. School boards challenge her superintendency in order to control her decision making power. She is seen as incapable to make decisions or to possess skills or abilities way before she is given a chance to exhibit decision-making skills. The African-American female superintendent’s decisions are routinely questioned. Her expertise is not readily accepted.

When an applicant is interviewed for the position of the superintendency, decision making skills are an important factor. The years of experience with budgets, planning and accountability are foremost in attaining the position of superintendency. However, when that applicant later becomes the superintendent and works with the constituency, taxpayers, and the school board, she is not viewed as competent. Consequently as a superintendent in a white, male-dominated field, she is internally invisible.

According to Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000), the external invisibility is a double jeopardy of gender and race. The dual invisibility is wrought because of her history of scarcity in the role of administrator. There are very few females in school leadership, even fewer African-American females. Sometimes African-American men or women obtain positions by using their contacts to acquire ascension (Shepherd, 1996). According to Hudson (1991), however, African-American females are not as likely to be hired as superintendents because they are unable to build strong, informal job contact
strong, informal job contact systems based on professional ties. Glass (1992) claimed that the public school superintendent is easily the most male-dominated positions out of any of the executive professions, and if an African-American female is not seen as a part of the "old boy" network, then she is invisible. If an African-American female is not seen within the professional system of education as a visible candidate, then she remains invisible.

According to Hudson (1991), African-American females are not likely to be candidates because of a lack of developing personal network among groups likely to become potential employers. Thus, African-American females are not viewed as a viable applicant for the superintendency.

According to Ortiz (2000), ethnicity and gender, not competency, were the primary factors for promotions within education. Ortiz (2000) also points out that while many white men are competent, no one questions their authority or "power" to carry out an administrative job. This is in contrast to the constant questioning and challenge of every decision made by an administrator, female or black (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000). The African-American female's lack of "power" to carry out an administrative job and to make decisions defines what is referred to in this study as the internal invisibility of mind of power.

Shakeshaft (1989) claims that African-American females are uncomfortable using power: "She cares for others, she placates, she pleases, yet she has to learn how to use power effectively" (p. 105). Do females, whites, and minorities have to embrace traditional leadership styles, or are they able to do things differently and develop their
own styles? To be nurturing or not to be nurturing, that is the question. To be nurturing involves not only the ability to stroke, flatter, appease, but to present the clear vision of truth. Traditionally speaking, African-American females are nurturers. According to Noddings (1984), caring that is seen as weakness is actually a strength in the career ascension of the female. Traditionally, it is more popular when one has power to display a lack of concern and a lack of any type of nurturance. On the other hand, to show an act of caring in leadership is to show some sort of weakness in your character and decision-making. Yet in myths and folklore, kindness to animals or strangers is enjoined, and heroes are rewarded for pausing on their journeys to care for those in need (Noddings, 1984).

One of the strong leadership characteristics of the African-American female superintendent is that she is caring and nurturant, and in her quest for ascension displays an ethic of care (Bateson, 1990). Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000) examine many cases of female leaders engaging in leadership informed by an ethic of care. In this study, the females each have their own approaches to mentoring and leadership, undergirded by a belief that they are serving as leaders out of a true concern for children.

Social Role Theory

The Social Role Theory is the process by which biological and cultural factors interact. Eagly (1987) theorizes that a variety of factors, including biological influences and childhood socialization predispose a sexual division of labor. Eagly (1987) goes on to explain the social roles:
of labor. Men tend to be found in roles demanding social
and physical power, and women in more nurturant roles.
Each sex tends to exhibit the behaviors expected of those
who fill such roles and to have their skills and beliefs
shaped accordingly. (p. 226)

During the process of social role playing, the African-American female
superintendent assumes an invisible identity. While it is acceptable for a male
counterpart to invite his guest out for an evening of social drinking, it may not be
acceptable for the female colleague. Society disposes a certain behavior upon females
that it does not require from males. These predispositions of sexual division in the labor
arena greatly influence the invisible identity of the African-American female. This
invisibility is an identity that she creates with her own values and norms, and an identity
seen through social and cultural aspects. In society, culture subtly, yet powerfully, affects
our attitudes and our viewpoints. Culture is not independent of a biological invisibility.
If other people’s expectations shape and influence us, then that is a part of the
socialization process of the Social Role Theory.

Biology and culture interact and influence the environment of the African-
American female superintendent. People respond differently to a male in the role of
superintendency than to a female in that same role. The African-American female
superintendent, therefore, is constantly being shaped by the demanding social roles placed
upon her.
Natural Association versus Networking

The average man and woman differ somewhat in social connectedness, empathy, social power, and aggressiveness (Swim, 1994). According to Gilligan (1982), females more than men give priority to relationships. These differences surface in childhood. Boys strive for independence; they define their identity in separation from the caregiver, usually their mother. Girls welcome interdependence; they define their identity through their social connections. Boys’ play often involves group activity. Girls’ play occurs in smaller groups, with less aggression, more sharing, more imitation of relationships, more intimate discussion (Tannen, 1990).

Beck (1994) further states that the conventional wisdom that females are moral leaders is known as an ethic of care. Females are far more likely to describe themselves as having empathy, as being able to feel what someone else feels – to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Females tend to be better at reading others’ emotions. Women’s sensitivity to nonverbal cues helps explain their greater emotional responsiveness (Gilligan, 1982) in both depressing and joyful situations.

Men are socially dominant. Men’s style of communicating undergirds their social power. Men tend to be directive; females tend to be democratic (Eagly, 1987). Men tend to excel as directive, task-focused leaders (Myers, 1996). People will accept a man’s “strong, assertive” leadership more readily than a woman’s “pushy, aggressive” leadership. Men’s conversational style reflects their concern for independence, women’s for connectedness. Men are more likely to act as powerful people often do – talking
leadership. Men's conversational style reflects their concern for independence, women's for connectedness. Men are more likely to act as powerful people often do—talking assertively, interrupting, touching with the hand, staring more, smiling less (Myers, 1996).

Networking creates visibility. According to Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000), the close mentoring which involves access to networking, a system or people, resources and assistance available has not yet been established for African-American females. This is a disadvantage to minorities. Networking is essential to positive leadership experiences.

Females know that gender bias exists. Swim (1994) and her co-researchers found a subtle sexism that parallels subtle racism. Myers (1995) implies that there is a social definition of who one is—her race, religion, sex, and academic status. The circle that includes "us" (the ingroup) excludes "them" (the outgroup). Thus, the mere experience of being formed into groups may promote ingroup bias. Females also are more prone to ingroup bias when their group is small relative to the outgroup (Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992).

When females are part of a small group surrounded by a larger group, females are also more conscious of their group membership. When their ingroup is the majority, females think less about it. Because females tend to evaluate themselves partly by their group membership, seeing their own groups as superior helps them feel good about themselves.
she is an African-American female prone to network, then she begins to create a visibility
for herself. Although it is not a traditional role that females are interdependent, the
African-American female can learn a new way of team sharing, forming relationships,
and creating a positive social identity.

Identification of the African-American Female

Who is the African-American female? How is she socially defined? Collins’s
(1990) comments reveal the historical and societal cubbyholes African-American females
have been shoved. The “categorical slander and shoddy attempts at truth” leave little
room, as Collins suggests (1990), for realistic individualistic perceptions of African-
American females, let alone as professionals (p. 46).

According to Collins (1990), one category is that of domestic, maid, or worker in
the white woman’s house. Collins (1990) further states that its integral place in African-
American experience suggests that the role or image of the African-American woman as
domestic is the basic historical conception from which other images and stereotypes have
grown. Dependency on service pans, the name for leftover food domestic workers were
given to take home to their families, foreshadows the dependency of welfare, for certainly
that paternalistic phenomenon influenced social expectations. Gardiner, Enomoto, and
Grogan (2000) argue that females are considered a “novelty,” and must deal with the
hardships and difficulties of being considered different and unusual in a patronizing way.
This is especially true for who African-American females are often quickly categorized.
Presentation and Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in the study:

* African-American female: a female whose roots derive from African descent or culture; contemporary title for black Americans.

* Appointed: job placement by preference of employer.

* Career ascendency patterns: the progression of job mobility reoccurring sequential order of progression in a job.

* Career factors: factors which include professional preparation, administrative experience, and occupational experiences.

* Elected: job placement by voting procedures.

* Gender: the characteristics, whether biologically or socially influenced, by which people define male and female.

* Gender role: a set of behavior expectations (norms) for males or females.

* Macroinequities: larger injustices and sacrifices that are capable of limiting access to higher positions.

* Mentor: a willing educator who nurtures another educator of perhaps lower career ascension along with her career.

* Microinequities: small injustices and sacrifices that are capable of jeopardizing/altering careers.

* Personal factors: Personal factors include age, gender, religious preference, educational background of the father, educational background of the mother, with whom
the applicant lived as a child, with whom the applicant felt closest to as a child, birth order and marital status.

*Racism:* the notable subtle pressures of discrimination, while operating under difficult conditions.

*Retardation of recognition:* consistent denial of awards and recognition, such as salary, recognition awards, and various other awards of noteworthiness.

*Sexism:* discrimination against the biological characteristics of a person.

*School superintendent:* the chief administrator of a school district. Usually hired by the district school board, the superintendent implements board policies in each district school and coordinates all school programs within the district.

*Sociopolitical factors:* factors that the applicant related to as her environmental, cultural, social or political influences that may have enhanced her selection to the role of superintendent.

*Stereotype vulnerability:* a disruptive apprehension that one will verify a negative stereotype.

Relationship of Selected Factors to the Ascendancy

One of the highest-ranking public school officials is the superintendent. The selection of a superintendent is governed by a number of selected factors such as sociopolitical involvement, educational background, sound career preparation, gender, race, and mentoring relationships.
This study focused on the selected factors that determined the career ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents. There was one selected factor, the career ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents, which linked relationship to five other selected factors: personal factors, educational factors, career factors, sociopolitical factors, and mentoring, as it is illustrated below in Figure 1. Figure 1 denotes the relationship of selected factors to the ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents. The study sought to determine if the perspectives of the career ascendancy patterns of African-American females linked relationships to each of the five selected factors.

Figure 1. Relationship of Selected Factors to the Ascendancy Patterns of African-American Female Superintendents
Limitations of the Study

Three basic limitations for this study were (1) access to African-American female superintendents, (2) time restraints, and (3) having a small sample of human subjects. The research for this study was conducted via an interview guide, which was mailed to African-American female superintendents in the United States. The American Association of School Administrators did not possess an address list of African-American female superintendents; therefore, the mailing list for the interview guide was compiled solely from information provided by the State Departments of Education of each United States via United States mail and e-mail. The National Alliance of African-American School Educators (NABSE) was contacted, but they stated that they did not have an up to date listing of African-American female superintendents due to the turnover rate.

Due to time restraints, in-depth phone interviews were not possible with all respondents. Respondents were asked in the Cover Letter (Appendix A) to voluntarily agree to phone interviews. The study examined in detail the characteristics and ascension patterns made by African-American female superintendents.

Fifty-four African-American female superintendents were invited to participate in the study. This could have represented a limitation to the study. According to Shepherd's (1996) research, the position of superintendency is a career position with an extremely high turnover rate, and it is difficult to locate and gather data.
Summary

According to Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000), it is acceptable for men to be career-oriented and focus on their own career advancement, but females feel compelled to claim higher moral causes and altruism. They are more likely to describe themselves as working for instructional improvement, or for children, rather than themselves.

All of the theories social role theory, natural association versus networking, dual invisibilities, and the identification of the African-American female mentioned in this chapter are helpful in gaining a clear understanding in regards to the identity of the African-American female superintendent. The African-American female, if she is to ascend in her career, must move beyond natural associations and create a working relationship with various groups surrounding the network of superintendency. The African-American female must also understand her past in order to achieve success in the future.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

Concerned with revealing the social factors involved in the career ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents, this study sought to determine the ascendancy patterns of African-American females who served as superintendents from 2000-2001. As stated earlier in the study, several personal factors, educational factors, career factors, and mentoring factors appeared to influence the ascendancy patterns for superintendency. This study sought to explore patterns of career ascendancy as perceived by African-American female superintendents.

The research design selected for this study was a qualitative, descriptive design to identify the experiences and perspectives of African-American female superintendents. In this study, the link between personal factors, educational factors, career factors, sociopolitical factors, and mentoring were examined. The Robison (1992) interview guide and Winthrop 2001 interview guide were the primary instruments. The data were gathered from the Robison (1992) interview guide, the Winthrop 2001 phone interview guide, along with document analysis. The results of the responses to the Robison (1992) interview guide and the Winthrop 2001 phone interview guides were reviewed, coded, and analyzed. The data from this study were organized in phases:
Phase 1. Names and addresses of African-American female superintendents were secured from a variety of sources (AASA, NABSE, etc.), including a list from each State Department of Educational Statistics (2000-2001) of African-American female superintendents in the United States.

Phase 2. Superintendents were contacted via mail and asked to participate in the study by completing the Robinson (1992) questionnaire. The cover letter contained a note of confidentiality (Appendix A).

Phase 3. After two weeks, 22 superintendents agreed to participate and returned their completed questionnaire.

Phase 4. To increase participation, a follow-up letter was mailed to non-respondents. Additional follow-ups were made via Internet and fax.

Phase 5. After six months, there were a total of 46 African-American female superintendents who agreed to participate by completing the Robison (1992) questionnaire.

Phase 6. With the use of a speaker phone and a tape recorder, Bogdan and Biklen (1998), the researcher used the Winthrop 2001 phone interview guide to speak with 27 out of the 46 identified African-American female superintendents who voluntarily participated in this study.

Phase 7. Oral interviews were transcribed.

Phase 8. Responses to questionnaires/interview guides were coded and categorized.
Participant/Site Selection

Data obtained from the National Association of African-American School Educators (NABSE) (2000) alone were inadequate due to the fact that the information affordable was no longer valid due to the high turnover rate of superintendents. Another attempt was made to identify all African-American female superintendents through the American Association of School Educators (AASA, 2000). Once again the data were outdated and inadequate to use as a final mailing source. The next attempt was that of collecting data from each state through the use of mail, phone calls, Internet and fax queries. This proved to be successful. Although the process was expensive in nature, (due to the expense of mail, phone and fax charges), the data received was helpful in contacting the 54 African-American female superintendents in the United States.

The study focused on the public school system. Of the 54 African-American female superintendents identified across the United States, 46 participated in this study. Of the respondents, 100% of all respondents were female. The sex and race items were left on the interview guide due to the limitation factor that there were no valid data banks in which to discern gender, as well as race. In validating the mailing lists from different sources, such as NABSE, AASA, and State Departmental Statistics in Education, 2000-2001, there were men with the name of “Darlene.” Therefore, the sex and race items on the interview guide remained for validation of respondents.

A composite profile of the identified 46 participants is an African-American female in her fifty to mid-fifties, married, possessing a doctorate degree, and the sole
officer of a school district enrolling between 1,001 and 3,000 urban students, with 7-10 schools in the district.

Working with Human Subjects

Study participants were informed in a cover letter that the collected data would be used confidentially in a dissertation with their permission.

Data Collection

Ann Robison (1992) developed an interview guide especially targeted to selected African-American females in the state of Georgia. The Robison (1992) interview guide was used as an introduction to a Winthrop 2001 phone interview. A cover letter explaining the study in detail and an opportunity to participate further was included in the mailing. The Robison (1992) interview guide and Winthrop 2001 interview guide examined selected factors, all of which determined the organization of this study. They include: (1) personal factors, (2) educational background factors, (3) occupational experience factors, and (4) mentoring factors. The first section of the Robison (1992) interview guide was designed to obtain demographic information and educational background. There were seven open-ended questions that were specifically designed to give the female superintendents a voice. Other questions dealt with occupational information, career factors, mentoring, and the perspectives of the black females regarding the position of the superintendency.

Approximately 54 African-American female superintendents were asked to participate in the study. Of that number, 46 responded to the interview guide, and 27 of
the 46 agreed to phone interviews. In order to collect data primarily focused on the
African-American female, it was necessary to assemble an instrument that spoke to the
African-American female experience in superintendency. The Winthrop 2001 instrument
was designed to obtain open-ended responses from the African-American female
superintendents in order to gain an in-depth perspective of their experiences.

Data Analysis

This section presents an analysis of the data that were obtained from the Robison
(1992) interview guide and Winthrop 2001 interview guide returned by the 46 African-
American female superintendents. The Robison (1992) interview guide and the Winthrop
2001 phone interview guides were organized into phases:

Phase 1. The questionnaires were returned and reviewed.

Phase 2. The data were coded and categorized.

Phase 3. Data were analyzed in order to identify emergent themes.

Phase 4. Follow-up letters were sent to non-respondents.

Phase 5. The researcher contacted by phone/fax/e-mail respondents who agreed
to be interviewed.

Phase 6. Data were transcribed following the phone interview.

Phase 7. Data from the phone interviews were coded and categorized.

Phase 8. Data were analyzed and emergent themes were identified.

Phase 9. Transcribed data were sent to participants for member checks.

Phase 10. The data were written-up.
As explained in Chapter I, the purpose of the study was to chronicle the perceptions of African-American female superintendents as they relate to their career ascendancy. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) also note that the ultimate goal of qualitative research is to make general statements about relationships among categories by discovering patterns in the data. Ordering categories can be done in several ways to discover patterns. For this study, categories were organized based upon the following selected factors: personal factors, educational factors, career factors, sociopolitical factors, and mentoring factors.

Data Trustworthiness/Credibility

In order to ensure instrument validity, there was a pilot of the interview guide used by Robison in 1992. However, another pilot of both instruments was conducted. The Robison (1992) interview guide and the Winthrop 2001 interview guide were validated through a panel of superintendents currently serving in the superintendency. The Robison (1992) questionnaire and Winthrop 2001 interview guide were sent to an expert in the field, (Dr. Slan, a current superintendent) in order to comment on the organizational content of the instrument.

The superintendents completed the instrument and added critical input in order to add credibility to the research findings. Member checks were conducted once all interview guides were returned and analyzed. Experts in the field (three current superintendents) conducted member checks regarding the recurring themes/categories, perceptions, and conclusions via phone, fax and e-mail. This was done in order to
validate the instrument and to determine if the transcription were accurate. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this technique is the most important in establishing credibility. The data from the Robison (1992) guide were organized into two sections. The first section was a description of the sample, and the second section was a qualitative analysis of the findings. The samples were described using basic qualitative research methods including interviews. The open-ended questions were described using narratives.

For this study, the first survey identified 54 African-American female superintendents. The second survey/interview involved 27 of the 54 identified African-American female superintendents. They were interviewed using a tape recorder, and the data were later transcribed. Primary documents were obtained from each district regarding the superintendents district size, pupil information, and governing statistics. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “each piece of information the study should be expanded by at least one other source, such as a second interview or a second method.” Lincoln and Guba (1985) further state that “single items of information contribute little to an understanding of the context of the study unless they are enriched through triangulation” (p. 48). The triangulation of this study resulted in the first survey of the Robison (1992) interview guide, the second survey, which was the survey/phone interviews, and countless documentation from state departments of education regarding each superintendent and her school district information. Denzin (1970) states that triangulation “leads to credibility by using different or multiple sources of data” (p. 46).

In this study, the researcher was careful to focus on relevant matters and avoid the danger of bias. According to Erlandson et al. (1993), the researcher must “find ways to
control the biases that do not inhibit the flow of pertinent information. Relevance cannot be sacrificed for the sake of rigor” (p. 53).

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), qualitative dialogue techniques hold the purpose of rendering content that will teach through supplying data as a result of the dialogue. The researcher renders penetrating conversations and talks as planned; also the researcher records ideas, strategies, reflections, as well as note patterns that emerge (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 56).

The findings, conclusions, and recommendations were presented appropriately in a way that would reveal the career ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents who participated in the study.

Summary

This chapter explained the methodology and procedures that were used for examining the ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents in the United States. The Robison (1992) interview guide and Winthrop 2001 interview guide were constructed with the African-American female superintendent in mind and spoke to the factors that this study is focused on: personal factors, educational background, sociopolitical factors, career factors, and mentoring factors. The research methods and procedures were qualitative analysis using patterns, perspectives and visual representation.

This research was based on two interview guides: the Robison (1992) and the Winthrop 2001 interview guides were mailed to 54 identified African-American female
superintendents. The Robison (1992) interview guide used for the analysis of this data was a 37-item guide. The interview guide drew an 80% return rate of 46 respondents. The Winthrop 2001 interview guide was conducted via telephone, taped and transcribed with 27 of the 46 participants. The Winthrop 2001 interview guide consisted of open-ended questions regarding career ascendency factors.

The data from the interview guide was presented in visual presentation of tables, as well as narrative perspective of the African-American female superintendents. The tables were designed to display the findings of the study relative to the selected factors: personal factors, educational factors, career factors (occupational experience), sociopolitical factors, and mentoring. The narrative served as a vehicle to illuminate the perceptions of the participants through rich description.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Data were analyzed and the following themes emerged: racism/sexism, private life vs. career, attainment of terminal degree of African-American female superintendents, nurturance and caring, servitude leadership, role power, mobility, plural politics, retardation of recognition, microinequities/macroinequities, the benefits of mentoring, and occupational progression. These themes specifically addressed research questions posed. This chapter is organized into seven sections. Each section identifies the research questions aligned with the respective theme. Superintendents’ responses are provided to justify the creation of the theme and to support the interpretation of participant’s perceptions.

In determining the ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents there were five research questions:

1. How do African-American females perceive the selected personal factors of the career ascendancy patterns to the superintendency?

2. How do African-American females perceive the selected educational factors of the career ascendancy patterns to the superintendency?

3. How do African-American females perceive the selected career factors of the career ascendancy patterns to the superintendency?
4. How do African-American females perceive the selected sociopolitical factors of the career ascendency patterns of the superintendency?

5. How do African-American females perceive the selected mentoring factors of the career ascendency patterns of the superintendency?

The responses from the African-American female superintendents provide a vivid picture of their career growth. Themes were evolved to link relationships. The analysis of data during its collection required the coding of data according to common emerging categories.

Personal Factors

Racism/sexism: The theme “racism/sexism” was defined as an appearance of subtle discrimination, indifference, and disregard in relationship to gender and race. Examples of participants’ comments included the following:

Being female and being African American have been two factors that have prevented my progress in my career.

(Superintendent 1)

The African-American female superintendents commented that there were two factors that hindered or that presented a dynamic challenge for their career ascension. Their comments were:

There are two things that have hindered my career: being a female and being African American. I recognize that I am
treated and viewed differently because I am African American and female. (Superintendent 7)

Many times while climbing to this present position any votes taken for appointments were made along racial lines. (Superintendent 32)

One superintendent comments on the overt racism when applying for a position:

I was asked by a search firm how much I made. I was told that as a female I could not expect to be superintendent in a district. Most districts aren’t even taking applications from women, let alone a woman of color. Note: This was a reputable, large search firm. (Superintendent 24)

Clearly stated, racism and sexism are two main factors in the ascension to the superintendency that challenge African-American female superintendents. To network is a challenge, but for those superintendents who network and are social, gender and race are an issue. According to Montenegro (1993), organizations apply deliberate and unconscious tactics to the socialization of new members that result in different types of responses.

For those superintendents whose focus is more concentrated on the role of the office and duties of the superintendency, the social perception is neither gender nor race. It is an internal challenge of empowerment. These African-American female superintendents have to work doubly hard on self-esteem, empowerment to others, talents
and concentration to details. One superintendent states, “I always have to be better, smarter, faster, more articulate” (Superintendent 17).

Private life vs. career: The theme “private life vs. career” is defined as the public life of an African-American female superintendent challenged by a contrasting private life. Table B1 (Appendix B) displays demographic information regarding the participants in this study. The African-American female superintendents who participated in this study come from varying backgrounds, yet share a common thread when it comes to the struggle of private life versus career. When considering the restrictions that female superintendents face in their public and private lives, it is apparent that female superintendents were devoted to their work. Examples of the participants’ comments for this theme included:

I did at one point in my life have to choose between my fiancé’ and my career. (Superintendent 19)

Raising a family and giving valuable time to my spouse has prevented me to progress in my career.

Making a sacrifice in her private life, yet balancing her career has been a challenge for most African-American female superintendents. Many are afforded opportunities, but cannot always respond to them:

I gave up at least four opportunities to move into higher administrative positions in order to support my husband. He is
a minister, and we moved to six different places from 1980 to 1992. Now he is very supportive of me. (Superintendent 10)

Working long hours with board members and school district communities bears a great personal impact on African-American female superintendents’ private time:

As a female, I have given up a personal life. I don’t have to act dumber than board members, but it is important for some to feel smarter. Too much publicity or recognition causes some to feel inferior and insecure. (Superintendent 17)

I lived away from my children for a while. Public life leaves not much private time. There are tough decisions that can jeopardize friendships. (Superintendent 8)

There were many times that I had neither quality nor quantity time with my husband and daughter let alone my mother and extended family members. I also found more often than not that this is still a “male dominated” position in our nation. (Superintendent 7)

There is a constant struggle to balance personal and professional lives. (Superintendent 11)
Educational Factors

*Attainment of terminal degree of African-American female superintendents:* The African-American female superintendents of this study generally agree that a doctorate in administration will help them secure management positions (see Appendix B, Table B2). This study reveals that of the 46 respondents, 36 of the respondents attained a doctoral degree. The respondents articulate the benefits they expected from a doctorate:

I originally entered the field of administration to have a greater impact on the role in education. I have attained a doctorate degree. (Superintendent 18)

I'm sure that my higher degree was instrumental in attaining my current position of superintendent. There are still a lot of political reasons that I waited so long to get it...sometimes I think that I could have done without it, if I had known the politics earlier on. (Superintendent 22)

The educational factors involved in the ascension of the superintendency are sometimes affected by a strong political network. In these cases, it is not enough to just have a doctorate’s degree. Respondents comment:

There is a very strong political obligation for the ‘Old Boys’ network. Having a doctorate’s degree helps. (Superintendent 6)
It is interesting how an African-American female can work so hard to attain a higher degree, but sometimes not even be able to get an interview. (Superintendent 16)

Of the institutions granting doctorates to the 46 African-American female superintendent respondents, they were more likely to attend higher institutions in the Northern and Midwest Regions.

Occupational/Career Factors

Nurturance and caring: The theme “nurturance and caring” is defined as the conception that female leaders are moral leaders with strong emphasis on what is known as an ethic of care (Noddings, 1984; Beck, 1994). Examples of participants’ comments included the following:

I became interested in helping students to read.

(Superintendent 17)

The respondents of this study exemplified that their entrance and goal in leadership was to make a difference and to share their talents, skills, and expectations with those who surrounded them. The respondents comment upon their dedication of nurturing:

Staff relationships, skills levels, no technology, no staff
development of teachers were not good...I went to work right away. I wrote a grant. I’m working on strategies on embracing
the person, and nurturing the person to want to be a part of the team. (Superintendent 26)

I wanted an opportunity to make a difference for students placed at risk. (Superintendent 41)

I have high expectations of traditional leadership. It barely exists today. (Superintendent 8)

Servitude leadership: The theme “servitude leadership is defined as the “attitude” of serving others with humble power (see Appendix B, Tables B3-B10). Examples of the conceptual meanings for this theme include “opening doors,” “making a difference,” and “opportunity to serve.”

Examples of participants’ comments included the following:

Going into administration afforded me the opportunity to serve.

(Superintendent 17)

The truth of the matter in serving others is: I don’t care where you work and who you are, if you are not happy, you are not going to produce. It’s the bottom line. I want all of my employees to be happy. (Superintendent 43)

The desire to make a difference is why this superintendent made her route to the superintendency from a position of college instructor. She entered public school administration as a project director:
I wanted to have a positive effect on K-12 education. I view my appointment to the superintendency as an open door to serve others. (Superintendent 18)

*Role power:* The theme “role power” is defined as a female superintendent’s empowerment of her surroundings as a leader. Examples of this concept included: “brilliance in position,” “surprising business sense,” and “gender success struggles.”

Examples of participants’ comments include the following:

A mentor who said I could have a greater impact on more children was the reason that I decided to go into administration.

(Superintendent 11)

One superintendent was requested by others to apply for various positions within her career. They felt that she had political savvy and matchless business skills. In the process of networking from one position to another, the superintendent experienced a divorce and decided to relocate to another area. She shares:

I would not follow this career track if I could start over. The personal sacrifice has been too great. No one in educational administration has an easy job, but female administrators have a very difficult role. We are not part of the ‘good-old-boys’ system, and are often isolated and not appreciated. The conflict between doing what is right and what boards of education vote is a constant source of stress. Until educators run education, the stressors will get greater. (Superintendent 44)
Other examples of role power that exemplifies the ability and skills of the participants include the following participant comments:

I’ve had 22 years of planning and problem solving. I am capable of leading out. And, I am able to help others to lead. (Superintendent 14)

The only thing that will drive my decision-making process will be what I feel is best for the child. (Superintendent 29)

Respondents commented on their ability to manage the role of superintendency and surviving in a male-dominated field. Their responses included:

I had managed budgets before. You want to be able to ask your financier to provide a ledger. I can fire people if I need to. I had to go to the taxpayers to float a million dollar tax bill. (Superintendent 45)

Being a female in a male dominated profession, I’ve had to prove my ability with each group I’ve worked with. (Superintendent 8)

It is extremely difficult being a female superintendent as the field is male-dominated. (Superintendent 34)

More is required for me to prove myself worthy. (Superintendent 17)
Mobility: The theme "mobility" is defined as the geographical freedom to progress. Examples of conceptual meanings for this theme included "write your own ticket."

Examples of participants' comments included the following:

This position is all about mobility – geography. If you can't uproot and go, you won't progress. (Superintendent 34)

On the flipside, when you have a mate who is successful, geography is always involved. A successful mate causes your own career to uproot. (Superintendent 42)

One superintendent comments on leaving a larger school district and deliberately choosing a smaller school district:

Working in smaller, less desirable districts and administrative positions helps to gain experience that helps with ultimate promotion. (Superintendent 54)

Females need to possess a willingness to move and not be geographically confined. (Superintendent 1)

Females should find a smaller district in order to build up experience and have a greater challenge to make a difference.
Sociopolitical Factors

*Plural politics:* “Plural politics” was defined as a dual political system with two sets of rules. Examples of conceptual meanings for this theme included “old boy network” and “double denial.”

Examples of participants’ comments included the following: “The ‘old boy’ network is the ingroup where superintendents hire friends until I proved my value to the system. There are politics” (Superintendent 1). The superintendent cheerfully responded that she did not live life in a fashion on denials. She simply wanted to look on the bright side of things. She responded:

I just keep pressing on, despite the downfalls. I focus on the positive and believe that the power to succeed is within us.

(Superintendent 24)

Other examples of participants’ comments included the following:

My mentor was representative of the district’s informal power structure. He was the man behind the scenes and I was his candidate. I realized what was going on and cultivated the friendship. That is what I mean by political overtones.

Superintendents and boards were not comfortable with women administrators in the 60s and 70s. I have seen a great increase in women superintendents, assistant and associate superintendents over the past six years. (Superintendent 11)
I feel that the greatest hindrance has been the politics of the position. (Superintendent 13)

The politics are subtle, yet apparent. (Superintendent 43)

*Retardation of recognition*: Responses to the question, “What particular professional experiences can you attribute to being African American and female?” revealed the theme “retardation of recognition.” Retardation of recognition was defined as the consistent absence of praise and rewards. Data revealed that there was a retardation of recognition that existed in the leadership ranks:

I have been awarded recognition, as one of my professional experiences. However the ridicule that I had to go through because of my recognition and bonuses made me question whether or not it was worth it. (Superintendent 48)

Some respondents appear to believe that the salary or bonuses they receive are not commensurate to their male colleagues. Examples of participants' comments included the following: “I work for far less money than I am worth” (Superintendent 17).

There is a great complacency on the part of superiors to show recognition. There are a lot of expectations of traditional leadership, but these expectations do not include being African American and female. Other examples of participants’ comments include:

I do not receive any type of recognition, nor consolation for representing my race/gender. A simple ‘pat on the back’ is withheld from me. (Superintendent 47)
Microinequities and macroinequities: The queries, “Please comment on the compromises and accommodations you have made in your career choice” and “Please mention any small or great inequities that you may have faced as you made your way to your present position,” revealed the theme of “microinequities and macroinequities.” Examples of participants’ comments included the following:

The only accommodation(s) I’ve made were related solely to the fact that my husband was active duty military. I moved when he moved, twice moving without a job. On the first occasion, it was eight months before I found employment; on the second, it was four months. However, I cannot say that my career suffered in any way. I firmly believe (1) all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord and are the called according to His purpose, and (2) if you are obedient and give 10% of your first fruits, He (the Lord) will bless you to the point of your cup overflowing! (Superintendent 1)

Having to give into board wishes even when they are wrong and you are right is a compromise for the position of superintendency. (Superintendent 13)

Based on an array of microinequities (small injustices/sacrifices) and macroinequities (greater injustices/sacrifices) they have encountered throughout their career, the African-American female superintendents of this study admit a lack of
progression. These professional delays are also due to compromises made along their career paths. When an applicant for the superintendency has an issue of mobility, it does not carry the same weight for a married woman as it would a single woman. It appears that most of the African-American female superintendents have to deal with family issues and spousal careers. Therefore, rejecting an offer for a more lucrative position (e.g. larger country/district) would be a sacrifice that married females face. Married respondents consider a move in their career a macroinequity when compared with that of a single respondent who does not have to deal with negatively affecting their husband’s job:

(Married respondent): I have progressed. Raising a family and giving valuable time to my spouse has prevented me in my career. This position is all about mobility – geography.

(Superintendent 15)

Although single females seem open to future career moves, they do admit to their own microinequities of the profession. For these females, although they may express a willingness to move, they realize they do so at some personal cost:

(Single respondent): Nothing prevented me from progressing. I did at one point in my life have to choose between my fiancé.

...experiences early in your opportunities.
Microinequities and macroinequities can be exemplified in the comments that the respondents made in regards to the compromises and accommodations during their career:

As a married African-American female, I have given up a personal life. I don’t have to act dumber than board members do but it is important for some to feel smarter. Too much publicity or recognition causes some to feel inferior and insecure. (Superintendent 28)

African-American female superintendents identified injustices when it comes to salary:

I have compromised a benefit package that is not quite as lucrative as some. The greatest compromise that I have made is with my salary. I work for far less money than I am worth, although I’ve made the compromises. (Superintendent 17)

The small and the great inequities, the microinequities, and the macroinequities are what all of the African-American female superintendents face on their ascension to the top educational position. According to Alston (1996), black females inhabit a “micro” world living simultaneously within the larger macroculture, and theirs is a harder climb when compared to white men and women. Respondents comment on what they have faced on their way:
Many times while climbing to this present position votes were
taken for appointments that were made along racial lines.

(Superintendent 19)

Mentoring Factors

*The benefits of mentoring:* The theme “the benefits of mentoring” illustrates the
great importance of having a role model, or significant one in which to lead and direct in
the career ascension (see Appendix B, Table B-11).

Tied closely to the scarcity of African-American superintendents is the brevity of
female role models in educational administration. As more and more females enter the
leadership roles in education, the importance of role models should change. At times, the
respondents seem to find themselves in isolation due to the lack of positive mentors to
show the way. The majority of respondents had a mentor, and 40 of those mentors were
male. It would also appear that the 40 females whose mentors were male moved more
rapidly than those whose mentors were female through the ascension route to the
superintendency. The numbers further reveal that few African-American females are
currently employed in public school management and lack same-sex representatives upon
which to pattern their career goals. Some African-American females find themselves
questioning not only their desire to be administrators, but their ability to perform as
administrators once hired.

The African-American female respondents of this study appear to find the
connection with an established sponsor or mentor important throughout their career
aspirations. Their mentors encouraged and supported them throughout their profession. From the perspectives of the respondents, their mentors strongly supported and encouraged the them during transitions and made every effort to bring out their talents and efforts so that they could be seen by others. Examples of participants’ comments included the following:

If your mentor, perhaps, is a white male with connections, you can write your ticket anywhere you want to go. It’s whom you know and what you know. The two go hand in hand. (Superintendent 24)

Mentors encouraged me and gave me opportunities to gain experience in a number of areas. This was in the process of becoming assistant principal and principal. (Superintendent 38)

They came together to support my efforts, share my successes and talents and convey that I could do this job and much more. (Superintendent 20)

The African-American superintendents seem to utilize a network system of mentors to provide the necessary experiences pursuant to a superintendency. The majority of African-American superintendents noted that a mentor was in their immediate work settings – usually male.
My mentors are encouraging, supportive, and trusting of my abilities. (Superintendent 14)

There is a difficult role of “tokenism” in any organization. When I was hired, my mentor was my immediate supervisor. (Superintendent 11)

Although a formal mentoring relationship was not established, I learned a lot from him and considered him a role model. I am aware he recommended me to serve on at least one advisory panel. I think that the greatest inequity would be the lack of previous females in similar roles. (Superintendent 11)

I’ve had to deal with the fact that race and sex have hindered me in my career. I am now a mentor to others. (Superintendent 10)

Generally, the role of a mentor is the role of supporter, comforter, guide, and advocate:

My mentor is my sounding board and advisor. (Superintendent 21)

My mentor has taught me the importance of being moral/ethical, student-centered, service oriented, and maintained a sense of humor in all that I do. (Superintendent 25)
My other mentor has been a great reference for other positions.

(Superintendent 12)

*Occupational progression.* This theme shows the progression of the respondents’ career ascension (see Appendix B, Tables B3-B10).

Most respondents surveyed began their educational careers as classroom teachers. The majority of the respondents were primarily located at an elementary school before becoming administrators. The majority of superintendents bypassed the principalship altogether, moving directly from classroom teacher to central office and subsequently to the superintendency. Some of the superintendents began as consultants, earning central office experience then moving to the superintendency. Other respondents followed the path of teacher to elementary principalship to superintendency. Other respondents followed another path from the ascendancy of teacher, to assistant principal, to secondary administration, to central office, and finally, to the superintendency. The survey reveals that 40 of the 46 African-American female superintendents respondents were appointed to their position by the Board of Education of their school district.

Contrary to the Alston (1996) study, this study demonstrates that the career ascendancy patterns for the 46 African-American female superintendents is not a classic career ascendancy pattern of teacher, elementary school principalship, central office, and superintendency. The majority of females have bypassed the elementary administration to serve in the central office. The majority of respondents appear to have had no occupational experience as an assistant principal. The data further revealed that some of the respondents were middle school or junior high school assistant principals. The survey
further shows that some of the respondents were high school assistant principals (see Appendix B, Tables B4 and B5). The remaining data revealed that some of the respondents started their career ascension as curriculum directors for a school for the mentally retarded.

The mean number of years that any African-American female superintendent served in this study as Assistant Principal was 1 year (see Appendix B, Table B-5). According to this study the mean number of years that respondents served as Principal was 5-6 years (see Appendix B, Table B7). From the data, the respondents who attained the level of central office administration for African-American female superintendents served for a mean of 6 years (see Appendix B, Table B9). The data revealed that some of the respondents were directors. The data also reported that a lot of the respondents were assistant superintendents. The data further reported that a few respondents were consultants. The remaining data revealed that an even smaller amount of the respondents were deputy superintendents (see Appendix B, Table B8).

The majority of respondents were hired to a district with 1,001 to 3,000 students. The data revealed that a few of the respondents were hired in a district with 12,000 or more students. The data further reported that some of the respondents were hired in a district with 3,001 to 5,000 students. The remaining data revealed that a few of respondents were hired in a district with 8,001 to 12,000 students (see Appendix B, Table B10).

Some of the respondents were hired to a school district with four-six schools. Also, the majority of the respondents were hired to a school district with 7-10 schools.
Data also revealed that some of the respondents were hired to a school district with 11-19 schools. Data further reported that some of the respondents were hired to a school district with 40 or more school districts. In addition, only a few of the respondents were hired to a school district of 3 or less.

The majority of the respondents had four-seven school board members in their school district. A few of the respondents had 9-12 school board members. The majority of school board members were elected into their position. Data further reported that a few of the respondents stated that the school board members’ selection in their district was appointed by city council (see Appendix B, Table B10).

Summary

The data examined from the 46 African-American female superintendent respondents provide insight into their professional and personal lives (see Appendix B, Tables B1-B11 and Appendix C, Figure 2). Their individual collective experiences offer a more diverse portrayal of factors related to career ascendancy. Often overlooked, these women’s critical reflections enhance mainstream accounts of the superintendent career path. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) point out that the essence of the black female administrators’ experience is the meaning of the common experience. The responses from the African-American females illustrate their experience.

As previously discussed, 12 themes emerged from the data. These themes were:

1. *Nurturance and caring:* The predominant theme “nurturance and caring” was defined as the conception that female leaders are moral leaders with
strong emphasis on what is known as an ethic of care (Noddings, 1984, 1992; Beck, 1994).

2. **Servitude leadership**: “Servitude leadership” was defined as the “attitude” of serving others with humble power.

3. **Role power**: The theme “role power” was defined as a female superintendent’s empowerment of her surroundings as a leader.

4. **Racism/sexism**: “Racism/sexism” was defined as an appearance of subtle indifferences and disregard in relationship to gender and race.

5. **Plural politics**: “Plural politics” was defined as a dual political system with two sets of rules.

6. **Retardation of recognition**: “Retardation of recognition” was defined as the consistent absence of praise and rewards.

7. **Mobility**: “Mobility” was defined as the geographical freedom to progress.

8. **Private life vs. career**: “Private life vs. career” was defined as the public life of a female superintendent challenged by a contrasting private life.

9. **The benefits of mentoring**: “The benefits of mentoring” consists of role models in educational administration who assist and nurture the appointees.

10. **Microinequities and macroinequities**: The small and the great inequities and sacrifices of the career ascendancy path.

11. **Attainment of terminal degree of African-American female superintendents**: The majority of African-American female superintendents have obtained a doctoral degree.
12. *Occupational progression:* Most respondents surveyed began their educational careers as classroom teachers. The majority of the respondents were primarily located at an elementary school before becoming administrators.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do African-American females perceive the selected personal factors of the career ascendancy patterns to the superintendency?

2. How do African-American females perceive the selected educational factors of the career ascendancy patterns to the superintendency?

3. How do African-American females perceive the selected career factors of the career ascendancy patterns to the superintendency?

4. How do African-American females perceive the selected sociopolitical factors of the career ascendancy patterns of the superintendency?

5. How do African-American females perceive the selected mentoring factors of the career ascendancy patterns of the superintendency?

Findings

The following are the findings which resulted from the perspectives of the respondents:
1. African-American female superintendents persevered through problems that related to their gender and race. These problems range from an invisible identity to microinequities (smaller injustices/sacrifices) and macroinequities (greater injustices/sacrifices).

2. Of the personal factors investigated, age and marital status produced a noticeable trend with regard to the ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents. The data revealed that a much higher percentage of African-American females were married and ages ranged from 50-59 years.

3. Educational factors seem to play an important role in the ascendancy patterns of African-American female to the superintendency. The majority of the respondents have achieved a doctorate degree.

4. The majority of African-American female superintendents bypassed the traditional ascension pattern of teacher to principalship to superintendent. The superintendents in this study ascended from teacher to central office to superintendency.

5. The majority of African-American female superintendents began their career in education as classroom teachers.

6. Selected career factors tend to be relevant to the ascendancy patterns of African-American females to the superintendency. The research data revealed that the majority of African-American female superintendents were appointed to their position by the Board of Education of their school district.
7. The selected sociopolitical factors seem to play a role in the ascendancy patterns of African-American females to the superintendency. Of the respondents who said that they had mentors, that mentor was male.

8. The majority of African-American female superintendents viewed their leadership role as a service. The respondents felt that in order to be an effective leader, they needed to meet the basic needs of their community.

9. The majority of African-American female superintendents spoke about the role of private life versus career. Motherhood restrained many female superintendents from pursuing administrative positions earlier in their career. Single African-American females also recognized the time and pressure of the superintendency.

10. Many African-American female superintendents perceive it difficult to ascend in the superintendency due to limitations relating to mobility.

Conclusions

The findings of this study clearly identified some important elements in the ascendancy pattern of African-American females to the superintendency. The following are the conclusions which were derived from the findings of this study and are presented as responses to the research questions:

1. For this sample of African-American female superintendents, age, marital status, significant other or parental support and influence throughout their
lives and religious preference seem to have an appreciable influence on ascendency to the superintendency.

2. African-American female superintendents were more likely to be between the ages of 50-59, married, and Protestant.

3. Just over 75% of the African-American female superintendents serving between 2000 and 2001 held a doctoral degree, suggesting that candidate who holds a terminal degree are more likely to be successful in accessing the superintendency.

4. Boards of education were more likely to appoint African-American female superintendents rather than to elect and place them in a district with 1,001 to 3,000 students.

5. African-American female superintendents were more likely to choose a male mentor over a female mentor that was also housed as an immediate supervisor. These mentors, it appears, were largely influential for the success of the African-American female superintendent.

Implications

The findings and conclusions of this research point to the following implications:

1. It is clear that mentors positively impact the participant’s career opportunities. This knowledge could encourage African-American females and other superintendents to reach out to form such professional alliances. Mentorship is often “closeted”; as a result, some potential superintendents
and superintendents may not realize the importance such professional relationships have on career ascension.

2. African-American females should preferably begin their superintendency in a smaller district, which brings the challenge of making a difference and a better chance of gaining experience in the field.

3. It is clear that African-American female superintendents should hold a doctoral degree to improve their chances of being successful in this quest.

4. It is evident that the position of the superintendency is a more basic set of understandings. It is important to be nurturing and caring, and it is important to have business savvy. Any school leader who focuses only on the issues of effectiveness and not on affectiveness is not doing a complete and thorough job. The affective leader understands that the key to communication is through people’s feelings, not through their thoughts.

Recommendations

The findings of this research study lead to the following recommendations for African-American female superintendents aspiring to ascend to the superintendency:

1. There is no accurate, reliable, longitudinal, and comparable across-the-states database on superintendents, including information on gender, race, and ethnicity. Bell and Chase (1993) point out that multiple definitions of superintendency exist across studies, often with all manner and types mixed together (e.g. county, vocational school districts, K-8 systems, intermediate
units). It would be beneficial and advantageous for the National Association of Black School Educators (NABSE) to form a data bank with an up-to-date historical account of all African-American superintendents.

2. Doctoral programs for African-American female superintendents should include case studies focused on the development of management skills in superintendency. The curricula should focus on the awareness of diverse populations of school districts, with special recruitment for minorities (non-African American) and African Americans.

3. Female applicants should develop an awareness of membership and professional organizations that would enhance their profession. These associations should include relative information for the female applicant and mentorship. Networking with the ingroup would greatly enhance the chances of finding a successful mentor and being successful in a career to the superintendency.

4. As more and more females possess leadership positions in education, the importance of role models (and the networks that now provide them) should dramatically change. In the future the issue should be one of qualifications, skills, and potential, not whether or not someone is male or female. Although role models will continue to be important, the emphasis should be on performance, not gender.

5. Further research should be done to explore and compare the characteristics and performances of male and female superintendents.
6. Be a role model. Recruit young applicants with promise, zeal, possibly 30-40's, and train them for a success route to the superintendency.

Summary

The outcome of this chapter was presented in four sections: findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations. In Chapter One, the research question provided the factors that influenced the investigation. Chapter Two related to the review of literature regarding African-American female superintendents. The Third chapter presented the theoretical framework concerning selected factors influencing the career ascendency path: Dual Invisibility, Social Role Theory, and Natural Association vs. Networking. In Chapter Four, the methodology and procedures were presented. In Chapter Five, 46 of the 54 identified African-American female superintendent respondents' data were analyzed.

The African-American female has persevered through many problems, enduring racial and gender discrimination. Her leadership is clearly evident as she displays the ability to perform the role of superintendent. Out of all of the factors in this study, mentoring and the attainment of a terminal degree are clearly the most relevant factors in the ascendency patterns of African-American female superintendents.
Dear Superintendent:

As you are aware the superintendency is a position where African-American females are very much in the minority and little information is available about career patterns for African-American females who wish to ascend in such roles. I am requesting your voluntary participation in a dissertation study of various factors that have influenced the career ascendancy patterns of African-American female superintendents. This is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership at Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia.

I request that you complete the enclosed open-ended survey/interview guide as the first step in this process. If you are available to discuss the interview questions further, please notify me by e-mail at: cywinthrop@yahoo.com, and we can decide upon an agreed time. Keenly aware of the many demands on your time, I have kept the enclosed interview guide as brief as possible: It should take ten minutes to complete. Please take the time to elaborate on questions: 25-28, and 35-37. Please respond to all items in all parts of the interview. Your input is critical to the outcome of this study, please complete and return in the enclosed addressed envelope by July 15, 2000, or contact me by e-mail at cywinthrop@yahoo.com.

I assure you that your responses will be confidential. I appreciate your time, contribution, honest responses, participation and assistance with this part of my research study. A summary of the major findings and themes will be available to you upon request.

Regards,

Cynthia Y. Williams Winthrop, ABD
SUPERINTENDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Select the response that best applies to you by checking the appropriate number. Please comment on the questions that request you to do so.

Demographic Information

Your sex:
1.1 __________ Male
1.2 __________ Female

Your race:
2.1 __________ Caucasian
2.2 __________ African American/African American/Negro
2.3 __________ Hispanic
2.4 __________ Asian
2.5 __________ Indian
2.6 __________ Other (please specify) __________

Your age:
3.1 __________ 20-29
3.2 __________ 30-39
3.3 __________ 40-49
3.4 __________ 50-59
3.5 __________ Other (please specify) __________

Your religious preference:
4.1 __________ Assembly of God
4.2 __________ Baptist
4.3 __________ Catholic
4.4 __________ Episcopalian
4.5 __________ Jewish
4.6 __________ Methodist
4.7 __________ Mormon
4.8 __________ Presbyterian
4.9 __________ Other (please specify) __________

Family Background

What is the educational background of your father?
5.1 __________ No formal education
5.2 __________ Elementary school
5.3 __________ Some high school
5.4 High school graduate
5.5 Some college
5.6 College graduate
5.7 Graduate degree
5.8 Doctoral degree

What is the educational background of your mother?
6.1 No formal education
6.2 Elementary school
6.3 Some high school
6.4 High school graduate
6.5 Some college
6.6 College graduate
6.7 Graduate degree
6.8 Doctoral degree

With whom did you live as a child?
7.1 Both parents
7.2 Father
7.3 Mother
7.4 Siblings
7.5 Grandparent
7.6 Aunt or Uncle
7.7 An unrelated friend or guardian
7.8 Other (please specify)

In your childhood, to whom did you feel the closest? (Check only one.)
8.1 Father
8.2 Mother
8.3 Siblings
8.4 Grandparent
8.5 Aunt or Uncle
8.6 An unrelated friend or guardian
8.7 Other (please specify)

Birth Order

List gender of siblings starting with the youngest to the oldest. Include your position in order with an asterisk (*).
9.1
9.2
9.3
9.4
Marital Status

Your current marital status is:
10.1 _______ Married
10.2 _______ Single (never married)
10.3 _______ Widowed or widower
10.4 _______ Separated
10.5 _______ Divorced

Number of birth or adopted children you have:
11.1 _______ 0
11.2 _______ 1
11.3 _______ 2
11.4 _______ 3
11.5 _______ 4
11.6 _______ 5 or more (please specify) ______

Educational Background

What is your highest level of professional preparation?
12.1 _______ High school
12.2 _______ Bachelor's degree
12.3 _______ Master's degree
12.4 _______ Specialist's Degree
12.5 _______ Doctorate
12.6 _______ Other (please specify)

If you received a doctorate, please name the granting institution:

Occupational Experience

How many years did you teach before becoming a superintendent?
______________________________ years

At what age were you appointed to your first administrative position?
______________________________ years old.
How many years including this year, have you been in your present position?
______________________________ years.

What was your age when you received your first superintendency?
______________________________ years old.

Is your superintendency:
18.1 _______ Appointed
18.2 _______ Elected

Please indicate at which level you were an assistant principal for the greatest number of years:
19.1 _______ Elementary
19.2 _______ Middle school/Junior high
19.3 _______ High school
19.4 _______ None
19.5 _______ Other (please specify)

How many years did you serve as an assistant principal?
__________________________________________________ years.

Please indicate at which level you were a principal for the greatest number of years.
21.1 _______ Elementary
21.2 _______ Middle school/Junior high
21.3 _______ High school
21.4 _______ None
21.5 _______ Other (please specify) __________

How many years did you serve as a principal?
_________________________________________________ years.

Please indicate at which level you were a central office administrator for the greatest number level.
23.1 _______ Consultant
23.2 _______ Director
23.3 _______ Assistant Superintendent
23.4 _______ Associate Superintendent
23.5 _______ Deputy Superintendent
How many years did you serve as a central office administrator?
__________________________________________________ years.

What is the reason that you became interested in educational administration?

Please comment freely on those factors which you believe have most hindered your career.

What, in your opinion, would be the reason you would give to explain any recognitions that were not awarded you?

What, if anything prevented you from progressing in your career path?

**School District Characteristics**

Please indicate the number of students your district serves:

29.1 ________ 1,000 or less
29.2 ________ 1,001 - 3,000
29.3 ________ 3,001 - 5,000
29.4 ________ 5,001 - 8,000
29.5 ________ 8,001 - 12,000
29.6 ________ 12,001 or more (please specify) __

Please indicate the number of schools in your district

30.1 ________ 3 or less
30.2 ________ 4 - 6
30.3 ________ 7 - 10
30.4 ________ 11 - 19
30.5 ________ 20 - 29
30.6 ________ 30 - 39
30.7 ________ 40 or more (please specify) _______
School Board Characteristics

Please indicate the number of school board members your district has:

31.1 ________ 1 – 3
31.2 ________ 4 – 7
31.3 ________ 8 – 12
31.4 ________ 13 – 19
31.5 ________ 20 or more (please specify) _______

How are the school members selected in your district?

32.1 ________ Elected
32.2 ________ Appointed by grand injury
32.3 ________ Appointed by city council
32.4 ________ Other (please specify) __________

Mentoring Experience(s)

Did you have mentor(s)

33.1 ________ Yes
33.2 ________ No

If yes, what was the sex of your mentor(s)?

34.1 ________ Male
34.2 ________ Female

If yes, please describe the role that your mentor(s) played in your attaining your present position and any other administrative position.

Please comment on the compromises and accommodations you have made in your career choice:

Please mention any small or great inequities that you may have faced as you made your way to your present position.
WINTHROP 2001 INTERVIEW GUIDE (PHONE)

1. Why did you become interested in educational administration?

2. Please comment freely on those factors that you believe have most hindered your career.

3. What, most helped you in your pursuit of attaining the career that you have in the superintendency?

4. What, if anything prevented you from progressing in your career path?

5. You mentioned in the first interview guide that you had a mentor. Please describe the role that your mentor(s) played in your attaining your present position and any other administrative position.

6. Please comment on the compromises and accommodations you have made in your career choice.

7. What particular professional experiences can you attribute to being African American and female?
APPENDIX B

TABLES

Table B1

Profile of an African-American Female Superintendent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Religious Preference</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Assembly of God</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mormon</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
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Table B1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Background of Father</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Formal Education</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>With Whom Did You Feel Closest?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt or Uncle</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An unrelated friend or guardian</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Birth Order</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest Child</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Child</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Child</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Child</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Child</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Child</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Child</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest Child</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Background of Mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Formal Education</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Whom Lived With as a Child?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Both Parents</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt or Uncle</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An unrelated friend or guardian</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single (never married)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow or widower</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
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Table B1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Birth/Adopted Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>46</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table B2

*Educational Attainment of African-American Female Superintendents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level of Professional Preparation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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Table B3

Career Ascendancy Patterns of African-American Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedural Hire</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elected</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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</table>

Table B4

Level of Assistant Principalship for African-American Female Superintendents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School/Junior High</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>46</td>
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Table B5

Occupational Years Served as Assistant Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Served as Assistant Principal</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 46</td>
<td>X = 1 year</td>
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Table B6

Level of Principalship for African-American Female Superintendents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School/Junior High</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
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Table B7

Occupational Years Serving as Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Serving as Principal</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 46</td>
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<td>X = 5 years</td>
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Table B8

Level of Central Office Administration for African-American Female Superintendents

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Superintendent</td>
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<td>Associate Superintendent</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Superintendent</td>
<td>3</td>
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Table B9

**Occupational Years Served as Central Office Administrator**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Served as Central Office Administrator</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 46</td>
<td>X = 6 years</td>
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Table B10

**Demographics of School District Characteristics and School Board Characteristics Relative to Where African-American Female Superintendents Serve**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students in District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 or less</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,001 - 3,000</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,001 - 5,000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,001 - 8,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,001 - 12,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,000 or more</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Number of Schools in District   |         |
| 3 or less                      | 2        |
| 04 - 06                        | 8        |
| 07 - 10                        | 24       |
| 11 - 19                        | 6        |
| 20 - 29                        | 0        |
| 30 - 39                        | 0        |
| 40 or more                     | 6        |
| TOTAL                          | 46       |
Table B10 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of School Board Members in District</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01 - 03</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 - 07</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08 - 12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 or more</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Board Members Selection in District</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointed by Grand Jury</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointed by City Council</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B11

Sociopolitical Analysis of Mentoring Experiences of African Female Superintendents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring Factors</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex of Mentor</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2. Profile of an African American Female Superintendent
APPENDIX D

VALIDATION INSTRUMENT
FOR SUPERINTENDENTS’ INSTRUMENT

Please select the response that best applies by checking the appropriate response. Please comment on the questions that request you to do so.

1. Is the survey’s directions stated with clarity and grammatically correct?
   1.1 Yes
   1.2 No If no, what is wrong?

2. Are the items in the Family Background section stated with clarity and grammatically correct?
   2.1 Yes
   2.2 No If no, what is wrong?

3. Are the items in the Family Background section appropriate for obtaining information from the subjects?
   3.1 Yes
   3.2 No If no, what is wrong?

4. In the Family Background section should any item(s) be excluded?
   4.1 Yes If yes, which one(s) and why?
   4.2 No

5. In the Family Background section should any item(s) be added?
   5.1 Yes If yes, please state:
   5.2 No

6. Is the item in the Birth Order section stated with clarity and grammatically correct?
   6.1 Yes
   6.2 No If no, what is wrong?

7. Is the item in the Birth Order section appropriate for obtaining information from the subjects?
   7.1 Yes
   7.2 No If no, what is wrong?
8. In the Birth Order section should this item be excluded?
   8.1 Yes  If yes, why?
   8.2 No

9. In the Birth Order section should any item(s) be added?
   9.1 Yes  If yes, please state:
   9.2 No

10. Is the item in the Marital Status section stated with clarity and grammatically correct?
   10.1 Yes
   10.2 No  If no, what is wrong?

11. Is the item in the Marital Status section appropriate for obtaining information from the subjects?
   11.1 Yes
   11.2 No  If no, what is wrong?

12. In the Marital Status section should this item be excluded?
   12.1 Yes  If yes, why?
   12.2 No

13. In the Marital Status section should any item(s) be added?
   13.1 Yes  If yes, please state:
   13.2 No

14. Is the item in the Educational Background section stated with clarity and grammatically correct?
   14.1 Yes
   14.2 No  If no, what is wrong?

15. Is the item in the Educational Background section appropriate for obtaining information from the subjects?
   15.1 Yes
   15.2 No  If no, what is wrong?

16. In the Educational Background section should the item excluded?
   16.1 Yes  If yes, why?
   16.2 No

17. In the Educational Background section should any item(s) be added?
   17.1 Yes  If yes, please state:
   17.2 No
18. Are the items in the Age at Appointment section stated with clarity and grammatically correct?
   18.1 Yes
   18.2 No If no, what is wrong?

19. Are the items in the Age at Appointment section appropriate for obtaining information from the subjects?
   19.1 Yes
   19.2 No If no, what is wrong?

20. In the Age at Appointment section should any item(s) be excluded?
   20.1 Yes If yes, which one(s) and why?
   20.2 No

21. In the Age at Appointment section should any item(s) be added?
   21.1 Yes If yes, please state:
   21.2 No

22. Are the items in the Occupational Experiences section state with clarity and grammatically correct?
   22.1 Yes
   22.2 No If no, what is wrong?

23. Are the items in the Occupational Experiences section appropriate for obtaining information from the subjects?
   23.1 Yes
   23.2 No If no, what is wrong

24. In the Occupational Experiences section should any item(s) be excluded?
   24.1 Yes If yes, which one(s) and why?
   24.2 No

25. In the Occupational Experiences section should any item(s) be added?
   25.1 Yes If yes, please state:
   25.2 No

26. Are the items in the School District Characteristics section stated with clarity and grammatically correct?
   26.1 Yes
   26.2 No If no, what is wrong?
27. Are the items in the School District Characteristics section appropriate for obtaining information from the subjects?
   27.1 Yes
   27.2 No If no, what is wrong?

28. In the School District Characteristics section should any item(s) be excluded?
   28.1 Yes If yes, which one(s) and why?
   28.2 No

29. In the School District Characteristics section should any item(s) be added?
   29.1 Yes If yes, please state:
   29.2 No

30. Are the items in the School Board Characteristics section state with clarity and grammatically correct?
   30.1 Yes
   30.2 No If no, what is wrong?

31. Are the items in the School Board Characteristics section appropriate for obtaining information from the subjects?
   31.1 Yes
   31.2 No If no, what is wrong?

32. In the School Board Characteristics section should any item(s) be excluded?
   32.1 Yes If yes, which one(s) and why?
   32.2 No

33. In the School Board Characteristics section should any item(s) be added?
   33.1 Yes If yes, please state:
   33.2 No

34. Are the items in the Mentoring Experience(s) section stated with clarity and grammatically correct?
   34.1 Yes
   34.2 No If no, what is wrong?

35. Are the items in the Mentoring Experience(s) section appropriate for obtaining information from the subjects?
   35.1 Yes
   35.2 No If no, what is wrong?
36. In the Mentoring Experience(s) section should any item(s) be excluded?
   36.1 Yes  If yes which one(s) and why?
   36.2 No

37. In the Mentoring Experience(s) section should any term(s) be added?
   37.1 Yes  If yes, please state:
   37.2 No

38. How many minutes did it take you to complete the Superintendents’
    Survey? ________ minutes

39. How appropriate is the survey’s length?
   39.1 Too long
   39.2 Too short
   39.3 Appropriate length

   Please make any comments or suggestions on the length:

40. In general does the survey appear to measure what it intends to measure?
    40.1 Yes
    40.2 No

   Please make any comments or suggestions:

41. In general does the survey appear to measure what it intends to measure?
    40.1 Yes
    40.2 No

   Please make any comments or suggestions:

42. Please comment on the survey’s layout:

43. Please comment on the survey’s size of print:
APPENDIX E

ANONYMITY AGREEMENT

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. Please know that your anonymity will be strictly protected. For purposes of analysis, individual responses will be considered as part of a data set. All identifiers will be deleted and/or changed in all written and oral discussions of this topic.

__________________________
Researcher

__________________________
Superintendent

Date ______________________
Dear Superintendent:

On June 20, I sent you a survey requesting your voluntary participation with my doctoral study at Clark Atlanta University.

If you have completed and returned it, I thank you very much.

If you have not answered, would you please do so at your earliest convenience? Please respond to all items in all parts of the survey. Your input is critical to the outcome of this study. Please return your survey in the enclosed addressed envelope, or by fax to (770) 944-3153, Attn: Cynthia Y. Williams Winthrop.

Regards,

Cynthia Y. Williams Winthrop, ABD
June 13, 2000

Dr. Daisy F. Slan  
East Feliciana County  
P.O. Box 397  
Clinton, LA 70722-0397

Dear Dr. Slan:

As you are aware the superintendency is a position where black females are very much in the minority and little information is available about career patterns for black females who wish to ascend in such roles. I am requesting your help in validating my interviewing process that will be used in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership at Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia. The purpose of this research is to examine various factors that have influenced case studies of career ascendancy patterns of black female superintendents.

In order to add credibility to the research findings experts in the field should review my interviewing process. Since you are presently a superintendent in Louisiana, I am requesting that you complete the Superintendents’ Instrument first, using the attached Validation Instrument. Your input is critical to the outcome of this study, please complete return in the enclosed address envelope by June 20, 2000, or contact me by e-mail at cywinthrop@yahoo.com.

I appreciate your valuable time, contribution, honest responses, participation and assistance with this part of my research study.

Regards,

Cynthia Y. Williams Winthrop, ABD  
Doctoral Candidate
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Robison, A. (1992). *A comparative analysis of the selected factors that have influenced the appointment of female and selected male superintendents in Georgia*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia.


