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Overcoming the Odds: An Exploration of Resilience Strategies Used by Female Superintendents in School Districts in Georgia

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OVERCOMING THE ODDS:
AN EXPLORATION OF RESILIENCE STRATEGIES USED BY FEMALE
SUPERINTENDENTS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN GEORGIA

by

KATHY H. SIMMONS

(Under the Direction of Linda M. Arthur)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences in the professional lives of female superintendents in Georgia to better understand the role of resilience when faced with adversity. The researcher utilized a mixed method design to determine the strategies employed by female superintendents to successfully overcome adversity and become more resilient. The experiences of female superintendents and strategies utilized in the position when faced with adversity were explored by administering a Leadership Resilience Profile questionnaire followed by in-depth interviews with five Georgia female superintendents. The questionnaire featured a rating scale to identify each participant's perception of individual resilience strengths as well as demographic data.

Eighty percent of the participants indicated having held the position for five years or less, and ninety-two percent succeeded male superintendents. Four themes emerged from the women's stories during the interview phase. Female superintendents perceive themselves to be value-driven and exhibit perseverance by focusing on priorities until success is attained. Female superintendents persistently refuse to give up. Having the resources of a strong personal and professional support base to help during tough times is

vital to the success of female superintendents. The female participants described a strong spiritual life which provided a source of strength during difficult times.

Conclusions drawn from the study indicated that not only did the participants reveal resilience through the data collected on the Leadership Resilience Profile Questionnaire, but the follow-up interviews indicated that adversity remains inherent in the position and female superintendents in Georgia demonstrate resilience. Varied and numerous strategies were employed by each female which strengthened their ability to demonstrate resilience and be successful in Georgia's top-ranking leadership position.

INDEX WORDS: Resilience, Female superintendents, Adversity, Resilient strategies, Women in Leadership

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SUPERINTENDENTS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN GEORGIA

by

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DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the strongest, most resilient woman I know, my mother, Betty Howard, who taught me to pursue my dreams, the importance of family, and the value of hard work. Her courage, strength, love, and support have sustained me through many phases of my life and this process was no exception.

Many people encouraged and supported me during this journey, each of whom contributed in his or her own way. I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Jeffery, who had the courage to deal with the tears and anxiety throughout this process. Your outlook on life has always reminded me of what matters most. I dedicate this dissertation to my brother, Johnny, whose love and passion for helping others are traits I strive to emulate. I dedicate this dissertation to my brother, Jerry, “the baby”, may you follow in our father’s footsteps and encourage your daughters to be independent and self-sufficient. I dedicate this dissertation to my “sister,” Lisa, who has been my support base and has always sustained my spirit. A special thank you goes to my father-in-law and mother-in-law, Donis and Harriett Simmons, who became surrogate parents to my children during this process. To my nieces, Malory, Shannon, Audrey, Kaley, Molly, Jayme and Casey, may education, strength, resilience, and independence continue to be legacies for the women in our family.

I conclude where this journey actually began, with my precious children, Austin and Trent. I hope this accomplishment is a constant reminder that anything is possible with perseverance and hard work. I hope it will encourage you to follow your dreams. You have both done more than your share to keep our home functioning while I worked, attended classes, studied, and wrote papers. You are the reason my life has meaning.

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I would like to acknowledge the women who planted the seed for the development of this dissertation, the female superintendents who have meant so much to me during my educational career: Mrs. June Bradfield, Mrs. Janet Watford, and Dr. Dean Brown. I was always amazed at your strength, resilience, and devotion to the profession. Students' lives were enriched and blessed because of you, and I will forever be indebted to each of you for giving me opportunities to build my leadership capacity. Your belief in me made all the difference.

I would like to express my gratitude to the female superintendents who participated in this study and shared their stories. Each one revealed herself to be a courageous warrior, passionate educator, and resilient leader. This work is the result of your courage and interest in helping other women become successful superintendents. You are paving the way for others to follow.

I would like to acknowledge the support of my committee and Georgia Southern professors throughout this process. Dr. Linda Arthur, Dr. Barbara Mallory, and Dr. Mac Brinson graciously offered constant feedback, encouragement, and guidance as members of my doctoral committee. You enabled me to complete this journey, and I am deeply grateful. Dr. Michael Richardson, Dr. T.C. Chan, Dr. James Burnham, Dr. Walter Polka, and the late Dr. Harbison Poole, your commitment to the profession will continue to impact the lives of students and educators for years to come.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The superintendency is the top ranking position in American public school systems. Research shows that school superintendents encounter adversity directly related to the roles and responsibilities of the superintendency (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000; Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Glass and Franceschini state the amount of stress experienced by superintendents can be excessive and can lead to disabling conditions affecting one's behavior, judgment, and performance. Because of the potential of adversity as a result of the challenges inherent in the superintendency, the ability to cope effectively and overcome adversity is critical to success and survival in the position. Patterson and Kelleher (2005) suggest that the position is a challenging one, requiring resilience. Maddi and Khoshaba (2005) describe resilient people as those who resolve conflicts, turn disruptive changes into new directions, learn from the process, and become more successful and satisfied in the process.

Although superintendent tenure in the position is usually five to six years (Byrd, Drews, & Johnson, 2006; Glass, 2000), understanding resilience of school system leaders who hold the position for more than the average tenure of most may yield insight into how leaders overcome challenges of the job. The fact that males have traditionally held the top ranking position in school districts, in an education profession that employs more women than men, leads one to specifically question resiliency of female leaders. Although few females have served as superintendents in a profession dominated by women (Brunner, 1999; Franklin, 2001; Manuel, 2001; Walder, 2000), many females have been successful in the role as the top school leader.

What is unique about women who reach and succeed in the superintendency?

Women demonstrate strategies to obtain the male-dominated position of school superintendent and demonstrate effective practices while holding the position (Reed & Patterson, 2007). As women play an increasing and influential role in the leadership of school systems, examining experiences of female superintendents is vital to understanding resilience strategies used by women who effectively lead school systems.

The set of skills emerging from research on school district instructional leadership parallel those skills identified in studies of female educational leaders (Miller, Washington, & Fiene, 2006). Washington and Jones (2010) indicate the key factors associated with successful women superintendents are preparation, perseverance, maintaining composure and risk taking. Investigating resilience of women superintendents may be beneficial to aspiring women school leaders. The researcher studied experiences in the professional lives of female superintendents in Georgia to understand the phenomenon of resiliency as they face adversity in the chief leadership role of the school district.

Background of the Study

According to Brunner and Kim (2010), the normative expectation for the superintendency is a male with particular formal education, experiential preparation, and experiences not often enjoyed, available, or sought by females. However, Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2000) report that nearly 80 percent of the superintendents across the nation are at or near the age of retirement, and Glass and Franceschini (2007) report that almost 55 percent of the current superintendents from across the nation would not be working within the next five years. The number of superintendents eligible for retirement, coupled

with the average tenure of 5.5 years (Glass & Franceschini), provides opportunities for more women to obtain the top ranking position in the future.

Accompanying the number of superintendents who will be leaving the position is the growing complexity of the superintendency itself. An increasing body of research has shown that school superintendents encounter considerable stress that is directly related to the responsibilities of the position (Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Glass, 2000; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Reed & Patterson, 2007). Glass and Franceschini report that nearly 60 percent of superintendents across the country experienced levels of stress that were either considerable or great. Litchka, Fenzel, and Polka (2007) indicate that school superintendents experience stress and strain similar to the experiences of corporate executives.

Litchka, Fenzel, and Polka (2007) found that superintendents are quite vulnerable to the effects of stressors faced in occupational roles, including role overload and the high level of fiscal and public responsibility the position carries. Those who cope successfully with the demands of work and personal lives tend to possess and utilize cognitive dispositions that promote effective problems solving, engage in activities that help reduce stress, and pursue social relationships that provide support. Litchka, Fenzel, and Polka further conclude that leaders need to know how to identify the potentially damaging sources of stress, and develop and employ effective coping mechanisms that increase potential success. Research has identified resilience as a quality of individuals who cope effectively with stress (Dolbier, Smith, & Steinhardt, 2007; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Reed & Patterson, 2007; Patterson, Goens, & Reed, 2009).

Women as School Leaders

As school reform has influenced the educational agenda the past twenty years, Brunner and Kim (2010) suggest characteristics of female administrators are highly desirable qualities that favor women leading reform efforts. Based on historical statistics, women have been an underutilized asset (Glass & Franeschini, 2007), and organizations may benefit from the attributes of women aspiring to and currently in leadership positions. While some of the preparedness components for women are different from those gained by men, Brunner and Kim suggest that the barriers experienced by women and the concentration on curriculum and instruction may render women better and more thoroughly prepared than men.

Although many women have not been successful in obtaining positions as superintendents, women in central office administration aspire to the position (Glass, Björk, & Brunner, 2000; Grogan & Brunner, 2005). According to Grogan and Brunner, not only do women aspire to the role of superintendent, but women work to fulfill aspirations, are successful in the superintendency, and enjoy the work associated with the position. Grogan and Brunner list the following important factors for women aspiring to the superintendent's position: interpersonal skills; ability to maintain organizational relationships; and responsiveness to parents and community groups. Even though women are an underutilized asset in school leadership, they do possess potential for leadership in the top-ranking position.

Common attributes of women leaders identified in research studies confirm that women approach school leadership differently than men (Björk, 2000a). According to Dana and Bourisaw (2006a), women are perceived to be more collaborative leaders and

tend to use more democratic leadership styles. These characteristics tend to facilitate a higher level of job satisfaction among staff. Dana and Bourisaw further state women are viewed as being change agents, have a deeper understanding of instruction, teaching, and curriculum and tend to get more deeply involved in reform efforts. Women are more likely to work toward creating climates conducive to learning. Female leaders are regarded as being relational, community sensitive, and politically savvy. According to Björk (2000a), these attributes are aligned with the expectations of superintendents to be change agents as well as educational, political, and managerial leaders.

Wilson (2004) stated fifty-seven percent of Americans believe the country would be better governed with more women in leadership positions, as women have the ability to create and maintain peace within organizations. Lougheed (2000) conducted a research study over a fifteen year period (1984-1998) to assess the attitudes of women and men toward female leaders. The analysis clearly suggested both women and men in the sample believe that women can be successful leaders. Also, women superintendents experience higher productivity and work longer hours than male superintendents (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006b).

Other researchers have reported findings to support the effectiveness of women in leadership positions (Samartseva & Fomina, 2002; Rosser, 2003). Samartseva and Fomina concluded that women have a much larger repertoire of management strategies than men and make more selective use of the strategies. Samartseva and Fomina stated that women demonstrated a diverse set of models of business strategies based on the need to be effective, not gender-role characteristics. Similarly, Rosser stated that women and

men reflect differing patterns in roles as leaders, but women were rated as more effective leaders in every dimension of leadership.

Strachan (1999) attributed the success of women in leadership positions to natural enthusiasm, energy, creativity, flexibility and diversity. Clisbee (2004) states women are collaborative leaders relying on interpersonal relationships where power is defined by the ability to bring people together to establish consensus. According to McCabe (2001), practicing female superintendents have placed an emphasis on being a facilitator and the empowerment of others. Female superintendents emerge as community builders and are grounded in knowledge of curriculum and instruction (Keller, 1999). Manuel, Shefte, and Swiss (1999) found: (1) women continue to bring unique leadership to organizations, (2) demonstrate comfort in leadership style, (3) commit to civic and community organizations, and (4) have the ability to acquire a range of leadership styles in response to work cultures. Grogan and Brunner (2005) identify female superintendents as being prepared to stay the course of leading school districts in challenging times.

Adversity in the Superintendency

According to Barnes (2007), anyone in a position of leadership has to deal with rapidly changing circumstances and must learn to recognize challenges as opportunities. Leaders must learn to be resilient in the face of adversity. Barnes defines the ability to take on difficult problems, to learn from the problem, and to turn the problem into an advantage as “leadership 101”. The superintendency is no exception. School superintendents today work more than ever in an increasingly high stakes environment full of adversity (Reed & Patterson, 2007). According to McCabe (2001), the position of superintendent is characterized as a position of conflict and possibility.

Browne-Ferrigno and Glass (2005) state contemporary superintendents have multiple responsibilities as the administrators of complex educational organizations. The contemporary superintendent is required to be a visionary, implement policy, establish priorities, collaborate, and facilitate public relations (Brown-Ferrigno & Glass). Fullan (2005) describes superintendents as leaders who take into account system forces while attempting to alter forces in an effort to transform the system itself. Patterson and Kelleher (2005) describe the current superintendency with the nautical metaphor of trying to ride out the torrent of relentless storms that come and go and come again.

Resilience and the Superintendency

Connor (2006) defines resilience as the capacity to absorb high levels of change while displaying minimal dysfunctional behavior. Many researchers define resilience as the flexibility or ability to rebound from adversity, to cope with, adapt positively to, and manage major difficulties and disadvantages in life, and even to thrive in the face of what appears to be overwhelming odds (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2002; Dent & Cameron, 2003). Konrad and Bronson (1997) define resilience as the capacity to recover, successfully adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social competence despite exposure to severe stress. Konrad and Bronson state that resilience is demonstrated when one defends oneself well against adversities in the environment. Block (1993) describes resilience as a characteristic that provides flexibility, problem solving, and the ability to detour around encountered barriers. According to Bobeck (2002), adverse situations serve as catalysts for the creation of resilience. As a challenging position, the superintendency is a field ripe with adverse situations involving

budgets, relationships, facilities and resources, professional learning, and student achievement.

Patterson and Kelleher (2005) in *Resilient School Leaders* state resilience is developmental, can be learned, and can be taught. Patterson and Kelleher define resilience as using one's energy productively to emerge from adversity stronger than ever. Patterson and Kelleher developed three components of a resilience framework: the interpretation of current adversity and future possibility; the resilience capacity to tackle adversity; and the actions needed to become more resilient in the face of adversity. School superintendents do not control the nature and intensity of adversity, but do have a choice in how the adversity is interpreted and, according to Patterson and Kelleher, can apply specific skills to bolster resilience. Leaders can strengthen resilience with the ability to accurately assess past and current reality, being positive about future possibilities, remaining true to personal values, maintaining a strong sense of personal efficacy, investing personal energy wisely, and acting on the courage of personal convictions.

In a study completed by Christman and McClellan (2005), the researchers recommended that we refrain from categorizing women leaders into a gender construction model. They found that resilient female administrators embrace or disclaim gender norms to varying degrees based on specific situations. The resilient female administrators exhibit a "multidimensional gendered leadership that allowed them to vary their responses to fit the complexity of the organization's expectations" (Christman & McClellan, 2005, p.28). Christman and McClellan also found resilient female

administrators have the ability to navigate the barriers created by expectations and select responses based on the situation and the organizational culture as a whole.

Connor (2006) identifies the degree to which people demonstrate resilience as the single most important factor to managing change. Frankel (2007) identifies resilience as a critical leadership trait. Wertz (2002) interviewed 18 superintendents and found resilient superintendents take pride in being a catalyst for change as well as a change agent. Resilient superintendents like learning new strategies and are challenged by the fear of the unknown inherent in the position. Bringing constituents together and organizing efforts to address issues are strategies utilized to demonstrate resilience.

Although resilience has been identified as a key trait of leaders, it has been understudied in the role of the top-ranking leader in school districts—the superintendency. What is clear from the literature is that the role of the superintendent places one in a high stakes environment full of adversity. School leaders, especially the superintendent, must demonstrate resiliency in the face of such adversity. Although women have been underrepresented in the role of the chief school leader, the females who have achieved success in the position may have insight into the phenomenon of resiliency.

Statement of the Problem

Superintendents encounter situations that generate conflict and stress, as change is inevitable in the education profession, especially in the superintendency. Increasing one's ability to adjust to varied situations and act more effectively in adverse conditions is critical to success in the superintendency. For an educational leader, demonstrating resilience is critical to deal with the pressures and uncertainties of being in charge in

today's school systems. As education remains in the national spotlight, few roles are as complex and pivotal as that of the school superintendent. The position will inevitably continue to be one of controversy, accountability, and adversity.

There are capable women in the field of education who are qualified to serve as public school superintendents. Classroom teaching positions are dominated by women, yet the superintendency is a position heavily dominated by men. While facing challenges to obtain the position of superintendent, women continue to aspire to the high-level administrative position. Researchers have found that women possess many of the critical attributes needed in leadership roles of the 21st century, as females have been characterized as leaders who are collaborative, focus on curriculum and instruction, share decision making, empower others, articulate new visions of what schools should be (Funk, Pankake, & Schroth, 2002). Although women may be effective in leadership, it is clear from the literature that superintendents face much adversity and challenges in their leadership roles. Resilience is a necessary trait in such a role. However, not much is known about women superintendents and the phenomenon of resilience. What are the resilience strengths of female superintendents? What resilient skill sets are essential to females in the superintendency? Understanding the dimensions of resilience and developing the capacity to overcome adversity inherent in the superintendency are key to success in the role. Learning strategies to overcome adversity and becoming more resilient may provide an avenue for women to experience success as educational leaders and effectively lead the nation's schools.

Current research indicated the need to examine long-term practicing female superintendents to understand: (1) resiliency strengths of women superintendents; (2)

how women describe resilient strengths in the superintendency; and, (3) the resilient skill sets that are essential in overcoming the odds and being successful in the superintendency. This information created a more comprehensive picture of practicing women in the position of superintendent and provides encouragement and direction to other females aspiring to the position. Although Patterson and Kelleher (2005) have identified six strengths of resilient leaders which help leaders move ahead in the face of adversity, little was known about the resilience strengths of Georgia's female superintendents and the role resilience when faced with adversity inherent in the position. Therefore, the researcher proposed to explore the resilience strengths, how female superintendents in Georgia experience resilience, and how the resiliency skills played a role in overcoming the adversity faced in position of superintendent.

Research Questions

The need for female superintendents who possess a skill set necessary for success in the leadership role of the superintendent is of significant concern in the female dominated profession of education. Although more men serve in the role, the 21st century superintendency is characterized as a field of adversity and challenges for which women are well-suited. However, resiliency is considered a major trait needed by anyone who serves in the role. More knowledge about the phenomenon of resiliency and how women experience the superintendency was needed. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences in the professional lives of female superintendents in Georgia to understand the role of resilience in overcoming the odds of being successful in the challenging role of the chief school leader. The overarching research question for this study was: What

resiliency strengths do Georgia's female public school superintendents exhibit in their positions?

- (1) What are the resiliency profiles of female superintendents?
- (2) How do female superintendents describe their experiences in the superintendency?
- (3) What role does resiliency play in the experiences of females in the superintendency?

Significance of the Study

The study has significance for the disciplines of education, educational leadership, and feminism. Additional research adds to the knowledge base of each area and stimulates further research about resilience in larger, more diverse populations. Research documents the concerns, knowledge, challenges, and successes of women in educational leadership, but additional information was needed about the specific strategies and skills needed for female superintendents to strengthen resilience. As noted previously, women comprise the majority of educational professionals in the United States but are underrepresented in the superintendency. By sharing life and career experiences, the participants of this study contributed to the general body of knowledge on women and the superintendency and provided access to information to encourage more women to aspire and seek the position. Information gained as a result of this study may encourage more women to not only break the superintendency's glass ceiling, but be successful, highly effective educational leaders leading reform efforts.

As an aspiring superintendent, the desire to learn from others who have faced adversity and applied strategies to move through adverse experiences motivated the

researcher to study the factors which contribute to the resilience of women in the superintendency in Georgia. The results of this study offered insight into providing a work setting conducive to the development of resilient leaders as well as strengthening the resilience of practicing leaders facing adversity. Also, results of this study helped peers and supporters understand the experiences of women and the skills and professional learning needed to overcome the inherent adversity of the position.

Definitions

The following definitions were used in this study:

Resilience – Resilient people use energy productively to emerge from adversity stronger than ever (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). Resilient people resolve conflicts, turn disruptive changes into new directions, learn from the process, and become more successful and satisfied in the process (Maddi & Khoshaba, 2005).

Adversity – hardship, suffering, an extremely unfavorable experience or event (American Heritage Dictionary, 2010)

Research Procedures

The researcher's intention was to explore the phenomenon of resilience in the role of female superintendents. Superintendents are inevitably going to face adversity, and resiliency has been described as the capacity to recover, successfully adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social competence despite exposure to severe stress. Since research on resilience and the superintendency was limited, this study employed a mixed methods design, which allowed the researcher to study many female superintendents by questionnaire and several in more depth through interviews.

This sequential explanatory mixed methods approach, consisting of a quantitative phase using descriptive statistics supported by a second phase of qualitative interviewing, provided the opportunity to describe participants relative to certain traits related to the research questions. Also, the quantitative results were used to guide the sampling of participants for the qualitative phase. In the quantitative phase, the researcher mailed copies of the Leader Resilience Profile questionnaire, a tool designed to measure resilience strengths. In the second phase, the researcher interviewed five practicing female superintendents. According to the Georgia School Superintendents Association (GSSA) in March of 2008, forty-seven of Georgia's school superintendents are female. Based on this data, the researcher mailed initial invitations to practicing female superintendents introducing the research project. Included in the mailing was a brief questionnaire to determine each superintendent's willingness to participate and ascertain general demographic information. The researcher employed purposeful sampling to determine potential participants. According to Creswell (2003), the idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that best help the researcher understand the topic being studied.

The research for phase one of this study was conducted using the Leadership Resilience Profile, a valid and reliable instrument developed by Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009). The purpose of the instrument utilized in phase one was to examine resilience strengths of female superintendents. In phase two of the research study, the researcher developed an interview guide to use in interviews with each of the superintendents selected for the study. The guide included open ended, in-depth questions which allowed the participants to comprehensively articulate reality as it relates to

exploring experiences in the superintendency. The researcher's role was to facilitate the conversation through follow up questions as necessary to discover key themes and the meaning of the participants' experiences and the role of resilience when faced with adversity. Content validity was established through examination of the open-ended interview questions with the connection to the literature.

The initial invitation to participate in the study was mailed to 47 recipients in an effort to describe the initial sample. Prospective participants were sent a letter of invitation outlining the purpose of the study. The initial mailing also included basic demographic questions, questions to determine willingness to participate in a follow up interview, as well as the initial Leadership Resilience Profile survey. Priority for participation in the study was given to those participants with the longest tenure in the superintendency and the highest scores on the Leadership Resilience Profile.

During phase two, interviews were conducted face-to-face for 60 to 90 minutes in a private location (i.e., office or other setting) with five practicing female superintendents in Georgia school systems. The interview allowed the researcher to explore experiences in the context of the superintendency. The interviews were taped and were used to compare the resilience strengths utilized by female superintendents to Patterson and Kelleher's (2005) and Patterson, Goens, and Reed's (2009) three dimensions/skill areas of resilience.

The recorded interviews were transcribed and categorical coding and analysis of strategies were the primary method of data analysis. The researcher looked for repeating ideas and themes that demonstrate the role of resilience in the superintendency of female administrators.

Delimitations

Although all female superintendents were surveyed, the sample represented a small percentage of superintendents in Georgia. The small sample of female superintendents in Georgia was indicative of the barriers experienced by women aspiring to the position. Superintendents in small districts may face adversity different from superintendents in larger urban districts, based on size and the number of people involved in more urban and suburban districts. Female superintendents serving in private, parochial and charter schools were also excluded from the study as adversity may be different in these settings as well.

Limitations

Superintendents are very busy leaders who may not respond to a lengthy questionnaire with 73 items. The researcher provided follow-up mailings to encourage participation. Another limitation is inherent in the interview process, which required female superintendents to describe their experiences with a relative stranger. To overcome this limitation, the researcher provided the female superintendents with a copy of the interview protocol prior to the interview. The researcher used semi-structured interviews and some answers to interview questions may have reflected a response bias and inaccuracies. Participants may have been reluctant to note specific responses to adverse situations. To overcome this potential limitation, the researcher assured confidentiality of tapes and anonymity in reporting findings.

This study was limited to female superintendents serving as superintendents in public school districts in Georgia. While these findings may not be generalized to the population as a whole, the results provide women in similar positions in educational

administration in Georgia a rich description of the strategies that may contribute to resilience in the superintendency.

Organization of the Study

The existence of research on female superintendents originated from many sources including the practitioners in the field of educational leadership. No guarantee exists that any one person's actions will be determined in all situations by one's gender, but research exists on several fronts concerning gender and leadership concepts and suggested that women need their own knowledgebase to truly be factored into the definition of leadership. Research focused on women's behaviors, the unique situations that frame actions and responses, and the development of resilience, helped bridge the gap between the current reality and future opportunities for females in the superintendency.

Chapter 1 included a description of the nature and purpose of the study, the specific research questions, methods, assumptions made by the researcher, definitions of terms used in the study, and limitations. This chapter briefly described the experiences of females in educational leadership supported by issues involving women and the superintendency, as well as the effectiveness of women in leadership. Resiliency was defined as it applies to educational leadership.

Chapter 2 included a review of relevant literature on resiliency and the superintendency. Literature that reviewed the barriers of women in educational administration was included in an effort to provide a comprehensive investigation of the experiences of women superintendents.

Chapter 3 included a presentation of the methodology of the study. The research methods used, the design, and the procedures used in the research were discussed including a justification for qualitative research methods and the selection of the participants. The purpose of the study and research question was revisited in this chapter.

Chapter 4 included a presentation of the results of the study, and the findings related to each of the research questions.

Chapter 5 included conclusions, discussions, and implications of results for theory, future research and practice.

Summary

Historically, women have been major contributors to educational systems, but few have obtained the position of superintendent when compared to their male counterparts. Although the percentage of women in the position has increased somewhat over time, women continue to face barriers. However, present school reform and district accountability require superintendents to move beyond traditional practices. There are numerous social, professional, and political forces impacting the role of the superintendent to positively influence classroom instruction and student achievement. Today's superintendents face numerous situations that generate adversity and increasing one's resilience is critical for success. Research documents that women have the skills and characteristics needed to lead effectively in the top-ranking position. However, not much was known about women and the resilience strengths demonstrated in a time of conflict and stress. Overcoming adversity and recognizing the importance of resilience in the role of superintendent are important to a female's success in the top-ranking position.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature on resilience and resilient characteristics of leaders provides a comprehensive description of the definition of resilience and resilient strengths. The importance of resilience emerges as the key theme. According to Maddi & Khoshava (2005), resilience is more important in today's world than ever before. Resilience enables individuals to courageously face potentially disruptive changes and turn adversity into advantageous opportunity. If individuals embrace change and use it creatively, new opportunities are revealed to develop better ways of working.

Researchers highlight the changing role of the school superintendent (Petersen & Barnett, 2003) and agree that the chaotic period that exists in education today will not end soon. Patterson (2001) states that those in educational leadership positions should see change as a challenge, accept responsibility, and move forward when faced with adversity. According to Patterson, by accepting responsibility and moving forward, educational leaders become more resilient, and resilient educational leaders are imperative for schools to achieve goals during a time of uncertainty and poor economic conditions. Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009) provide a framework for understanding resilience and resilient strengths in the context of the superintendency.

Data confirms that women continue to face barriers in obtaining the top-ranking position of superintendent (Glass and Franceschini, 2007). However, research also documents that women have the skills needed to effectively lead school systems. Women demonstrate resilience and have a multidimensional gendered leadership that provides the opportunity to vary responses to fit the complexity of the organization. An overview of

the literature provided a deeper understanding of resilience, resilience models, and the importance of resilience strengths in the superintendency.

Resilience

What is resilience? The term resilience is derived from the Latin root meaning “to jump or bounce back” and has no one accepted definition. Most definitions found in the literature are very similar, with each definition providing a different perspective or emphasis. The concept has been examined independently from a variety of disciplines including psychology, medicine, social science, human development and change theory. However, as one studies the many definitions of resilience found in the literature, a common sense of resilience emerges. According to Waller (2001), the construct of resilience initially emerged through empirical findings of longitudinal studies on at-risk children in developmental psychopathology and psychiatry. These studies focused on resilience by exploring mental health, coping, academic and social competence.

Many fields view resilience as a human capacity, strength, or ability (Werner & Smith, 2001; Wayman, 2002; Hollister-Wagner, Foshee, & Jackson, 2001). Werner and Smith define resilience as the ability to withstand or successfully cope with adversity. Waller (2001) and Masten (2001) state resiliency emphasizes the ability of individuals to achieve positive and normal development despite challenging conditions, risks, and stress. Fullan (2005) suggests that resilience is the combination of perseverance and flexibility. The concept of resilience indicates that one has certain qualities which enable one to face difficult or adverse circumstances. Not only does the concept denote qualities that enable one to face adversity, but resilience also provides an opportunity to become stronger while overcoming the experience. The study of resilience highlights a shift in

focus from studying problems and deficits of individuals to understanding the strengths of individuals faced with adversity. According to Huber and Mathy (2002), rather than traditional models which focus on factors which predispose individuals to adverse experiences, current resilience research explores factors which allow an individual to successfully overcome adversity.

Early writings suggest resilience is an inherent trait which one either possesses or does not possess (Brody, 2005). However, Luthar and Zelazo (2003) warn against developing a negative attitude toward individuals unable to overcome adversity since resilience should be viewed as a process. According to Brooks and Goldstein (2004), being resilient does not indicate any risks or adverse conditions. Resilience is learning how to deal effectively with the inevitable stresses of life. In educational environments, resilience is “using energy productively to achieve school goals in the face of adverse conditions” (Patterson, Collins, & Abbot, 2004, p. 3) The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2006) defines resilience as “the ability to recover quickly from illness, change, or misfortune; buoyancy”. Merriam-Webster (2010) defines resiliency as “the ability to recover strength, spirits, good humor, etc. quickly; buoyancy”. Consequently, resilience is the capacity to deal with daily adversity as well as the reserve to endure challenges.

The good news is resilience can be learned. According to Coutu (2002), one must be trained to survive before an adverse event occurs. If factors can be identified which contribute to resilience and the development of resilience, the body of knowledge will be enriched, leadership will be enhanced, and schools and school systems will be more effectively led for longer periods of time. According to Reivich & Shatte (2002), current

literature suggests resilience is a continuum. Reivich & Shatte indicate that regardless of one's position on the continuum, resilience can be increased through intentional learning and cultivation.

Gu and Day (2007) concluded the capacity to be resilient in a variety of circumstances can be enhanced or inhibited by the nature of the setting in which one works, the people with whom one works, and the strength of one's beliefs and aspirations. Gu and Day further state that resilience can be achieved through the following; caring and attentive educational settings; positive and high expectations; positive learning environments; a strong supportive social community; and supportive peer relationships.

According to Haw (2010), resilience is a non-negotiable in private industry and is not an innate characteristic. Haw reinforces the idea that where resilience is not developed naturally over time through adversity, resilience can be taught. Resilience has been identified by corporate leaders globally as the most critical factor in helping businesses survive in tough economic times.

Sankey (2004) and Patterson (2010) also indicate the ability to remain strong amid ambiguity and change, or resilience, is a skill that can be developed and honed. Sankey (2004) supports the idea that resilience is a skill that can be cultivated by creating strategies to develop greater resilience. According to Sankey, resilience is the outcome of one's choices. Coutu (2002) highlights Harvard research conducted during a 60-year period which documents that one can become markedly more resilient during one's lifetime.

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) state “emotional intelligence,” of which resilience is a component, contributes to leadership effectiveness much more than IQ. The Work and Family Institute has identified the following seven qualities of peak performers: vision, focus, values, passion, emotional intelligence, balance, and resiliency (Estep, 2005).

According to Coutu (2002), terrorism, war, and the recession have made understanding resilience more important than ever. Reivich and Shatte (2002) suggest four fundamental uses of resilience: to overcome the obstacles of childhood, to steer through the everyday adversities that befall us, to bounce back from a major setback, and to reach out to others to maximize potential.

O’Hara (1995) states resilience can significantly reduce costs through reduced absenteeism, greater productivity, and a reduction in the costs of recruiting, training, and replacing leaders. The cost of teacher and administrator turnover is significant, and often estimated at 150% of one’s annual salary. According to Sullivan (2007), not all turnover is equal. The cost of losing a high performing employee is three times greater than an average performer. For leaders, Bliss (2008) states the cost is significantly higher at 200% to 250% of annual compensation. Hoffman (2004) indicates there are multiple reasons that school districts have difficulty recruiting and retaining administrators including increase accountability expectations, the necessity for leaders to spend a great deal of time meeting the demands of the job, and stress. In a survey by CareerBuilder.com, burnout is identified as a main factor contributing to turnover by 75% of workers in the United States (Crews, 2007). Burnout is defined by Lorenz (2007) as a response to work stress that leaves one feeling powerless, hopeless, drained, and

frustrated. These factors and the constant change inherent in the education profession call for resilience in employees at all levels.

Characteristics of Resilient Leaders

In a report titled, *Women Leaders and Resilience: Perspectives from the C-Suite* (2010), corporate leaders in 20 countries indicate that women are more resilient than men. Haw (2010) further states that many of the companies included in the study indicate an increasing number of women-specific leadership development programs offered in an effort to increase the resilience and confidence of women. As a result, women are better prepared to succeed in senior leadership positions. The study found resilience, which was defined as the combination of adaptability, flexibility and strength of purpose, and the ability to overcome challenges and turn them into opportunities, should be a key capability when determining who to retain.

Reivich and Shatte (2002) discuss three hallmarks of resilient people: (a) a task oriented coping style; (b) a deeply held belief in one's ability to control the outcomes of one's life; and, (c) the ability to use connections to others as a way to cope. In addition, Reivich and Shatte identify four additional skills of resilient individuals. Resilient people are able to monitor and regulate emotions, including the emotions of others. The ability to stay focused on solving problems and high self-efficacy are also identified as resilient skills. Resilience is also demonstrated by the ability to see challenges as opportunities with a willingness to take risks.

Patterson and Kelleher (2005) indicate that resilient people possess optimism or have the ability to maintain a positive outlook in the face of adversity, without denying reality and the constraints posed by reality. According to Sankey (2004), physical health

and mental health are the foundation of resilience as a means of allowing one's body to perform at a higher level. A resilient leader is one who does not neglect physical and mental health.

Gu and Day (2007) identified two assets of resilient teachers, a sustaining sense of vocation and a developing sense of efficacy. Patterson, Collins and Abbott (2004) identified several common qualities of resilient teachers and teacher leaders: (a) A set of values which guide one's professional decision making; (b) Valuing quality professional development and pursuing opportunities outside the district when needed; (c) Mentoring; (d) Remaining student focused; (e) initiative to solve problems; (f) Emotional and intellectual support group of colleagues and friends; (g) Open to new ideas to enhance teaching skills; (h) Know when to be involved and when not to; and, (i) Avoid bureaucracy which reduce energy.

According to Patterson and Patterson (2001), characteristics emerge which help school administrators move ahead in the face of adversity. Resilient leaders take a proactive approach rather than a reactive or passive approach to problem solving and avoid being rigid when faced with a difficult situation. Adversity is anticipated and resilient leaders do not waste time on issues which diminish resilience. Resilient leaders recognize personal strengths and weaknesses, display patience, understanding, and humor when dealing with change. Resilient people see major changes or disruptions as uncomfortable but also believe one can learn and grow from negative experiences. These experiences and challenges help one deal more effectively with future adversity. Patterson describes resilient school leaders as those who consistently and persistently apply strategies to operate from a set of personal and organizational values, despite any

external adversities. Resilient people are flexible and believe that change is manageable. Flexible school leaders have a high tolerance for ambiguity, and do not need extended periods of time to recover from adversity. Patterson also describes resilient leaders who pay attention to the external forces and find ways to include diverse perspectives while always focusing energy to achieve goals.

Women, Resilience, and the Superintendency

Female superintendents remain a minority when compared to the representation of women in teaching positions and other educational leadership positions. According to *Women in the Labor Force: A Databook (2007 edition)*, women represent 63.4% of all educational administrators. Nationally, women make up 21.7% of school superintendents, up from 16% in 2000 and 18% in 2005 (Grogan & Brunner, 2005; Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Although men and women are both capable of resolving conflicts that emanate from the educational environment, *The State of the American School Superintendency: A Mid-Decade Study* reveals 29 percent of women superintendents say a glass ceiling exists that hurts women's chances of being selected for the job.

According to Björk (2000b), the United States public school superintendency continues to be the most gender-stratified executive position in the country. Men are 40 times more likely to advance from teaching to the top leadership role in schools (Skrla, 2000), and men are twice as likely as women to be appointed to the position of superintendent from the outside the system (Grogan & Brunner, 2005). According to Noel-Batiste (2009), males continue to dominate all facets of the educational administration domain except elementary school principalships and instructional specialists. Brunner (2000) found the percentage of women superintendents at the end of

the twentieth century to be approximately the same percentage of women superintendents at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Brunner (1999), the male dominance of the superintendency has existed since the creation of the position in the late nineteenth century. Tallerico and Blount (2004) agree with other researchers (Brunner & Björk, 2001; Grogan, 2003; Mertz, 2003) that caution should be utilized about drawing overly optimistic conclusions from the recent increase in female representation in administration since women have not attained, or sustained over time, equitable representation in school administration.

Has a hole opened in the glass ceiling for those females aspiring to the superintendency? Although male superintendents continue to significantly outnumber female superintendents, according to Derrington and Sharratt (2009), recent research indicates more women are moving to the top position. Glass and Franceschini (2007) indicate the percentage of female superintendents nationwide at 22% in 2006, a significant increase from 12% in the late 1990s. The increase in 2006 is encouraging, but women have a long way to go to reach representation in the superintendency at an equal number to male counterparts. When one compares the number of female teachers, 71%, then an even greater disparity exist. Derrington and Sharratt also highlight that the number of women achieving a superintendent position does not match the pool of talented women who are qualified for and would succeed in the position. Derrington and Sharratt state that although there may be a hole in the glass ceiling, “a strong ladder of support is required to climb through it.”

Although the number of female superintendents has been on the rise in recent years, the magnitude of this increase is concerning. At the current placement rate, the

number of women in the superintendency will not approach equal numbers of male superintendents anytime soon. In a study of California female superintendents, Wiekham (2008) found women less willing to relocate in order to obtain a superintendent position because of family or spouse's job. Women also have difficulty balancing the demands of the superintendent position and family responsibilities. Sharp, Malone, Walter, and Supley (2004) found the same frequently-cited concerns in Illinois, Indiana, and Texas. However, Derrington and Sharratt (2009) describe the more significant barriers to be stress and lack of support from teachers, parents, and the community.

According to Werner and Smith (2001), resilience does not eliminate risks and adverse conditions in life but allows the individual to deal with the adversity effectively. Resilience is associated with bouncing back from adverse conditions by doing something to alter the situation with the necessary skills, behaviors, or qualities so the situation is no longer stressful or problematic. Resilient superintendents should be able to flourish while facing adverse situations and maintain productive relationships while doing so. When facing negative outcomes or failure, resilient superintendents should be able to learn from the experience, and cope in a positive manner. According to Abdullah (n.d.), being resilient means one should show courage, flexibility, self-reliance, and the ability to find meaning and purpose in life.

Palladino, Haar, Grady and Perry (2007) list people skills through which constituents observe genuine care and interest as a consistent trait associated with successful superintendents. Grogan (2003) argues that people skills in the superintendency are different from the skills needed in school level administrative positions. According to Grogan, superintendents encounter demands of forming

relationships with members of a “highly pluralistic society”. These demands must be met in addition to other fundamental demands of the position such as managing fiscal and human resources of a district.

Moral responsibility, according to Palladino et al., also accounts for the superintendent’s sustainability and calls attention to the ethical leadership skills necessary for the position. Fullan (2005) calls for “deep learning” to be a resilient superintendent and further states that sustainability requires continuous improvement, adaptation and collective problem solving in the face of complex challenges that continually arise.

Instructional leadership skills are identified as the third characteristic of successful superintendents as high stakes testing mandates force districts to recruit superintendents capable of securing success with state and national requirements. In conclusion, Palladino et al. state a successful superintendent should be a moral person with exceptional people skills and instructional leadership traits. According to Haws (2010), women have an advantage since women are more creative, innovative, and excellent planners, which makes women better problem solvers.

Christman and McClellan (2005) studied seven women identified as resilient administrators. The researchers expected to find “feminine” traits such as collaboration and caring which sustained the women in each administrative position. However, the results of the study describe the resilience of these women by a complex use of gender in leadership that defied being categorized into one gender construct model. Resilient female leaders embraced or disclaimed one gender norm for another to varying degrees based on specific situations. These resilient women had a more multidimensional gendered leadership that provided the opportunity to vary responses to fit the complexity

of the organization's expectations. Christman and McClellan also found these women to be able to navigate the barriers which are created by expectations. These women were able to choose typically feminine or masculine responses to particular events based on the event itself and the organizational culture as a whole.

Skrobarcek and Stark (2002) reviewed the career paths of aspiring female superintendents in Texas and determined the barriers female superintendents encounter are different than male counterparts. Women have not been socialized to aspire to administrative positions or to prepare for the position. School systems are structured in ways that tend to exclude women from higher-level jobs. Male dominance in society overall results in covert and overt forms of sex discrimination. This discrimination limits women to subordinate positions both publically and privately.

The researchers, Polidore, Edmonson, and Slate (2010), proposed the question, "Can a model of adult resilience be gleaned from those teaching experiences?" The researchers examined the philosophical views of three female African American educators as well as the life experiences that contributed to resilience. Polidore, Edmonson, and Slate (2010) state resilient teachers who have endured adverse situations over time who remain positive may be able to impart a sense of optimism that children can emulate regardless of the student's situation. The data from interviews revealed the presence of eight themes: "(a) deeply committed; (b) enjoys change; (c) bias for optimism; (d) flexible locus of control; (e) ability to control events; (f) moral and spiritual support; (g) positive relationships; and, (h) education viewed as important" (p. 595). Findings indicated that a model of resilience in education can assist learning communities with recruitment and support. A model can also provide modeling opportunities for

parents and teachers so students begin to emulate resilience themes to help develop positive life coping strategies.

Palladino et al. (2007) solicited testimonies from five female superintendents, each in an initial appointment less than five years, with the intent to tap into the female's unique stories of resistance in the superintendency. The researchers discussed the challenges encountered and probed for a better awareness of how these women overcame difficulties to exert full leadership potential and subsequent commitment to foreshadowed, long-term superintendent careers. Palladino et al. employed a theoretical lens to identify implications for best practices and additional research. The researchers reported a major thematic finding, "relationships". The participants identified inter and intra-school relationships as the essential core of their resistance, success, commitment, and joy as a superintendent. In overcoming each adversity, respondents explained how specific relationships helped promote success with each area.

Resilience Models

Much of what is known about human resilience has come from examining children when faced with adversity. Resilience theory, although it has been evolving for many years, has recently entered a new era. What started as an enquiry into the childhood roots of resilience has grown into a broad field of study. Resilience theory currently addresses children, adults, families, communities, workplaces, and policies. There are few areas that have not been touched in some way by resilience theory.

Richardson (2002) proposes that resilience research occurred in three stages. The initial stage of resilience research focused on the discovery of internal and external factors which promote resilience in children. The second stage focused on discovering

how the qualities identified from the first stage could be acquired by individuals. This stage led to the development of resilience models. The last stage of research is an attempt to understand the motivation for individuals to reintegrate or return to a state of unity. Richardson refers to the current stage as the study of innate resilience.

Models or frameworks often aid in the process of investigating complex concepts such as resilience, and many researchers have developed models or frameworks that attempt to illustrate resilience (Beasley, Thompson, & Davidson, 2003; Brooks & Goldstein, 2003; Richardson, Neiger, Jensen, & Kumpfer, 1990; Richardson, 2002; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004; Reivich & Shatte, 2002; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Patterson, Goens, & Reed, 2009). Of particular interest in this research study is the resilience process as well as the innate qualities associated with resilience as related to the adversities experienced by female superintendents.

More recently, researchers have examined individual qualities and characteristics that allow for an individual to achieve resilience. Beasley, Thompson, and Davidson (2003) studied factors that aided adults dealing with negative life events and stress. Findings indicated cognitive hardiness and individual coping style aided in the development of resilience. Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) examined the function of positive thoughts in individuals shown to exhibit resilience and concluded that individuals who have positive emotions, such as optimism in the face of adversity, are able to overcome adversity.

Richardson and colleagues propose a resiliency model which conceptualizes resilience as a cyclical process (Richardson, Neiger, Jensen, & Kumpfer, 1990). Positive adaptation is not just the act of overcoming a challenge or obstacle, but involves

improvement beyond the previous level of competence. The intent of Richardson's model is to provide understanding of how resilient qualities are created and strengthened through adverse experiences. The basic principle is that an individual prefers to maintain a comfort zone in which one has adapted physically, mentally, and spiritually to a set of good and bad circumstances. This process is referred to as reintegration. According to Richardson (2002), reintegration occurs when one is able to grow through disruption. Resilient reintegration is a strengthening effect on an individual by which the development of skills enables one to deal with future adversity.

Once a disruption occurs, individuals go through a state of disorganization then form new skills to try and recover and correct the disorganization. Disruption is caused when one experiences an adverse situation not experienced before or experienced before without resilient reintegration. According to Richardson (2002), disruptions are what present individuals with the opportunity to grow and learn. Reintegration with loss exists when one suffers a gradual decrease as a result of the disruption and reintegrates at a lower level than before the disruption. Richardson highlights that disruption is not always an unexpected experience. Individuals often create disruptions intentionally with an awareness of the opportunities for learning and personal growth.

Brooks and Goldstein (2003) framework identifies a "resilient mindset" common to resilient individuals. Resilient individuals have a feeling of being in control of one's life. Other commonalities include the ability to be empathic and to establish realistic goals and expectations. Resilience is demonstrated by feeling special and not self-centered while helping others reciprocate the feeling. Brooks and Goldstein highlight the importance of living a responsible life based on a set of values and being a compassionate

and contributing member of society. Effective communication and interpersonal capabilities as well as solid problem solving and decision making skills are strengths of resilient individuals. Most importantly, Brooks & Goldstein state resilient individuals know how to strengthen one's stress hardiness and learn from failures as well as successful experiences.

Other researchers, in addition to developing a resilience framework, added professional learning components to help develop resilience. Reivich and Shatte (2002), professors at the University of Pennsylvania, developed a "Resilience Quotient" evaluation along with training modules in seven areas designed to increase resilience. Customer service representatives trained utilizing the model outperformed the control group in the four most important performance elements of the position. In an additional study, Reivich and Shatte trained underperforming sales and office managers utilizing the resilience modules. Within one month, the employees outperformed peers by 50%. Coutu (2002) states that non-resilient individuals more easily develop resiliency skills than those with a "head start" (p. 50). Those who start with deficits in resilience skills can make tremendous progress in cultivating resilience.

Patterson and Kelleher's Resilience Model

In *Resilient School Leaders*, Patterson and Kelleher (2005) developed three components of a resilience framework: (a) the resilience cycle that one experiences when moving from adversity to growth; (b) the resilience dimensions of interpretation, capacity, and actions; and, (c) the resilience strengths exemplified by resilient school leaders. Patterson and Kelleher propose three dimensions which frame the core of a comprehensive framework: the interpretation of current adversity and future possibility,

the resilience capacity to tackle adversity, and the actions needed to become more resilient in the face of adversity.

In the dimension of interpretation, Patterson and Kelleher (2005) add the variable of interpretation into the historical stimulus-response theory of early psychologists. Adversity occurs in one's life. The adversity is interpreted, drawing on one's sense of what led to the adversity, who or what actually caused the adversity, the risks, and what the future holds as a result. Based on one's interpretation of these variables, a response is selected. Basically, one chooses how to interpret adversity. According to Patterson and Kelleher, the interpretation dimension serves as a master filter that all stimuli must pass through before a response is selected. This interpretation is the single most powerful factor in predicting one's resilience. One's interpretation is an expression of the level of relative optimism or pessimism.

Patterson and Kelleher (2005) categorize four types of perspectives related to optimism. Unrealistic pessimists have a negative interpretation of adversity and have no confidence that anything positive will come out of the adversity in the future. Realistic pessimists have a reasonably accurate interpretation of reality of the past, but a negative expectation of the future. Realistic pessimists view efforts as having little if any impact on the future. Unrealistic optimists have an unrealistic perspective of the past and are quick to interpret reality without taking the time to determine what is truly happening. Unrealistic optimists underestimate the risks posed by the adversity and assume the outcome will be positive. Realistic optimists have an optimistic view of the future and seek to understand fully reality including the causes of the adversity. Realistic optimists

believe one can make a difference in the future despite any constraints imposed by reality and gather accurate information to fully understand past and present reality.

Patterson and Kelleher (2005) highlight that despite chronic adversity, there are many examples of school leaders who demonstrate resilience capacity and lead high performing schools. Three sources make up this resilience capacity: personal values; personal efficacy; and personal energy. As one experiences adversity, resilience capacity is expanded through strengthening personal values, efficacy, and energy. This new expanded resilience capacity better prepares one to face future adversity. The reverse is true as well. If one reacts to the adversity negatively, resilience capacity is diminished.

Personal values consist of one's core values and transcend time and context. Included in one's personal values are primary educational values (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). These values represent what matters most to you in your role as a school leader. Program values are the values that guide your actions related to specific program initiatives in your organization.

Personal efficacy, or your belief in your capacity to accomplish challenging goals, is composed of your sense of self-confidence and competence and your strong connections to others who support your efforts (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). According to Patterson and Kelleher, one's past competence directly affects one's present confidence, which in turn affects present competence and future confidence. Strong self-confidence and competence combine to create a positive upward spiral of improved performance.

Personal energy is a resource that you draw upon when you are ready to act to do the work needed to move ahead in the face of adversity. According to Patterson and

Kelleher (2005), energy comes in four types: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Patterson & Kelleher state physical energy lies at the heart of alertness and vitality and affects one's ability to manage emotions, sustain concentration, think creatively, and even maintain commitment to the mission. Mental energy allows one to focus and be mentally acute. Spiritual energy provides the capacity to overcome adversity in support of an issue beyond one's own self interest. Spiritual energy promotes full engagement. According to Patterson and Kelleher, one moves from capacity to strength when one adds the resilience dimension of action. "A resilience strength is the sum of the dynamic interaction among three dimensions of resilience: interpretation, capacity, and action" (p. 11).

A Framework for Understanding Resilience in Educational Leadership

The work of Patterson and Kelleher (2005) was expanded by Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009). Patterson, Goens, and Reed state that adversity in the superintendency is inevitable and resilience is optional. One can choose whether or not to exercise resilience strategies. According to Patterson, Goens, and Reed, resilience is at the heart of successful leadership. The researchers begin with an assessment of the level of functioning in normal times, and then describe what can happen when adversity strikes. All leaders experience a level of deterioration after experiencing adversity. Leaders lacking resiliency skills can rapidly become dysfunctional leaders. Those who are moderately resilient will limit the deterioration by adapting in a way that allows for survival. Leaders with relatively more resilience will move beyond adaptation to recovery, ending up at the same level of functioning as they were before experiencing the adversity.

According to Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009), leaders who are most resilient

will move beyond the adaptation and recovery phase into growth and development. These leaders will move to a higher level of performance than before experiencing the adversity. These leaders will develop the most in terms of resiliency skills and will create a positive cycle that will lead to future preparedness. Patterson, Goens, and Reed indicate that at this level, resilient leaders are able to recover, learn from, and mature developmentally when faced with adversity. Patterson, Goens, and Reed state one can develop concrete skills to boost resilience. These skills are categorized in three areas: thinking skills, capacity skills, and action skills. Each skill area is further defined by strengths and action strategies (See Appendix J).

Thinking skills are interpretation filters (Patterson, Goens, & Reed, 2009). A leader often does not control the nature or intensity of an adverse situation, but do have a choice about how the situation is interpreted. Resilient leaders accurately and clearly understand the present adversity and act from a comprehensive picture of reality. Resilient leaders demonstrate an optimistic view about the possibilities of positive outcome without denying restraints.

The researchers (Patterson, Goens, & Reed, 2009) use the metaphor of a fuel tank to describe capacity skills. Capacity skills are the fuel which supplies the necessary energy resilience actions. One's leadership resilience capacity is elastic and can be increased over time as one confronts adversity successfully. Four leader resilience strengths comprise capacity: personal values, personal efficacy, personal support base and personal well-being. Patterson, Goens, and Reed state leaders can successfully expand capacity by: reflecting on actions needed that are consistent with what matters most among competing values and opposition; reflecting on actions needed to

demonstrate a sense of confidence, competence, and respected leadership presence; identifying individuals that can be trusted to discuss doubts and fears with; and, finding healthy ways to channel physical and emotional energy as a stress reliever. The more “fuel” one can add to the tank during good times, the more quickly the tank will refill after adversity.

According to Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009), resilience thinking skills and capacity building skills are necessary, but not sufficient, to sustain resilience. Resilience action skills are crucial. One needs to take deliberate actions to apply resilience thinking and capacity building skills to develop resilience. Action skills demonstrate how quickly one can recover and learn in the face of adversity. Leaders with strong action skills show perseverance in staying true to the course of the goals of the organization and demonstrate adaptability in seeking flexible and creative approaches to adversity. Leaders demonstrate resilience action skills by assuming personal responsibility for mistakes and standing accountable for the long-term organizational impact of tough leadership decisions.

Resilient superintendents exhibit resilience action skills in four areas: perseverance, adaptability, courageous decision-making, and personal responsibility (Patterson, Goens, & Reed, 2009). When disruptions occur, resilient leaders demonstrate adaptability by resisting the temptation to retreat to the old way of handling issues and instead, seek flexible and creative approaches to get the organization through the tough times. Resilient superintendents demonstrate perseverance by staying focused and refusing to let adversity interfere with organizational effectiveness. Courage is modeled by taking actions to move ahead, even when adverse circumstances are ambiguous and

confusing. Finally, resilient superintendents publicly accept personal responsibility for contributing to adversity.

According to Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009), one instrument utilized to measure resilience is the Leaders Resilience Profile. The leader resilience instrument is designed to provide an individualized profile of resilience strengths. The framework described by Patterson, Goens, and Reed aligns resilient strengths determined by the instrument with thinking, capacity, and action skills (See Appendix H). Action strategies are defined for the resilient strengths which leaders can implement or demonstrate to become more resilient and lead more effectively during adversity (See Appendix J). The Leader Resilience Profile reports resilience strengths by providing a raw score for each strength and by grouping each strength by skill set. Patterson, Goens, and Reed state that resilient leaders should align their beliefs with specific actions to demonstrate responsibility for the strength and success of the organization.

Summary

Specific characteristics set apart highly successful leaders from peers. Many leaders have the ability to bounce back when faced with failure, loss, or other obstacles. Why does adversity that defeats and exhausts some leaders tend to invigorate, inspire, and motivate others? While education, experience, and training are essential foundations for all leaders, the greatest predictor of success may be the beliefs and behaviors associated with resilience. An accurate self-awareness which allows women superintendents to frankly identify resilience strengths and areas where assistance is needed may serve to enhance resilience.

Legislative mandates at the federal, state, and local level continually challenge superintendents. Information and demands from parents, principals, teachers, members of the board, federal and state departments, external advocates and programs, and community groups constantly bombard superintendents. Current research does not present an accurate reflection of adverse experiences in leadership by gender. Women who have been able to integrate personal obligations with the demands of the superintendency are an untapped pool of strong, qualified applicants. The women who do succeed appear to have unusually resilient, flexible, and accommodating systems of support.

In this chapter, the literature on resilience, resilience models, and female superintendents was reviewed. While resilience and resilience models are documented in the literature, there seems to be a lack of information on the resilient strengths of females in the superintendency. As the current percentage of women superintendents has increased, it is evident that some women have learned to overcome the adversity that exist within the position, but it is important that the stories these women are shared. Thus, the researcher focused on the resilient strengths of women currently holding the position of superintendent of schools.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

According to Dr. Diane Reed, a leader who is resilient and who adapts to change and learns from mistakes is a much more effective leader (Delisio, 2007). As stated in Coutu (2002), one's level of resilience determines success or failure more than education, experience, or training, whether in the cancer ward, the Olympics, or in the boardroom. Additionally, if the resilience of a leader can be increased, one is enabled to lead longer and contribute more effectively to school systems. One measure of a superintendent's worth is the level of resilience demonstrated in the event of a crisis (Pardini, 2001). Literature on the superintendency often explored the negative aspects of the position, but rarely documented the skills and strategies utilized by effective superintendents. More specifically, as more women seek the male-dominated position of chief school leader, it was helpful to understand the phenomenon of resiliency in the superintendency from the female perspective.

Given the increasing demands of the public school environment, universities and school districts are striving to create support mechanisms designed to increase administrator resiliency (Hoffman, 2003). With the increased challenges, stress, and need for longevity in leadership, the literature and research conclude that resilience is a valuable skill to possess. Educational leaders must have resilience to thrive, not just survive, in leadership positions. However, according to Patterson and Kelleher (2005), resilience can be learned and can be taught. Consequently, if factors can be identified that contribute to resilience and enable one to "learn" and cultivate resilience in educational

environments, the body of knowledge on the superintendency can be enhanced, leaders can be enriched, and school systems can be led more effectively. Therefore, the researcher wanted to explore how female superintendents in Georgia experience adversity and how the phenomenon of resiliency plays a role in overcoming the adversity they face. The researcher explored the experiences in the professional lives of female superintendents in public school systems in Georgia to understand strategies used to demonstrate and strengthen resilience.

Research Questions

The following overarching question guided the study: What resiliency strengths do Georgia's female public school superintendents exhibit in their positions? In addition, the following subquestions were used to answer the overarching question.

- (1) What are the resiliency profiles of female superintendents?
- (2) How do female superintendents describe their experiences in the superintendency?
- (3) What role does resiliency play in the experiences of females in the superintendency?

Research Design

The researcher used a mixed methods design, a procedure for collecting, analyzing and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study to understand a research problem more completely (Creswell, 2003). According to Creswell, the rationale for utilizing any method for a study rests with the purpose and assumptions of the research questions. Tashakkori and Teddie (2003) highlight that mixed methods are often more efficient in answering the

research questions than either qualitative or quantitative alone. A mixed method study allowed one set of data to complement the other and developed a more comprehensive understanding of experiences of superintendents and the strategies utilized to demonstrate and strengthen resilience.

As the researcher sought to understand resilience in the leadership role of female superintendents, the sequential explanatory mixed methods approach allowed a multidimensional investigation to the study. The purpose of the sequential explanatory design is typically to use qualitative results to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of a primarily quantitative study (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2008). The initial quantitative phase of this study provided an opportunity for the researcher to describe female superintendents and resilience strategies utilized by them to move ahead in the face of adversity in an attempt to describe how they demonstrate resiliency. Quantitative results can be used to guide the purposeful sampling of participants for the qualitative phase, and the researcher of this study used the quantitative phase to identify the sample for the secondary, qualitative phase of the study. This method's strength was the straight forward nature of the design with clear steps for implementation. Plano Clark and Creswell also highlighted the design's strength of providing the researcher the opportunity to report findings in two distinct phases with a final discussion that brings the results together.

In the first phase, the quantitative data was collected using the Leadership Resilience Profile developed by Patterson, Goens and Reed (2009). The purpose of the profile was to provide a description of resilient strengths in the following categories: spirituality, support base, perseverance, understanding of reality, personal responsibility,

value-driven, courageous decision-making, optimism, efficacy, adaptability, emotional well-being, and physical well-being. The goal of the quantitative phase was to describe the resilient strengths of female superintendents in Georgia and to allow for purposefully selecting participants for the second phase. In addition, the investigator of this study provided a portrait of female superintendents in Georgia to better understand who the women educators are who have assumed the top-ranking position in school districts.

In the second phase, qualitative interviewing was utilized to collect data through semi-structured interviews to help describe the experiences of female superintendents and identify strengths utilized when faced with adversity. Patton (2002) described the benefits of the combination approach as combining an interview guide with a standardized format by specifying key questions exactly as the question must be asked while leaving other questions as topics to be explored at the interviewer's discretion based on the interview responses. This combined strategy of a structured interview guide with follow up questioning offered the researcher the flexibility to probe and explore responses in greater depth or pose questions about new unanticipated areas of interest. The phase two qualitative data analysis refined and explained the quantitative results by exploring experiences in greater depth.

The priority in this two-phase design was given to the qualitative phase since the qualitative research component represents the major aspect of data collection and analysis in the study, focusing on in depth descriptions of the adverse experiences and resilient strengths by exploring individual cases. At the completion of phase one, the researcher selected participants for phase two, the qualitative phase. The results of phase one and phase two were utilized to respond to the research questions of the study.

Population

To ensure a diverse and representative sample, the most current data at the Georgia School Superintendent's Association (GSSA) superintendent database was utilized to determine the initial population for phase one of this study. The population for phase one of the study was female superintendents in Georgia in the spring of 2011. While names of superintendents are typically listed on each system's website, the GSSA directory provided a comprehensive listing of all superintendents including demographic information. According to the GSSA directory, the researcher's initial screening identified that there were 181 Georgia school superintendents, 47 of which were female. Due to the small number of female superintendents in Georgia, all 47 female superintendents were included in the initial sample. From the respondents in phase one, the researcher further narrowed this database for phase two by identifying five female superintendents in public school systems in Georgia based on the following criteria to ensure high quality data collection:

1. System has a grade span of Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12);
2. Superintendent had a minimum of three years experience as a superintendent at the present district;
3. Willingness to participate
4. Results of the Leadership Resilience Profile with scores moderate to very high in all categories

Should the researcher not have identified five superintendents based on this criteria, the researcher would have modified the criteria to be able to complete phase two of the study. Potential modifications included fewer years of experience, a location that was

convenient to the researcher, or profile results that met moderate or very high in a majority rather than all of the categories. If the researcher had identified more than five based on the criteria, the researcher would have conducted a random drawing of all who met the criteria to select five.

Participants for phase two were selected based on the ability to best help the researcher understand the research problem and answer the research questions. According to Creswell (2003), this does not suggest the selection of a large number of participants and sites. Sampling is designed to pick a small number of cases that will yield the most information about a particular phenomenon. According to Creswell, purposeful sampling leads to greater depth of information from a smaller number of carefully selected cases. In this study the researcher believed that the in-depth interviewing of five superintendents would yield the data needed to respond to the questions of the study.

Instrumentation

The research for phase one of this study was conducted using the Leadership Resilience Profile, a valid and reliable instrument initially developed by Patterson, Patterson, and Riddle (2007). The purpose of the instrument utilized in phase one was to examine resilience strengths demonstrated by female superintendents to move ahead in the face of adversity and become more resilient (Reed & Patterson, 2008).

The profile consisted of 73 indicators that measure leader resilience, organized under three skill sets and twelve strengths/subscales. Information on the development and validity of the LRP can be found in Appendix D. Using a Likert scale, the 73-question inventory measured resilience strengths and yielded a score for each category, as well as a complete resilience profile. The profile provided a score for each of the strengths and

highlighted the strengths by theme. The research of Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009) identified the following resilience strengths of leaders: optimism, value-driven, personal efficacy, support base; personal well being, perseverance, adaptability, courageous decision making, and personal responsibility.

Reed and Patterson (2008) established content validity of the Leader Resilience Profile through a content validity study of a panel of experts. An expert of panel of sixty-seven rated the items on the initial instrument. Items were added, deleted, and modified to strengthen the content validity of the Leader Resilience Profile. Seventy-three items were selected to measure leader resilience (See Appendix B).

After establishing content validity of the instrument, Reed and Patterson (2008) assessed reliability, both in terms of internal consistency and stability over time. In assessing internal consistency reliability of the twelve subscales, the research team distributed the Leader Resilience Profile (LRP) to 65 educational leaders. For eight of the twelve indicators, the coefficient Alpha is at least 0.7. For the other four subscales, the coefficient Alpha ranges from 0.6349 to 0.69993.

Test-retest reliability was used to examine stability of the LRP over time. Based on 43 completed surveys from two different administrations of the LRP, eleven of the twelve subscales demonstrated a coefficient exceeding 0.6. Reed and Patterson (2008) conclude that the instrument is valid and reliable.

Although Reed and Patterson (2008) concluded that the instrument was valid and reliable, they expressed the limitations of a self-reported instrument and encouraged others to improve the instrument they developed. Permission was granted by both authors to utilize the instrument for this study.

Data Collection

After IRB approval from Georgia Southern University, the researcher initiated phase one by preparing the mailings for the participants of the study. During phase one, the researcher initially emailed all female superintendents to briefly describe the study, inform the superintendents of the upcoming request, and encourage participation. In addition, the researcher utilized “snowballing” to encourage female superintendents to participate in the research study. According to Creswell (2003), snowballing is conducive to use as a method of collecting robust data. The researcher utilized professional contacts to identify female superintendents who may be information-rich participants. The researcher used social networks to inform others of the research project and identify those who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study. Then, the invitation to participate in the study was mailed to 47 female superintendents. Prospective participants were sent a cover letter outlining the purpose of the study as well as an invitation to participate (See Appendix B) concurrently via email and U. S. mail with self-addressed stamped return envelopes included. The initial mailing also included basic demographic questions, questions to determine willingness to participate in a follow up interview, as well as the initial Leadership Resilience Profile survey.

To encourage participation in the study, all participants returning the initial survey had the opportunity to receive a copy of an individual Leadership Resilience Profile as well as the final results of the study. Each female superintendent was asked to complete and return the initial survey within ten days and include the school district information if the Leadership Resilience Profile is requested. After seven days the researcher sent another email to the female superintendents thanking them in advance for participating

and requesting a response if one has not been submitted. The initial mailing served to describe the initial sample, confirm demographics, determine the resilient strengths of practicing female superintendents in Georgia and identify potential candidates for phase two.

At the end of phase one, the researcher utilized the online profile at <http://www.ed.uab.edu/tri/lrp.asp> for the resilience instrument to key in each respondent's results and print each respondent's Leadership Resilience Profile. Potential candidates were determined based on the responses on the survey and each superintendent's willingness to participate in phase two based on the criteria previously described. If prospective participants volunteered for the study but did not meet the minimum qualifications, the researcher sent via e-mail or U.S. mail a letter thanking each respondent and indicating participation in the study was not needed.

To begin phase two, a letter and/or email thanking participants for their participation in phase two of the study along with an Informed Consent form and the interview protocol (Appendix C) was e-mailed and/or U. S. mailed to the five participants selected. The Informed Consent Form was collected at the time of the interview via mail or email. Next, participants who met the minimum selection criteria and were selected for the study were contacted by telephone and/or email to clarify any outstanding questions or concerns and to schedule a convenient date, time, and location to conduct face-to-face for 60 to 90 minutes in a private location (i.e., office or other setting). A private location was selected for each interview to provide the opportunity for the researcher to conduct the interview without interruption. The researcher began each interview utilizing the interview protocol. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by an online transcription

service providing completed transcripts in 72 hours. Once the interviews had been transcribed, the researcher mailed each participant a copy of the transcript for review by the participant for completeness and accuracy. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included in the mailing and participants had five days to respond if corrections needed to be made to the transcription of the interview.

Patton (2002) emphasized that detail is critical to the semi-structured interview approach to ensure that each interviewee gets asked the same questions, in the same way, and the same order, including standard probes. For this reason, the researcher developed the interview protocol (See Appendix C). In addition to the open ended interview questions, the researcher used follow-up questions and probes in order to collect the necessary data for analysis. The researcher engaged participants and maximized time by providing each participant with a copy of the Interview Protocol prior to the interview. A thank you letter was sent to those who participated following the interview.

Data Analysis and Reporting

According to Creswell (2009), if the research is designed with two relatively independent phases, then inferences made on the basis of the results of each strand are pulled together at the end of the study. The researcher described respondents of phase one in terms of years experience and the demographic information obtained from the questionnaire. The researcher also described respondents of phase one in terms of the means of each resilient strength to show low, moderately low, moderate, moderately high, or very high strengths of the female superintendents who responded. The researcher described the profiles of the female superintendents in response to research question number one.

Following phase one, the researcher began each interview by emphasizing the intent of the study. Once the interview was completed, the audio tapes were transcribed by an online transcription service. The transcripts from the interviews were coded based on the action strategies defined under each skill set by Patterson, Goens, and Reed's (2009) framework. Each action strategy was utilized as a coding category (See Appendix F). The findings were reported in narrative form and were utilized to answer research questions two and three.

Summary

Chapter three included a restatement of the research questions, the research design, instrumentation, procedures, participants, and method of analysis. The study involved a mixed-method of study using quantitative and qualitative data. The participants were selected from 47 of Georgia's practicing female superintendents. The Leader Resilience Profile developed by Patterson and Reed was utilized to survey the participating female superintendents. The researcher also conducted semi-structured interviews with the female superintendents responding to the questionnaire who were willing to participate in the interview phase of the study. Transcribed audio-taped interviews were analyzed to reproduce the experiences described by female superintendents.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH FINDINGS
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences in the professional lives of female superintendents in Georgia to understand the role of resilience in overcoming the odds of being successful in the challenging role of the superintendency. The population of the study included Georgia female public school superintendents who were representative of different size school systems and locations. Participants were asked to complete the Leadership Resilience Profile questionnaire and the responses were analyzed to provide a description of resilient strengths of the participants in the following categories: spirituality, support base, perseverance, understanding of reality, personal responsibility, value-driven, courageous decision-making, optimism, efficacy, adaptability, emotional well-being, and physical well-being. In addition, the questionnaire provided a portrait of female superintendents in Georgia to better understand who the women educators are who have assumed the top-ranking position in school districts. The analysis of the interviews is a presentation of how each participant's responses relate to the overarching research question. The resilience strategies utilized by five female superintendents in Georgia are presented in this chapter through the lens of the resilience framework presented by Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009).

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this study was: What resiliency strengths do Georgia's female public school superintendents exhibit in their positions? The researcher also addressed the sub-questions:

- (1) What are the resiliency profiles of female superintendents?
- (2) How do female superintendents describe their experiences in the superintendency?
- (3) What role does resiliency play in the experiences of females in the superintendency?

Summary of Procedures

The researcher employed a mixed method research design, a procedure for collecting, analyzing and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study. Quantitative methods were employed to assess the data collected through the Leadership Resilience Profile questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed by twenty-five female superintendents in Georgia which demonstrated a 53% response rate. The data collected from the questionnaire was entered online at <http://www.ed.uab.edu/tri/lrp.asp> and a resilience profile was generated for each participant. The data from the individual profiles was then analyzed to help answer the research questions and determine the participants for phase two. The questionnaire was used to describe the resiliency strengths of practicing female superintendents in Georgia. After analyzing the categories determined to be strengths, the demographic information, and each participant’s willingness to participate in phase two of the study, the participants for phase two were selected by a random drawing.

The population for the study included forty-seven female public school superintendents in Georgia. Each superintendent responding to the questionnaire represented varying years of experience in the position of superintendent, with only one superintendent holding the position for 10+ years. Respondents reported holding various

leadership positions prior to obtaining a superintendency: assistant principal, 80%; elementary principal, 48%, middle school principal, 24%; high school principal, 20%; district coordinator/director, 72%, assistant/associate superintendent, 76%; teacher, 92%. Respondents indicated succeeding a male superintendent more often than a female with 92% succeeding a male superintendent. Even though some demographic information obtained by the researcher on the questionnaire was not directly relevant to the study, the level of experience in the superintendency was used to prioritize the participants for phase two and demographic information helped paint a portrait of the participating female superintendents. A database with the district name, superintendent's name, district address, and superintendent's email address was developed utilizing data from the *Georgia School Superintendent's Association website (n.d.)*.

Emails were sent to all female superintendents four days prior to the mailing of the questionnaire to introduce the study and request each superintendent's participation. Questionnaires were mailed providing each superintendent the choice of participating by completing a paper questionnaire or by completing the questionnaire online. A cover letter was included explaining the study and providing Institutional Review Board information. A postage-paid envelope was included with the survey to make the return mailing simple and to encourage participation. There were 25 questionnaires completed during the two week response time, which resulted in a 53% return rate. Eight of the respondents reported being in the position 0-2 years, twelve reported holding the position 3-5 years, four indicated being superintendent for 6-10 years, and one female superintendent reported holding the position more than ten years.

Nine of the participants agreed to participate in an interview in phase two of the study. All nine participants met the minimum criteria for participation so five superintendents were randomly drawn. Due to the time constraints and previously scheduled commitments, one superintendent selected in the initial random drawing was unable to participate in phase two. One additional participant was drawn from the remaining four not selected in the original drawing.

Instrument Used in Data Collection

Participants completed the Leadership Resilience Profile questionnaire, LRP (see Appendix C), to provide a description of resilient strengths of the participants in the following categories defined by Reed and Patterson (2008): spirituality, support base, perseverance, understanding of reality, personal responsibility, value-driven, courageous decision-making, optimism, efficacy, adaptability, emotional well-being, and physical well-being. The questionnaire contained demographic information and 73 indicators that measure leader resilience, organized under three skill sets and twelve strengths/subscales. Using a Likert scale, the 73-question inventory measures resilience strengths and yields a score for each category, as well as a complete resilience profile. The profile provides a score for each of the strengths and highlights the strengths by theme. The research of Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009) identified the following resilience strengths of leaders: optimism, value-driven, personal efficacy, support base; personal well being, perseverance, adaptability, courageous decision making, and personal responsibility.

For phase two, participants who met the minimum selection criteria and were selected for the study were emailed to clarify any outstanding questions or concerns and to schedule a convenient date, time, and location to conduct face-to-face meeting for 60

to 90 minutes in a private location. The researcher began each interview utilizing the interview protocol (See Appendix F) which was provided to participants prior to the interview. Interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed by an online transcription service providing completed transcripts in 48 hours.

Findings

The questionnaire began with items requesting demographic data as well as one item asking participants to participate in phase two, the interview. The results have been organized and are displayed in the following tables.

Table 1

Years Experience in the Superintendency

<u>Number of Years</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0 – 2 years	8	32%
3 – 5 years	12	48%
6-10 years	4	16%
10+ years	1	4%
<u>Total</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>100%</u>

Note. Table 1 shows the majority, 20 or 80%, of the participants in this study had 5 or fewer years experience in the superintendency.

Table 2

Positions Held Prior to Superintendency

<u>Position</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Assistant Principal	20	80%
Elementary Principal	12	48%
Middle School Principal	6	24%

High School Principal	5	20%
District Coordinator/Director	17	68%
Assistant/Associate Superintendent	18	72%
Teacher	24	96%

Note. Table 2 shows that the majority, over 50%, of the participants held the positions of assistant principal, district coordinator/director, assistant/associate superintendent, and teacher.

Table 3

Succeeded Male/Female Superintendent

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	23	92%
Female	2	8%

Note. Table 3 shows that the majority, 23 or 92%, of the participants succeeded a male superintendent and two succeeded a female.

Based on the respondents, the typical practicing female superintendent in Georgia has been in the position 5 years or less, held the positions of teacher, assistant principal, district coordinator/director, and assistant/associate superintendent prior to obtaining the superintendency, and succeeded a male superintendent.

The participants of phase two, the interview phase, represented schools systems in Georgia with less than 5000 students. All interview participants had teaching experience and two of the five participants had held positions as elementary and/or middle school principals. No high school principal experience was reported by the interview participants. Only one of the participants indicated succeeding a female superintendent. Four of the five participants had held positions as district coordinators with two holding

the position of Assistant Superintendent. One participant reported having out of state experience as a superintendent. Each of the five participants perceived themselves as having high levels of resilience as indicated on the Leadership Resilience Profile.

Research Question 1

What are the resiliency profiles of female superintendents?

Resilient people use energy productively to emerge from adversity stronger than ever (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005). Resilient people resolve conflicts, turn disruptive changes into new directions, learn from the process, and become more successful and satisfied in the process (Maddi & Khoshaba, 2005). An analysis of the Leader Resilience Profile questionnaire was conducted using each respondent's scores for each resilient strength category based on the score placement on the continuum from low, moderately low, moderate, moderately high, very high. The lowest possible rating was "low" with a corresponding strength score range of 6 to 11. "Moderately high" scores ranged from 12 to 17 and the "moderate" strength score range was 18 to 23. Respondents in the "moderately high" continuum scored between 24 and 29. Strength scores in the range of 30 to 36 are considered "very high".

The strength categories with the highest scores indicating the resilience category as "very high" were: understanding reality; envisioning the future, personal values, personal efficacy, personal support base; spiritual well being, perseverance, adaptability, courageous decision-making, personal responsibility (Table 4). Emotional and physical well being were the only resilience strength categories with scores in the moderately high area of the resilience strength score continuum.

Table 4

Leadership Resilience Profile Scores by Category

Strength	Mean	SD
Understanding Reality	33.20	2.255
Envisioning the Future	32.88	1.922
Personal Values	32.92	2.482
Personal Efficacy	32.08	2.914
Personal Support Base	32.04	2.922
Emotional Well-Being	29.24	3.431
Spiritual Well-Being	31.76	3.140
Physical Well-Being	26.80	4.840
Perseverance	30.30	3.320
Adaptability	32.44	2.615
Courageous Decision-Making	32.40	2.677
Personal Responsibility	34.32	1.865

*Research Question 2**How do female superintendents describe their experiences in the superintendency?*

In this study adversity was defined as a hardship, suffering, or an extremely unfavorable experience or event. During the interview phase, the women in the sample were asked to describe experiences in the superintendency. The intention of the initial design of the study was to elicit information regarding the most adverse situations experienced in the position, but beginning with the first interview, it was apparent that

ambiguity and adversity were inherent and experiences occurred almost on a daily basis requiring the women to demonstrate leadership strategies to overcome obstacles and deal with difficult situations. As the participants described their experiences in the superintendency, they readily shared the trials and tribulations of being a female superintendent and their stories echoed with continued challenges. Experiences were described as “battles,” “storms,” “winning the war,” and “game playing”. Participants described adverse situations which centered around community issues and agendas, budget, and personnel, all areas which can be daunting.

In general, it appeared that the women who participated in the study saw their experiences in the role of superintendent as more than a job, even more than a profession, but a calling and expression of their commitment to enriching the lives of children. The position of superintendent was described as “mission work” and when asked at what point each of them were willing to abandon a cause, all female superintendents interviewed indicated, for them, abandoning a cause was not a option in the role of superintendent, highlighting their perseverance in the role.

All five interviewees recognized the uniqueness of serving in the role of superintendent during a time of shrinking resources, a situation that has forced some to reduce staff and eliminate programs. Likewise, the female superintendents recognize that taxpayers, parents, and community members feel the superintendent should be actively involved during emergencies to resolve any crisis that may arise. Each participant’s loyalty and commitment to the school, community, and the students was evident as they described strategies and solutions they had been a part of with the ultimate goal of serving students. They described a commitment to team involvement and believed in

leading with heart to meet the needs of school and community. The female superintendents described experiences where they were strategic planners as well as excellent managers of resources and information. They exemplified characteristics needed for the role of servant leaders.

Characteristics of the participants' leadership styles during adversity shared among all five participants were: fairness, practicing equity and objectivity including the ability to listen without judgment, and the importance of communication. Themes of honesty, openness, and accessibility were often identified as key qualities for success when dealing with problems. They described the importance of open communication in creating a caring atmosphere.

Gender related themes also emerged during the interviews. Female superintendents are conscious of the role of gender in their position, their peer groups and relationships with board of education members. Two superintendents described experiences in which they watched the men around them and what they did to be successful. All participants described being persistent and while one described developing a "thick skin" in the position of superintendent. One participant described her role as the only female superintendent in her area as difficult.

You can't be intimidated by them...you have to speak your mind. If you are going to be a female in a leadership role and you walk into a room with men and you sit there and don't participate, then you've created a reputation. They are not going to respect you. What you are saying to them with your silence is that what you have to say is unimportant...I wish I could have a class for beginning superintendents for females. You have to tackle things differently. There is a way

to tell someone that you really think they are wrong without telling them they are wrong. You have to be careful.

The importance of a highly supportive family structure was also identified throughout the interviews as necessary for superintendents to work through the adversity inherent in the position because of gender and the role within the family structure. Participants indicated that each experience provided knowledge and information to approach the next situation better as well as the skills needed to better prepare for future adverse situations.

Research Question 3

What role does resiliency play in the experiences of females in the superintendency?

In order to best describe each female superintendent's resilience strengths, results are presented as descriptions of the themes that most closely define the essence of each female superintendent's experience. Although the coding of the transcripts revealed strategies in each of the resilience strength categories highlighted on the questionnaire by at least one of the participants, four themes relating to the phenomenon of resilience emerged from the analysis of the transcripts of all participants collectively: value-driven, the importance of a support base, personal well being, and perseverance.

The experiences of the superintendents and the emerging themes from the interview phase are analogous to the historical role of the coastal lighthouse. The lighthouse provides a specific reference point during journeys at sea including times of smooth sailing as well as during the turbulent storms. The lighthouse represents the theme of being "value-driven," the reference point that kept these women grounded in the work of the superintendency. A support base, personal well being, and perseverance

were other themes or directions the data ventured, yet each of these themes were described in relation to the theme of remaining value-driven and doing “what is best for students”.

When analyzing the data, some themes were more easily noticed than others though the less noticeable themes were no less important. The findings are summarized by identifying the strategies utilized under each of the themes. The “voices” of the participants are interwoven throughout the text in the form of quotations describing the essence of the phenomenon. Table 5 provides a brief overview of the five themes.

Table 5

Themes Emergent from Female Superintendents

Themes	Sub-themes
Value Driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the importance of doing what is right for students in the forefront of all decision making, even in the face of strong opposition. • Strong sense of purpose • Model and communicate core values. • Hold moral or ethical principles that guide them through adversity. • Consistently communicate and gather feedback.
Support base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain close professional relationships with mentors. • Maintain relationships with all stakeholders, especially contact with the students and community. • Have the resources of a strong personal/professional support base to help during tough times. • Surround themselves with support staff who are trustworthy. • Stay professionally active in leadership organizations.

Personal Well Being

- Strong spiritual life which provides a source of strength during adversity.
- Feel a spiritual connection to the field of leadership.
- Protect their time to maintain family well-being as well as physical and spiritual well-being.
- Emotionally let go of issues/experiences to obtain long-term goals.
- Stay in touch with their emotions during adversity and realize how emotions affect the leadership performance, especially as a female in a male dominated profession.

Perseverance

- Never let disruptive forces and other distractions interfere with the leadership focus on important goals and tasks.
- Become more persevering than ever when confronted with the next round of adversity.
- Maintain a steady, concentrated focus on the most important priorities until success is attained.
- Strive to keep adversity in one aspect of their life from having a long-term impact on resilience in other parts of their life.
- Persistently refuse to give up, unless it is absolutely clear that all realistic strategies have been exhausted.

Value Driven

The foundational theme, or the “light house” of each superintendent’s experience, was remaining value driven, especially during times of adversity. Being value driven meant that one’s moral compass was calibrated on what mattered most ethically, professionally, and programmatically to the leader. Knowing one’s mission, goals, and the importance of moving the organization in the preferred direction radiated from each conversation. Although several of the participants did not set out to attain the superintendency, once in the position, a sense of purpose was greatly realized. For these

participants, being value driven meant that their efforts during adversity were ultimately driven by putting the needs of students first. Their values and actions were congruent as participants described modeling their beliefs and values and exhibiting unwavering courage when faced with adversity to keep students at the forefront of decision making. Participants valued being identified as leaders exhibiting integrity, honesty, and fairness. One participant stated:

I don't start anything unless it's the right thing to do for the children, and I constantly remind my Board and my staff and my parents that we believe in our mission statement that we are willing to do whatever it takes for all students to succeed. We mean it. We live it. We breathe it. I could tell you story after story of the lengths our staff go to help kids. There's not much in education that kids aren't going to be affected by. It's passion, you know.

The most frequently mentioned concepts were being able to publicly articulate core values and staying focused on the mission of the system. Staying focused on what is best for the organization as a whole was discussed as a key factor in overcoming adversity and making tough decisions. Although strong opposition may periodically be present and adversity inherent for those in the position, the female superintendents indicated that staying true to values while making critical decisions was critical to keeping them on course in their professional lives. One participant stated, "I like to be liked and trusted. It's an integral part of who I am, that people trust me and know that I am a person of integrity. I am not going to lie or mislead anyone." Each participant had a clear focus on the work they were doing, their accomplishments, and could articulate the

experiences well. For the female superintendents, being value driven played the role of the beacon lights of the lighthouse to guide the battered ship sailing in stormy weather.

Support Base

According to Patterson, Goens and Reed (2009), a support base can be erected on a number of support pillars, including relationships among friends, family, clergy, and specific support groups. A support base can provide expertise for critical decisions, emotional support, or can provide a diversion from the pressure associated with the adversity experienced in the position. Having a close group of peers and colleagues was identified by all participants as important when faced with adversity. The women placed a high emphasis on their relationships with mentors and role models, family members, students, and employees. The participants attributed much of their success to the support provided by relationships. One participant stated, "I know lots of people. I try to be consistent and very fair. I want people to see me that way and know I hope they are doing well and that I care about kids. That makes a big difference." Another participant recognized her close relationship with students, parents, and the community and integral components of her support base. She stated:

The kids know me. The parents know me. I am out. I go to ball games. I get on the field with the players. I get on the court with the players. I hug kids. I go to the drama club activities. The kids scream across the street at me when they see me downtown. I love the kids and they keep me focused on doing the right thing...I make it personal. I tell them I liked that pass or I loved your role in that play. You were fabulous. I stress to teachers that they won't remember what you taught them, but they will remember how you treated them. I try to lead by example.

Two participants identified the importance of having other female superintendents to share and communicate with. One participant stated that “men don’t like to share or admit that they need help.” All of the participants indicated the importance of professional organizations such as the Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs), the Georgia School Superintendent’s Association, and the Superintendent’s Professional Development Program in supporting the role of superintendents in Georgia and the importance of finding a mentor.

Critical to success of the participants was communicating with trusted colleagues and peers to gather honest feedback to make sure they were modeling behavior representative of their decisions and communication with the public. One participant stated:

I model what I say. Teachers and staff members know I care. They know that we are a family. What touches one of them, touches all of us. I’ve built a relationship with the student body. I know them by name. When they come across the day they graduate, it really validates what we do. They don’t want me to just turn the tassel. They want to give me a hug. I have developed relationships within the community. They know that I care. I am transparent in the decision making, and I am very careful to have what I think is a clear thought process that I am willing to share before I make the decision. This is what we are facing. This is where we are. This is what I think will be best, and this is why I think it’s best. I attribute my successes back to those relationships.

Personal Well-being

When reviewing items on the Leadership Resilience Profile questionnaire individually (see Appendix G), it becomes evident that female superintendents struggle with time management and physical well-being. However, the female participants in phase two, the interviews, continually identified their connections to a higher purpose in life and their commitment to prayer as source of strength throughout their personal and professional lives. Three of the participants discussed that the opportunity to pursue the calling of leadership in the role of superintendent was a spiritual gift, providing them the opportunity to do “what was right”. One participant indicated that she was in her position because “God had opened the door” for her to “step up and help” her community.

Another participant stated:

I pray a lot. I really...that part of me, you know, I do...I am a person of great faith and I do...I have learned to take the time to give myself time to think things through, but to also give myself time to pray about the situation and ask God to show me the right thing to do because...I mean...I've made career moves that I don't think I would have made had I not prayed to know which way to go.

A spiritual quality resonated throughout the interviews of all participants, indicating a strong spiritual connection to their professional roles as superintendents.

Perseverance

The female superintendents described their desire to stay the course. Each participant had stories to share demonstrating their ability to persist and continue in spite of difficulties, highlighting their resilience. One participant described her role in fighting the war as:

I won the war, the battle...the smaller battles...I win one and lose one and win one and lose one. But I kept the momentum going with the support I had. Yeah, I won the war.

Four of the participants indicated that it would be impossible to perform the role of superintendent without these traits. One participant described acting on her personal convictions and having courage:

I think this job does take more courage or more grit, that's the word I like to use, more determination, you know, more stamina to always let doing the right thing drive me. Because it's easy, real easy, to sit down and let things play themselves out. If it's important and needs to be changed for the betterment of the district, then, you know, I do have the courage to make sure that I do the right thing.

The participants were aware that their capacity for staying the course and handling difficult situations increased with experience. One participant described becoming stronger with each round of adversity. All participants indicated that they had never experienced a situation that they were willing to "give up" and abandon the cause, but expressed the importance of staying the course with a focus on the goals of the organization.

Summary

The researcher conducted a mixed methods study to explore the experiences in the professional lives of female superintendents in Georgia to understand the role of resilience in overcoming the odds of being successful in the challenging role of the superintendency. Data was collected using the Leadership Resilience Profile (LRP) as well as interviews with practicing female superintendents in Georgia. The LRP is a valid,

reliable instrument to measure leader resilience developed by Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009). Data was analyzed by coding the transcripts for emerging themes.

Research question one, a description of the profiles of female superintendents in Georgia utilizing the Leadership Resilience Profile Questionnaire, utilized frequency, mean, and standard deviation to provide a portrait of Georgia's practicing female superintendents. According to the responses, the strengths include: understanding reality; envisioning the future, personal values, personal efficacy, personal support base; spiritual well being, perseverance, adaptability, courageous decision-making, personal responsibility. Emotional and physical well being were the only resilience strength categories with scores in the moderately high area.

For research questions two and three, an analysis of the transcriptions was utilized. The women described the superintendency as a position inherent with adversity. Gender related issues were highlighted as well as the current budget crisis as areas of significance for them in their role of superintendent. The female superintendents describe the superintendency as "tough position," but a position they enjoy.

During the interviews in phase two, the themes of being value driven, having a support base, personal well being, and perseverance were interwoven throughout the stories the women told. The women superintendents' voices individually as well as collectively described their strengths, successes, the role of adversity, and their motivation to continue in the position. For these women, taking the path less traveled turned into a journey into the unknown, yet these five courageous women continue to press on viewing their work as a calling from a higher power. Visions of success for all students keep them steadfast and on the right path. These women have a keen sense of

self, their purpose, and appreciate the significance of others in their personal and professional lives. These women set sail weathering many storms for the sake of their passion for helping students. They know where they must go, leading with “heart” and depending on their “lighthouse” of core values to guide them in their role of superintendent.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, the researcher presents an analysis and discussion of the research findings, conclusions, implications, recommendations and concluding thoughts. This chapter is organized to include a discussion of how the research findings relate to the review of the literature. Finally, the researcher provides recommendations for additional study and concluding thoughts.

Analysis of Research Findings

The typical profile of current women superintendents in Georgia was discussed briefly in Chapter 4. But, how do the female superintendent participants in this study compare to the typical superintendent in the United States? The typical American public school superintendent is a white male who has served an average of 8.75 years in the superintendency. His average tenure in a single superintendency is between five and six years, unlike the participants in this study who served an average of 5 years or less. Not only was the typical white male superintendent mentored, he currently mentors others, both men and women who aspire to the superintendency. The respondents in this study discussed the importance of having a mentor, often a male, but did not discuss mentoring others. His background includes five to seven years of teaching in secondary schools where he also obtained his first administrative experience (Glass, Björk, & Brunner, 2000). Women, like the participants in this study, hold only a fraction of those positions. Based on the findings in this study, what do we know now that might help females develop the resiliency skills needed to be successful in the top-ranking position?

It was apparent that the women superintendents who participated in this research study viewed experiences of adversity as opportunities for growth and development. The participants described experiences of exclusion and uncertainty among their male counterparts as well as a consciousness concerning their role as a female in a male dominated position. All of the women who participated in the interviews shared stories regarding the constant adversity experienced in the position and strategies utilized which demonstrated resilience. Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009) describe leadership resilience the following way:

Even in the toughest of times, educational leaders consistently demonstrate the ability to recover, learn from, and developmentally mature when confronted by chronic or crisis adversity. Resilience is not an all-or-nothing, fixed characteristic. Resilience is a relative concept. Some leaders are relatively more resilient than others. Resilience is also cyclical. (pp. 3-4).

According to Patteron, Goens, and Reed (2009), the resilience cycle begins with a phase known as normal conditions or homeostasis. During this phase, events are moving along with no major disruptions or difficulties. An adverse situation occurs and conditions potentially deteriorate, putting the educational leader into phase two, the deteriorating phase of the resilience cycle. During this phase, leaders may blame others or may blame themselves. During the interviews, several female superintendents described their struggle with blaming themselves and learning over time to not take adverse situations personally. They stressed the importance of learning from experiences to be better prepared for the next adverse situation. According to Patterson, Goens, and Reed, if one fails to reverse the negative or downward spiral of behaviors, then one moves

towards dysfunctionality. However, if one reverses the negative attitude and behavior and has a more positive set of responses, one progresses to the adapting phase (Patterson et.al).

The adapting phase continues on to the recovering phase. The recovering phase is a path back to the level of stability experienced before the arrival of the adversity. This status quo is referred to as level one resilience. If leaders top out at the status quo level, they may continue to function adequately. However, no growth occurs from the experienced adversity. Patterson et al. (2009) state that resilient leaders do not settle for status quo or level one resilience. Truly resilient leaders enter the growing phase and move to level two, or strengthened resilience. The data provided by the female participants in this study indicate level two resilience as experiences described highlighted growth as educational leaders following each adverse situation. The scores on the Leadership Resilience Profile Questionnaire were very high and indicated level two resilience as well.

Patterson et al. (2009) stated that adverse situations are certain to come, but what separates the highly resilient leaders from others is the way in which they interpret the adversity. How do these women interpret adversity? Do they expect that good things will come out of the adverse situations? The strength categories with the highest scores on the Leadership Resilience Profile indicating the resilience category as “very high” were: understanding reality; envisioning the future, personal values, personal efficacy, personal support base; spiritual well being, perseverance, adaptability, courageous decision-making, personal responsibility. Emotional and physical well being were the only resilience strength categories with scores in the moderately high area of the resilience

strength score continuum. Survey participants rated themselves in the higher area of the continuum on all strength categories. According to Patterson et al. (2009), every leader can think they are resilient and talk a good talk about their capacity to be resilient, but highly resilient leaders, model resilient behavior. They act on the courage of their convictions, especially during difficult times.

Reed and Patterson (2007) state it is not a matter of choosing to model or choosing not to model. It is a matter of what the leader chooses to model that sends signals about one's true values. The participants in this study did just that as evidenced by the responses in the interviews which described their commitment to modeling their values, beliefs, and focusing on making decisions in the best interest of students. Survey participants also rated themselves very high in terms of personal values, courageous decision making, and personal responsibility which are indicative of their focus on modeling resilience.

Patterson et al. (2009) suggested that one should think of resilience capacity building skills as the fuel tank supplying the energy needed to produce resilient actions. Patterson also suggested that resilience capacity was partially defined by one's accumulated experiences. As the participants in this study described growing stronger by successfully confronting adversity, their capacity for resilience increased and increased their fuel reserves for successfully weathering future storms and tackling the next battle.

The participants indicated a strong sense of perseverance as indicated by the perseverance scores on the LRP, as well as the theme of perseverance which emerged from the interview phase. The findings in this study suggest that building resilience is essential for those women who aspire to and obtain the position of superintendent.

Perhaps more importantly, it is imperative for female superintendents to view adversity as an opportunity for growth and development and as an opportunity to become prepared for other difficulties that may lie ahead.

Discussion of Findings

Four themes emerged from the women's stories during the interview phase, individually and collectively. Female superintendents perceive themselves to be value-driven and exhibit perseverance by focusing on priorities until success is attained. Female superintendents persistently refuse to give up. Having the resources of a strong personal and professional support base to help during tough times is vital to the success of female superintendents. The female participants described a strong spiritual life which provided a source of strength during difficult times. The stories of the women superintendents described their unique and individual experiences that documented triumphs, or "winning battles" as well as trials. As each participant described their experiences, it was apparent that they were powerful, strong women who insisted on shaping the lives of the students they serve and directing their own school systems. The journeys they described offered profound implications for other females serving in educational leadership roles. The identified themes have been connected to the research questions, the framework of Patterson, Goens, and Kelleher, or the lens of this study, and to the literature.

Value Driven

The theme of being value driven was continually highlighted throughout the interview data as each participant revealed through her story that she was value driven, not event driven. According to Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009), being value driven means that one's moral compass is calibrated on what matters most to the leaders,

ethically, professionally, and programmatically. Most commonly mentioned concepts during the interview phase were staying focused, modeling values and expectations, and aligning decisions with values. Each participant knew what her overarching direction in the role of superintendent must be, that of making decisions with students at the forefront of the decision making process. One participant indicated the practice of soliciting feedback from trusted colleagues to verify that practices aligned with values. Another participant in the study pointed out that what happens in the classroom is the most powerful measure of actions aligned with values.

Several superintendent participants emphasized the importance of maintaining perspectives in the role of superintendent. One participant commented on the struggle to not take outside adverse situations personally and to, in turn, stay focused on core values when dealing with adversity. The thread of putting the job in perspective was woven throughout the interview comments as female superintendents struggle to maintain a sense of purpose and do what is right for children. According to Grogan and Brunner (2005), boards hire women to be educational leaders rather than managers, especially at a time in education when curriculum and instructional knowledge are critical. The participants in this study demonstrate resilience as educational leaders as they focus on doing what is right in the face of aggressive, and occasionally hostile, adverse situations that are very public in nature. The focus on students not only enticed the women in this study into educational leadership positions, but it has kept them there as well. At the core of being value-driven was a deep commitment and fundamental concern for the welfare of children in each of the participant's districts. The focus on students gave meaning to

and guidance in everything the female superintendents in this study did in their roles as educational leaders.

Support Base

Many of the participants in the interviews spoke of the roles their mentors, colleagues, families, and students played in their success in attaining and maintaining the superintendency. They also discussed the roles each played in defining their roles as educational leaders in terms of leadership style and decision making strategies. They learned to bring together those people whom they could rely on to provide an emotional base of support. Support from family and friends and the guidance provided by mentors were identified as strategies critical for success in the superintendency. One participant cited her close relationship with the children as her support base. Several participants indicated they relied on support from key trusted personnel in their inner circle to provide support during adverse situations. Some participants relied on those outside the profession for support while others counted on colleagues and mentors. Regardless of the selected mentor, the importance of the role remained true throughout the interviews.

The mentors described came in many forms. One participant mentioned a retired male superintendent and highlighted that most of her mentors had been men. Another participant discussed the importance of having female mentors as men “seem to want to solve the problem and sometimes you just need somebody to bounce things off of. I don’t need a solution. I need ideas so I can go home and think about a solution that fits my system.” Reed and Patterson (2007) state that from whatever source one picks a mentor, the selection process is important as the selection has the capacity to significantly influence your future.

The importance of a support base was not limited to the professional lives of the participants. During the interviews, participants described situations in their personal lives which could potentially impact their professional lives. They attributed their success in dealing with the adversity with having a strong support base. Participants valued having trusted colleagues and mentors to help overcome adversity. Participants highlighted the importance of finding a support base of trusted colleagues or friends who honor confidentiality and truly understood the vulnerability of educational leaders.

Personal Well-Being

Throughout the interview responses, participants indicated a consciousness of their gender and the ability to stay in touch with emotions during adversity. Each participant had experiences where they had struggled with emotions in an attempt to prevent emotions from affecting leadership performance. Personnel issues related to small, rural systems, the involvement of close community organizations, athletics, personal relationships with board members, and church families are examples of factors lending themselves to emotional issues described in the interviews. Christman and McClellan (2005) found that resilient female leaders embraced or disclaimed one gender norm for another to varying degrees based on specific situations. The participants interviewed described experiences that required a more multidimensional gendered leadership which allowed them to differentiate responses to meet the needs of the school system. The participants were able to navigate the barriers which are created by the gender expectations described by Christman and McClellan and were able to respond based on the school system's culture as a whole.

Also, evident in the life of each participant was support from a strong spiritual connection, both with the importance of God in their life as well as a spiritual connection to the profession. According to Patterson and Kelleher (2005), spiritual energy provides the capacity to overcome adversity in support of an issue beyond one's own self interest and promotes full engagement. As one participant stated, "I pray every day for words and wisdom to get me through whatever it is that I've got to go through." Another stated that the position of superintendent was "mission work." One female superintendent indicated the importance of having a strong prayer life with the following statement:

If I didn't believe that God opened this door and put me here, I probably would have gone home many years ago... There is a strong faith-based support that I have that is absolutely, absolutely crucial. There are folks in this community and in this school system who constantly encourage. They tell me that they know it is tough, but they believe that I am making a difference.

Also highlighted by several participants was the feeling of spiritual gratitude to pursue a calling of leadership. One participant stated that the timing of the position was "God directed and God driven."

During each interview, participants discussed the long hours of the position but indicated their ability to protect their time for emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being. One participant devoted time to community activities that also strengthened her communication with stakeholders. Other indicated the ability to devote time to family as needed. One participant indicated that her spouse enjoyed the activities required of her position which made merging the roles easier.

Perseverance

Reed and Patterson (2007) found that resilient leaders possessed the ability to recover, learn, and in fact, grow stronger when confronted by chronic or crisis adversity. Washington and Jones (2010) indicate the key factors associated with successful women superintendents are preparation, perseverance, maintaining composure and risk taking. Those interviewed in the present research left no doubt that the position of superintendent was the most difficult position they had held in education. However, the interview participants found ways to stay positive and focus on forming the future from what they had learned in the past. For these superintendents, achieving goals involved maintaining a steady focus, even as tactics, strategies, or plans changed. One participant described her role during the budget crisis as being ultimately responsible as a leader to communicate that the system must continue to move forward, striving to do more with less. Several of the participants spoke of long-term goals and staying the course even though results were not immediate.

The demographics of the superintendency and each participant's relative position demonstrates perseverance as female superintendents encounter numerous gender-related barriers in educational leadership. Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009) suggest that leaders should stay focused on what matters most among competing demands and distractions by outside forces until success is attained. Data collected by the LRP questionnaire and the interview data verified each participant's broad and extensive experiences and commitments to long-term goals by the achievement of credentials and attainment of multiple leadership positions.

One female superintendent revealed her resilience and perseverance skills as she shared difficulties that arose prior to and during her leadership position. She referred to the strength or skill as having “grit” and felt that each adverse situation increased her resilience, pushed her, and trained her for dealing with the subsequent adversities that would arrive. The participant stated that this quality was essential for anyone aspiring to or holding the position of superintendent.

All of the female superintendents spoke passionately as they gave voice to the stories and experiences in their roles as educational leaders. They were very clear in revealing the passion for the focus of their work, the achievement and welfare of the students they serve. Even though the journey has been difficult at times and complex, the female participants in this study spoke of their personal and professional growth in the role of superintendent. The findings from this study reveal that the women participants used resilience strengths to be successful in their positions. Each of the interview participants stated that not once had they encountered a situation that had caused them to rethink the decision to lead their respective systems.

Conclusions

In 1909, Ella Flagg Young stated at her appointment to the superintendency of Chicago City Schools that women were destined to rule the schools in every city. She further stated that, in the near future, more women would be in charge of educational systems. Her goal was to show that women were better qualified for the work than men (Glass, 2000). Her view was optimistic as not nearly as many women have reached the superintendency since her address in 1909, but the findings revealed in this study do illustrate that women are prepared and capable of leading today’s school system’s

effectively by demonstrating the resilience skills necessary to stay the course. Women have encountered barriers and have struggled with adversity in the superintendency. Today, these struggles continue and barriers still exist, but female superintendents are increasing in number in Georgia and demonstrate resilience. These women possess varied and numerous skills which strengthen their ability to be successful in the position. It appears that being value driven, persevering, personal well being and having a strong support base are related to the resilience of female superintendents in Georgia.

It also appears that female superintendents in Georgia realize that the wholeness of leading school systems is greater than the sum of its discrete parts. The participants were women of faith who recognize the superintendency as a “cause beyond oneself.” The participants were passionate about serving students and communities. Modeling integrity, courage, fairness, and honesty shaped the overall resilience of the female superintendents who participated in this study. These participants believed in empowering others and recognized the importance of bringing the organization together as a whole to meet the needs of students. They described themselves as responsible leaders taking every opportunity to stay close to those they serve, a basic concept of servant leadership. They were not hoarders of information, parceling it out to fit their own autocratic interests, but operate as a team and look below the surface to identify unarticulated needs of those they serve. What can be learned from their experiences will, hopefully, pave the way for progress and success for other female superintendents and, eventually, fulfill Ella Flagg Young's vision for the superintendency of having women rule the schools in every city.

Implications

Female superintendents discussed specific strategies/strengths they found to be effective in addressing adversity in the position. The strategies identified represented no major differences to the research presented previously. However, the findings of this study provide implications for several groups who can make significant contributions to strengthening the resilience skills of women in the superintendency in Georgia which will in turn promote success in the position. These groups include: women who aspire to the superintendency; practicing female and male superintendents; college and university educational leadership programs; educational organizations; and educational researchers.

Females who aspire to the position need to understand the adversity associated with the superintendency and strategies that can be utilized to promote resilience. They need to be prepared and plan ahead to employ proven strategies in achieving the goals of the system before adversity exists. Others can learn a great deal about resilience in the superintendency from the stories of practicing superintendents. The participants in this study shared stories that can serve as guidance to others who are currently in the position or wish to pursue the superintendency. Women in educational leadership positions need to persevere just as the women superintendents in this study and stay focused on doing what is right for students.

The findings of this study may create an awareness of the importance of mentors to those new to the position of superintendency. Practicing superintendents can provide advice, guidance, and personal stories that may strengthen the resilience skills of those new to the superintendency or those that aspire to the position. In addition, the stories and

the experiences of the participants in this research study add to the body of literature on educational leadership.

Universities and education programs need to value the experiences and stories of women and their gender related experiences in educational leadership positions, especially the superintendency. Men and women can benefit from studying the unique needs of women in the superintendency. Women will better understand the issues unique to their gender and develop the skills to address adversity related to those issues. Men will better understand the experiences of their female colleagues and value the unique qualities females bring to the position. Special attention to successful strategies utilized by women in Georgia who have attained the position should be incorporated into programs to promote success for female superintendents.

The results of this study are encouraging. The unique stories of female superintendents need to be heard. Many opportunities exist to examine the experiences of women in the superintendency, and it is critical that practitioners provide insight into the strategies which promote success in the position for women. Although the body of literature on resilience and female superintendents continues to grow, more studies need to be initiated to verify and confirm previous findings and to search for new knowledge.

Recommendations

The findings from this study highlight the effective resilience strategies employed by female superintendents in Georgia which sustain them on their journey of the superintendency when faced with adversity. Based on the findings regarding resilience strategies, the researcher makes the following recommendations.

1. Additional studies need to be conducted on and for women leaders that document and accurately portray the resiliency of women as observed by others.
Researchers need to examine resiliency of female superintendents from the perspective of coworkers and colleagues.
2. Future studies identifying effective resiliency strategies need to be conducted in other states and across the nation at large so that a clearer picture will exist for those practicing superintendents who aspire to the position.
3. Researchers need to examine the perceptions of both male and female superintendents in terms of resilience and skills and strategies employed which promoted success. Adversity is inherent in the position of superintendent regardless of the gender of the superintendent. Educational leaders can learn from the experiences of others to move beyond level one resilience to level two resilience where they are thriving in their positions and dealing with adversity successfully.
4. Mentoring is critical to the success of females in the superintendency. Research on best practices in mentoring for both women and men leaders as they mentor males and females who are new to the position or aspire to the superintendency is imperative.
5. Additional qualitative studies need to be conducted on and for women leaders that document and accurately portray the stories and experiences of women. Women need to overcome gender related issues in a male dominated position and need successful role models.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL CORRESPONDENCE

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs		
Institutional Review Board (IRB)		
Phone: 912-478-0843		Veazey Hall 2021
		P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-478-0719	IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Kathy H. Simmons
Barbara Mallory
Department of Education

CC: Charles E. Patterson
Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Initial Approval Date: March 2, 2011

Expiration Date: March 2, 2012

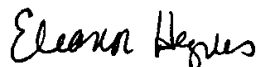
Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered H11298 and titled "Overcoming the Odds: An Exploration of Resilience Strategies used by Female Superintendents in School Districts in Georgia." it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable. You are authorized to enroll up to a maximum of 60 subjects.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

If at the end of this approval period there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period. Total project approval on this application may not exceed 36 months. If additional time is required, a new application may be submitted for continuing work. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer

APPENDIX B

LEADER RESILIENCE PROFILE INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Dr. :

I am requesting your participation in a research study involving female superintendents in Georgia. The research project is designed to study Georgia's female superintendents and strategies utilized when faced with adversity. The study involves two phases. Phase one includes the completion of the enclosed Leadership Resilience Profile. Phase two will involve interviewing selected superintendents. The interview questions are part of a research element of the dissertation of Kathy H. Simmons, Georgia Southern University doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership.

The purpose of the interview is to obtain relevant data that provides a deeper reflection that can be found only through qualitative data of Georgia's female superintendents experiences when faced with adversity. Participation is voluntary and would be greatly appreciated. All survey responses and interviews are strictly confidential.

The Leadership Resilience Profile (LRP) consists of 73 Likert-scale items. Each participant returning the LRP will receive an individualized resilience profile. The interviews will consist of open-ended questions and will take approximately one hour. No sensitive data will be requested or used. A list of questions will be sent prior to the interview session.

Participating superintendents will also receive a copy of the study results if indicated during the interview process. The benefits to you and your district will be information in this report relating to Georgia's female superintendents leadership practices and strategies utilized when faced with adversity. Each superintendent will receive information concerning each respondent's resilience profile.

Participating districts will remain anonymous. All your responses will be kept confidential, and no name or any specific identities will be presented in the final dissertation report. If you are willing to participate, please complete the enclosed Leadership Resilience Profile indicating your approval to participate and mail in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

If you have any additional questions about the interview process or the LRP, please do not hesitate to call me at home at (912) 977-2721 or at work at (912) 545-2367. Please return the completed LRP and one copy of the Consent Form no later than XXXX XX, 2010. Thank you in advance for your participation!

With much appreciation,

Kathy H. Simmons

The Leadership Resilience Profile is designed to measure resilience and provide leaders with an individualized profile of resilience strengths. As you read each pair of statements below, reflect on your own leadership behavior in the face of adversity. All of the items contain statements that most leaders would find desirable, but answer only in terms of what your leadership behavior is *actually* like.

For each of the seventy-three items, circle the number that best describes where your leadership behavior fits on the continuum from being like the statement on the left to being like the statement on the right. "1" means your leadership behavior in the face of adversity is strongly reflected by the statement on the left. "6" means your leadership behavior is strongly reflected by the statement on the right. Marking numbers 2, 3, 4, or 5 reflects various positions in between.

There is no correct answer for these items. Your responses will be treated as confidential, so please give honest responses to all questions. After you complete the LRP, enclosed please find a business reply envelope (postage paid by the investigator), and mail your questionnaire as well as the signed Consent Form to the investigator no later than (date). Thank you for your cooperation!

Leader Resilience Profile Initial Questionnaire

I have been a superintendent in this district for:

- _____ 0 – 2 years
 _____ 3 – 5 years
 _____ 6-10 years
 _____ 10+ years

_____ I am interested in receiving a Leader Resilience Profile and the results of this study. District Name: _____

_____ I am willing to participate in a 60 – 90 minute interview about female superintendents and how they handle adversity:

Name: _____
 District: _____

What formal leadership roles did you hold prior to the superintendency?

Check all that apply:

- _____ Assistant Principal _____ Elementary Principal
 _____ Middle School Principal _____ High School Principal
 _____ District Coordinator/Director _____ Assistant/Associate Superintendent
 _____ Teacher

Did you succeed a male or female superintendent? Male Female
When confronted with adversity in my leadership role:

	Statement	My Leadership Behavior	Statement
1	I will always have a positive influence in making things happen.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never have a positive influence in making things happen.
2	I don't have an overall sense of competence and confidence in my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I have an overall sense of competence and confidence in my leadership role.
3	I always use feedback about current reality plus what's possible in the future to make adjustments in my leadership strategies.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never use feedback about current reality plus what's possible in the future to make adjustments in my leadership strategies.
4	I never manage my time so I can achieve rest and recovery.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always manage my time so I can achieve rest and recovery.
5	I have a track record of being able to take appropriate action, even when some things about the situation remain ambiguous or confusing.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I have a track record of not being able to take appropriate action, even when some things about the situation remain ambiguous or confusing.
6	I never accept responsibility for making difficult leadership decisions that may negatively affect some individuals or groups.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always accept responsibility for making difficult leadership decisions that may negatively affect some individuals or groups.
7	I always try to prevent current adverse circumstances from happening again.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never try to prevent current adverse circumstances from happening again.
8	I never reach out to build trusting relationships with those who can provide support in tough times.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always reach out to build trusting relationships with those who can provide support in tough times.
9	I always adjust my expectations about what is possible based on what I've learned about the current situation.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never adjust my expectations about what is possible based on what I've learned about the current situation.
10	I don't demonstrate the overall strength of physical well-being needed to effectively carry out my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I demonstrate the overall strength of physical well-being needed to effectively carry out my leadership role.
11	I always take prompt, principled action on unexpected threats before they escalate out of control.	1 2 3 4 5 6	When unexpected threats occur, I never take action before the threats escalate out of control.

12	When I choose to take no leadership action in the face of adversity, I never accept personal accountability for this choice.	1 2 3 4 5 6	When I choose to take no leadership action in the face of adversity, I always accept personal accountability for this choice.
13	I always expect that good things can come out of an adverse situation.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never expect that good things can come out of an adverse situation.
14	When adversity strikes, I never try to learn from the experiences of others who faced similar circumstances.	1 2 3 4 5 6	When adversity strikes, I always try to learn from the experiences of others who faced similar circumstances.
15	I always demonstrate the ability to put my mistakes in perspective and move beyond them.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never demonstrate the ability to put my mistakes in perspective and move beyond them.
16	I never draw strength during adversity from my connections to a higher purpose in life or causes greater than myself.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always draw strength during adversity from my connections to a higher purpose in life or causes greater than myself.
17	I always take prompt, decisive action in emergency situations that demand an immediate response.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never take prompt, decisive action in emergency situations that demand an immediate response.
18	I always have trouble accepting accountability for the long-term organizational impact of any tough leadership decisions I make.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always accept accountability for the long-term organizational impact of any tough leadership decisions I make.
19	I always pay attention to external forces that could limit what I would like to accomplish ideally.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never pay attention to external forces that could limit what I would like to accomplish ideally.
20	I always try to offset any relative weakness I have in an area by turning to others who have strength in this area.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never try to offset any relative weakness I have in an area by turning to others who have strength in this area.
21	I never demonstrate an overall strength of adaptability in my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always demonstrate an overall strength of adaptability in my leadership role.
22	I always draw strength from my sense of spirituality in the face of adversity.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never draw strength from my sense of spirituality in the face of adversity.
23	never am able to make needed decisions if they run counter to respected advice by others.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I am always able to make needed decisions, even if they run counter to respected advice by others.
24	I demonstrate an overall strength of making courageous decisions in my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I don't demonstrate an overall strength of making courageous decisions in my leadership role.

25	I don't have an overall strength of accepting personal responsibility for my leadership actions.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I have an overall strength of accepting personal responsibility for my leadership actions.
26	I always focus my energy on the opportunities to be found in a bad situation, without downplaying the importance of obstacles.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always focus my energy on the obstacles, not the opportunities, found in a bad situation.
27	I never have a strong support base to help me through tough times in my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always have a strong support base to help me through tough times in my leadership role.
28	I can always emotionally accept those aspects of adversity that I can't influence in a positive way.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I can never seem to emotionally accept those aspects of adversity that I can't influence in a positive way.
29	During adversity, I never feel a deep sense of spiritual gratitude for the opportunity to pursue a calling of leadership.	1 2 3 4 5 6	During adversity, I always feel a deep sense of spiritual gratitude for the opportunity to pursue a calling of leadership.
30	I always make value-driven decisions even in the face of strong opposing forces.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never make value-driven decisions even in the face of strong opposing forces.
31	I never gather the necessary information from reliable sources about what is really happening relative to the adversity.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always gather the necessary information from reliable sources about what is really happening relative to the adversity.
32	I always maintain a respectful sense of humor in the face of adverse circumstances.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I am never able to maintain a sense of humor in the face of adverse circumstances.
33	I always let adversity in one aspect of my life have a long-term impact on the resilience in other parts of my life.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never let adversity in one aspect of my life have a long-term impact on the resilience in other parts of my life.
34	When adversity strikes, I always avoid taking action until I've sufficiently gained control of my emotions.	1 2 3 4 5 6	When adversity strikes, I always take action before I've sufficiently gained control of my emotions.
35	I never protect sufficient time and space for renewing the spirit.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always protect sufficient time and space for renewing the spirit.
36	I always demonstrate the overall strength of being a resilient leader.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never demonstrate the overall strength of being a resilient leader.
37	I never demonstrate an overall strength of optimism in my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always demonstrate an overall strength of optimism in my leadership role.
38	I persistently refuse to give up in overcoming adversity, unless it's	1 2 3 4 5 6	I stubbornly refuse to give up in overcoming adversity, even when

	absolutely clear all realistic strategies have been exhausted.		it's absolutely clear all realistic strategies have been exhausted.
39	I never emotionally let go of a goal that I commit to, even at the expense of sacrificing goals and values that are more important to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always emotionally let go of a goal that I am pursuing, if it's causing me to sacrifice goals and values that are more important to me.
40	I possess an overall strength of spiritual well-being in my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I don't possess the overall strength of spiritual well-being in my leadership role.
41	I never seem to look for the positive aspects of adversity to balance the negative aspects.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always try to find the positive aspects of adversity to balance the negative aspects.
42	I always seek perspectives that differ significantly from mine, when I need to make tough decisions.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never seek perspectives that differ significantly from mine, when I need to make tough decisions.
43	I never try to find new or creative strategies to achieve positive results in a difficult situation.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always search for various new or creative strategies to achieve positive results in a difficult situation.
44	During adversity, I always sustain a steady, concentrated focus on the most important priorities until I achieve successful results.	1 2 3 4 5 6	During adversity, I never sustain until success is reached a steady, concentrated focus on the most important priorities.
45	I never demonstrate an understanding of my emotions during adversity and how these emotions affect my leadership performance.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always demonstrate an understanding of my emotions during adversity and how these emotions affect my leadership performance.
46	I always rely on strongly-held moral or ethical principles to guide me through adversity.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never turn to moral or ethical principles to guide me through adversity.
47	I never seem to accept the reality that adversity is both inevitable and many times occurs unexpectedly.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always accept the reality that adversity is both inevitable and many times occurs unexpectedly.
48	I am always confident that I can learn something from my adversity to help me be stronger in the future.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I am never confident that I can learn something from my adversity to help me be stronger in the future.
49	I always let disruptive forces and other distractions interfere with my focus on important goals and tasks.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never let disruptive forces and other distractions interfere with my focus on important goals and tasks.
50	I always create time for		I never create time for replenishing

	replenishing emotional energy.	1 2 3 4 5 6	emotional energy.
51	I never seem to be able to privately clarify or publicly articulate my core values.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I am always able to privately clarify or publicly articulate my core values.
52	I always accept the reality that adversity can disrupt my best-laid plans or current projects.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never accept the reality that adversity can disrupt my best-laid plans or current projects.
53	I never take a deliberate, step-by-step approach to overcome adversity.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always take a deliberate, step-by-step approach to overcome adversity.
54	I always demonstrate an overall strength of perseverance in my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never demonstrate an overall strength of perseverance in my leadership role.
55	I never have the overall strength of emotional well-being in my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always have the overall strength of emotional well-being in my leadership role.
56	I always take leadership actions consistent with what matters most among competing values.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never base my leadership actions on what matters most among competing values.
57	I don't possess the overall strength of understanding current reality in my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I am proud of demonstrating an overall strength of understanding current reality in my leadership role.
58	I always demonstrate the essential knowledge and skills to lead in tough times.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never demonstrate the essential knowledge and skills to lead in tough times.
59	I never seem to find healthy ways for channeling my physical energy to relieve stress.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always find healthy ways for channeling my physical energy to relieve stress.
60	I never let adverse circumstances that inevitably happen disrupt my long-term focus on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always let adverse circumstances that inevitably happen disrupt my long-term focus on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
61	I never seek feedback to see if my leadership actions are matching my values.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always seek feedback to see if my leadership actions are matching my values.
62	I always accept responsibility for making needed changes personally in those cases where I contributed to the adversity.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never seem to accept responsibility for making needed changes personally in those cases where I contributed to the adversity.
63	I never maintain a confident presence as a leader in the midst of adversity.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always maintain a confident presence as a leader in the midst of adversity.
64	I always quickly change course, as needed, to adapt to rapidly	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never quickly change course, as needed, to adapt to rapidly

	changing circumstances.		changing circumstances.
65	I never monitor my personal health factors, then adjust my behavior accordingly.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always monitor my personal health factors, then adjust my behavior accordingly.
66	I always demonstrate an overall strength of being value-driven in my leadership role.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never demonstrate an overall strength of being value-driven in my leadership role.
67	I never seem to acknowledge my mistakes in judgment as a leader.	1 2 3 4 5 6	When I make mistakes in judgment as a leader, I publicly accept responsibility to avoid making these mistakes in the future.
68	I never hesitate to tell those I trust about my doubts or fears related to adversity.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never tell those I trust about any of my doubts or fears related to adversity.
69	I am always determined to be more persevering than before when confronted with the next round of adversity.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never seem determined to be more persevering than before when confronted with the next round of adversity.
70	I never try to learn from role models who have a strong track record of demonstrating resilience.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always actively seek to learn from role models who have a strong track record of demonstrating resilience.
71	I always seek the most current, research-based information about how to sustain healthy living in stressful times.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I never seek the most current, research-based information about how to sustain healthy living in stressful times.
72	I never turn to personal reflection or introspection to steady myself during adversity.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I always turn to personal reflection or introspection to steady myself during adversity.
73	I am always comfortable sharing with my support base any small wins I achieve along the road to recovering from adversity.	1 2 3 4 5 6	I am never comfortable sharing with my support base any small wins I achieve along the road to recovering from adversity.

APPENDIX C

SUPERINTENDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE/PROTOCOL

Superintendent Interview Guide/Protocol

The goal of this interview is to explore strategies utilized when faced with adversity.

Let's begin by talking about an experience that you perceived to be an adverse situation during your tenure as superintendent.

1. Describe an experience that you perceived to be adversarial during your tenure. What did you learn about others during this experience? What did you learn about yourself?
2. Describe the things that you did to address this situation. I am looking for your initial approach, time frame, key players, steps that you took, etc.
3. In times of adversity, how do you make decisions?
4. During adversity, have you ever given up? At what point are you willing to abandon a cause?
5. During adversity, what motivates you to keep going?
6. How does adversity affect your feelings about yourself?
7. Has a tough situation caused you to rethink your position about your future?
8. How difficult is it for you to remain true to yourself and your values as a female superintendent?
9. Describe your own abilities during difficult times.
10. Because not all experiences have positive outcomes, how do you pick yourself up after a bad experience in which you are not satisfied with the outcome?
11. In your opinion, how does adversity require more courage to act on personal convictions than other situations?
12. What advice would you give to female colleagues who find themselves facing an adverse situation?

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH CORRELATION

Resilience Strength	Model(s)	Profile Strengths /Subscales	Corresponding Item on Instrument	Skill Set	Research Question
Optimism	Tugade and Fredrickson (2004); Patterson & Kelleher (2005); Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009)	Understanding Reality	19, 31, 41, 47, 52, 57	Thinking	1, 2, 3
		Envisioning Future Possibilities	1, 7, 13, 26, 32, 37		
Value Driven	Brooks & Goldstein (2003); Patterson & Kelleher (2005); Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009)	Personal Values	30, 51, 56, 61, 46, 66	Capacity	1, 2, 3
Personal Efficacy	Brooks & Goldstein (2003); Reivich & Shatte(2002); Patterson & Kelleher (2005); Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009)	Personal Efficacy	2, 20, 48, 53, 58, 63	Capacity	1, 2, 3
Support Base	Patterson & Kelleher (2005); Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009)	Support Base	8, 14, 27, 68, 70, 73	Capacity	1, 2, 3
Personal Well-being	Beasley, Thompson,	Emotional Well-Being	28, 34, 39, 45, 50, 55		

	& Davidson (2003); Richardson Patterson & Kelleher (2005); Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009)	Spiritual Well-Being	16, 22, 29, 40, 35, 72	Capacity	1, 2, 3
		Physical Well-Being	10, 71, 60, 65, 4, 59		
Perseverance	Beasley, Thompson, & Davidson (2003); Richardson, Neiger, Jensen, & Kumpfer, 1990; Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009)	Perseverance	33, 38, 44, 49, 54, 69	Action	1, 2, 3
Courageous Decision-Making	Patterson & Kelleher (2005); Reivich & Shatte (2002); Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009)	Courageous Decision-Making	5, 11, 17, 23, 24, 42	Action	1, 2, 3
Adaptability	Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009)	Adaptability	3, 9, 15, 21, 43, 64	Action	1, 2, 3
Personal Responsibility	Patterson, Goens, and Reed (2009)	Personal Responsibility	6, 12, 18, 25, 62, 67	Action	1, 2, 3

APPENDIX E

LEADER RESILIENCE PROFILE TECHNICAL SUPPLEMENT

**From *Leader Resilience Profile (LRP): Technical Supplement*
by Dr. Diane Reed and Dr. Jerry Patterson (2008)**

The purpose of this project was to develop a valid, reliable instrument to measure leader resilience. Based on an extensive review of the literature on leadership and resilience, the research team, comprised of four university professors with extensive K-12 senior leadership experience, established the following assumptions about leader resilience:

- Leader resilience is a long term, not short term construct. A leader's resilience reflects an *overall* orientation or approach to how one responds to adversity.
- Leader resilience refers to one's resilience within the particular context of one's leadership role. A person may be resilient in his or her leadership assignment, but not necessarily resilient in response to personal adversity.
- The term *resilient leader* is not synonymous with the term *effective leader*. A resilient leader is not necessarily a highly effective leader and a leader may be effective under normal conditions, but not be highly resilient under adverse conditions.

Within these assumptions, the research team defines a resilient leader as one who demonstrates the ability to recover, learn from, and developmentally mature when confronted by adversity. Our challenge was to develop a valid, reliable instrument that provides leaders with an individualized profile of their resilience strengths.

Research Methodology

Development of key indicators of leader resilience

First, our research team conducted an exhaustive review of the literature in the fields of leadership and resilience. The research led us to identify initially sixty-two indicators that measure leader resilience, organized under three themes and twelve sub-scales. All findings were based on scholarly research studies examining the concepts of leadership and resilience.

Expert Panel Review for Content Validity

We used the indicators to construct a web-based survey designed to solicit feedback from a panel of experts regarding the extent to which the survey accurately measures what the research team intended on the subject of leader resilience.

A leadership governance board of one of the largest organizations serving senior educational leaders was invited to serve as expert panel reviewers. All invited expert panelists received a cover letter, directions, IRB-approved consent form, as well as the survey. Each panel member was asked to quantitatively and qualitatively rate items using a three-point scale:

1) Required indicator of a resilient leader (*A leader cannot be considered resilient without demonstrating this indicator*)

2) Useful but Not Required indicator of a resilient leader

3) Not Applicable (*This indicator is not relevant in determining the resilience of a leader*)

For any item that the panelists felt should be modified to achieve greater clarity or accuracy in expression of the intended principle, panelists were asked to enter the recommended modification in the space directly following the stated item.

In addition, on the last page of the survey panelists could provide any *additional* statement(s) that they believed should be included as a demonstrated indicator of a leader's resilience.

We received sixty-seven completed surveys as part of the content validity study. In advance of distributing the survey, we established a threshold of 'acceptability' if at least 80 percent of the review panel indicated that a specific indicator was *required* or *useful* as a demonstration of leader resilience. In other words, we rejected all items as being content valid if at least 20 percent of the panelists marked *not applicable* in determining leader resilience. Only one indicator, item, failed to meet the threshold of a valid content measure of leader resilience.

After we analyzed the data from the reviewers, we added, deleted, and modified items to strengthen the content validity of the LRP. Based on these revisions, we developed the 'end user' instrument containing 73 items designed to measure leader resilience.

Analysis of Reliability

After establishing content validity for the Leader Resilience Profile, the research team took the necessary steps to assess reliability, both in terms of internal consistency and stability over time.

In assessing internal consistency reliability of the twelve subscales, the research team distributed the LRP to 65 educational leaders. We received 43 completed surveys. For eight of the twelve subscales, the coefficient Alpha is at least 0.7. For the other four subscales, the coefficient Alpha ranges from 0.6349 to 0.6993.

The research team used test-retest reliability to examine the stability of the LRP over time. Based on 43 completed surveys from Round 1 and Round 2 administered two weeks later, the Pearson correlation coefficients were reviewed. For eleven of the twelve subscales, the coefficient exceeds 0.6. It should be noted that the test-retest correlations were possibly adversely affected at times because not all items followed the pattern of the most desirable choice being located on the left end of the continuum.

In the analysis of the data, our research team found that there was a wide swing by a few individuals from Round 1 to Round 2 on particular items. Our interpretation is that the individuals reporting the wide swings did not actually shift from highly resilient to non-resilient in two weeks. Instead, they simply marked the item without carefully reading to detect that not all items were listed with the positive statement on the left side of the survey.

Conclusion

This report documents the steps our research team followed in the development of a valid, reliable instrument to measure leader resilience. Overall, we conclude that the instrument is valid and reliable. We are aware, however, of the limitations of self-report instruments. We also realize that our work to date is simply a starting point. We encourage other researchers to build on and improve what we have developed.

APPENDIX F

RESILIENT LEADER CHECKLIST

RESILIENCE THINKING SKILLS

STRENGTH: Optimism
ACTION STRATEGIES

Resilient leaders:

- Come to terms with the reality that adversity likely will show up unexpectedly and disrupt their best laid plans.
- Pay attention to the reality of any external forces that could limit what they would like to accomplish ideally.
- Search for the positive aspects of adversity to balance the negative aspects.
- Find ways to have a positive influence in making good things happen.
- Expect good things will come out of an adverse situation.
- Focus their energy on the opportunities, not the obstacles, found in a bad situation.
- Maintain a respectful sense of humor in the face of adverse circumstances.

RESILIENCE CAPACITY BUILDING SKILLS

STRENGTH: Value driven
ACTION STRATEGIES

Resilient leaders:

- Privately clarify and publicly articulate their core values.
- Rely foremost on strongly held moral or ethical principles to guide them through adversity.
- Act on what matters most to them among competing values.
- Consistently gather feedback to make sure they are walking their talk.
- Make value-driven decisions even in the face of strong opposition.

STRENGTH: Personal efficacy
ACTION STRATEGIES

Resilient leaders:

- Try to offset any relative leadership weakness they have in an area by turning to others who have strength in this area.
- Remain confident that they can learn from their adversity to help them be stronger in the future.
- Maintain a confident presence as leader in the midst of adversity.
- Take a deliberate, step-by-step approach to overcome adversity.
- Demonstrate the essential knowledge and skills to lead in tough times.

STRENGTH: Support base

ACTION STRATEGIES

Resilient leaders:

- Learn from the professional experiences of others who faced similar circumstances.
- Have the resources of a strong personal support base to help them through tough times in their leadership role.
- Never hesitate to tell those they trust about their doubts or fears related to adversity.
- Feel comfortable sharing with their support base any small wins they achieve along the road to recovering from adversity.

STRENGTH: Personal well-being

ACTION STRATEGIES

Resilient leaders:

- Emotionally accept those things they cannot influence in a positive way.
- Emotionally let go of any goal they are pursuing if it's causing them to sacrifice more important long-term goals and values.
- Stay in touch with their emotions during adversity and realize how their emotions affect their leadership performance.
- Turn to personal reflection or connections to a higher purpose in life as a source of strength during adversity.
- Feel a deep spiritual gratitude for the opportunity to pursue a calling of leadership, especially during tough times.
- Protect time to renew their emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.

RESILIENCE ACTION SKILLS

STRENGTH: Perseverance

ACTION STRATEGIES

Resilient leaders:

- Never let disruptive forces and other distractions interfere with the leadership focus on important goals and tasks.
- Become more persevering than ever when confronted with the next round of adversity.
- Maintain a steady, concentrated focus on the most important priorities until success is attained.
- Strive to keep adversity in one aspect of their life from having a long-term impact on resilience in other parts of their life.
- Persistently refuse to give up, unless it is absolutely clear that all realistic strategies have been exhausted.

STRENGTH: Adaptability

ACTION STRATEGIES

Resilient leaders:

- Use ongoing feedback about the reality of what's happening and possible in the future and make adjustments in leadership strategies.
- Adjust expectations about what is possible based on what is learned about the reality of the current situation.
- Demonstrate the ability to put mistakes in perspective and move beyond them.
- Search for workable strategies to achieve positive results in difficult situations.
- Quickly change course, as needed, to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.

STRENGTH: Courageous decision-making

ACTION STRATEGIES

Resilient leaders:

- Take appropriate action, even when some things about the situation are ambiguous or confusing.
- Take prompt, principled action on unexpected threats before they escalate out of control.
- Make principled decisions that, at times, are contrary to respected advice by others.
- Take prompt, decisive action in emergency situations demanding an immediate response.
- Seek perspectives that differ significantly from their own, so they can make the most informed decisions possible under tough conditions.

STRENGTH: Personal responsibility

ACTION STRATEGIES

Resilient leaders:

- Accept responsibility for making tough choices that may negatively affect some individuals or groups.
- Are always aware that when they decide not to take action in the face of adversity, they have to assume personal responsibility for that action.
- Accept accountability for the long-term organizational impact of any tough leadership decision they make.
- Acknowledge mistakes in judgment and assume responsibility for making the necessary changes in the future.
- Accept responsibility for making needed changes personally in those cases where they contributed to the adversity.

APPENDIX G

LEADERSHIP RESILIENCE PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM
RESPONSES BY CATEGORY*When confronted with adversity in my leadership role:*

Item	Statement	Rating Scale						Statement
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
		Responses						
Understanding Reality								
19	I always pay attention to external forces that could limit what I would like to accomplish ideally.	12	13	0	0	0	0	I never pay attention to external forces that could limit what I would like to accomplish ideally.
31	I never gather the necessary information from reliable sources about what is really happening relative to the adversity.	0	0	0	0	8	17	I always gather the necessary information from reliable sources about what is really happening relative to the adversity.
41	I never seem to look for the positive aspects of adversity to balance the negative aspects.	0	0	0	1	9	15	I always try to find the positive aspects of adversity to balance the negative aspects.
47	I never seem to accept the reality that adversity is both inevitable and many times occurs unexpectedly.	0	0	1	2	8	14	I always accept the reality that adversity is both inevitable and many times occurs unexpectedly.
52	I always accept the reality that adversity can disrupt my best-laid plans or current projects.	12	10	4	0	0	0	I never accept the reality that adversity can disrupt my best-laid plans or current projects.

57	I don't possess the overall strength of understanding current reality in my leadership role.	0	0	0	1	6	18	I am proud of demonstrating an overall strength of understanding current reality in my leadership role.
Envisioning Future Possibilities								
1	I will always have a positive influence in making things happen.	17	8	0	0	0	0	I never have a positive influence in making things happen.
7	I always try to prevent current adverse circumstances from happening again.	15	9	1	0	0	0	I never try to prevent current adverse circumstances from happening again.
13	I always expect that good things can come out of an adverse situation.	12	11	2	0	0	0	I never expect that good things can come out of an adverse situation.
26	I always focus my energy on the opportunities to be found in a bad situation, without downplaying the importance of obstacles.	9	13	3	0	0	0	I always focus my energy on the obstacles, not the opportunities, found in a bad situation.
32	I always maintain a respectful sense of humor in the face of adverse circumstances.	17	6	1	1	0	0	I am never able to maintain a sense of humor in the face of adverse circumstances.
37	I never demonstrate an overall strength of optimism in my leadership role.	0	0	0	0	12	13	I always demonstrate an overall strength of optimism in my leadership role.

Personal Values

30	I always make value-driven decisions even in the face of strong opposing forces.	16	8	0	0	1	0	I never make value-driven decisions even in the face of strong opposing forces.
46	I always rely on strongly-held moral or ethical principles to guide me through adversity.	19	6	0	0	0	0	I never turn to moral or ethical principles to guide me through adversity.
51	I never seem to be able to privately clarify or publicly articulate my core values.	0	0	0	10	15	0	I am always able to privately clarify or publicly articulate my core values.
56	I always take leadership actions consistent with what matters most among competing values.	12	12	0	0	0	1	I never base my leadership actions on what matters most among competing values.
61	I never seek feedback to see if my leadership actions are matching my values.	0	0	0	5	10	10	I always seek feedback to see if my leadership actions are matching my values.
66	I always demonstrate an overall strength of being value-driven in my leadership role.	15	8	2	0	0	0	I never demonstrate an overall strength of being value-driven in my leadership role.

Personal Efficacy

2	I don't have an overall sense of competence and confidence in my leadership role.	1	1	0	0	10	13	I have an overall sense of competence and confidence in my leadership role.
20	I always try to offset any relative weakness I have in an area by turning to others who have strength in this area.	16	7	1	0	1	0	I never try to offset any relative weakness I have in an area by turning to others who have strength in this area.
48	I am always confident that I can learn something from my adversity to help me be stronger in the future.	17	7	0	0	0	1	I am never confident that I can learn something from my adversity to help me be stronger in the future.
53	I never take a deliberate, step-by-step approach to overcome adversity.	0	1	0	3	11	10	I always take a deliberate, step-by-step approach to overcome adversity.
58	I always demonstrate the essential knowledge and skills to lead in tough times.	8	15	1	0	1	0	I never demonstrate the essential knowledge and skills to lead in tough times.
63	I never maintain a confident presence as a leader in the midst of adversity.	0	0	0	1	10	14	I always maintain a confident presence as a leader in the midst of adversity.
Support Base								
8	I never reach out to build trusting relationships with those who can provide support in tough times.	0	0	1	2	3	19	I always reach out to build trusting relationships with those who can provide support in tough times.

14	When adversity strikes, I never try to learn from the experiences of others who faced similar circumstances.	0	0	0	2	4	19	When adversity strikes, I always try to learn from the experiences of others who faced similar circumstances.
27	I never have a strong support base to help me through tough times in my leadership role.	1	0	0	1	6	17	I always have a strong support base to help me through tough times in my leadership role.
68	I never hesitate to tell those I trust about my doubts or fears related to adversity.	8	10	4	2	1	0	I never tell those I trust about any of my doubts or fears related to adversity.
70	I never try to learn from role models who have a strong track record of demonstrating resilience.	0	0	0	0	5	20	I always actively seek to learn from role models who have a strong track record of demonstrating resilience.
73	I am always comfortable sharing with my support base any small wins I achieve along the road to recovering from adversity.	8	9	5	2	1	0	I am never comfortable sharing with my support base any small wins I achieve along the road to recovering from adversity.
Emotional Well-Being								
28	I can always emotionally accept those aspects of adversity that I can't influence in a positive way.	4	14	4	2	1	0	I can never seem to emotionally accept those aspects of adversity that I can't influence in a positive way.

34	When adversity strikes, I always avoid taking action until I've sufficiently gained control of my emotions.	7	13	4	0	1	0	When adversity strikes, I always take action before I've sufficiently gained control of my emotions.
39	I never emotionally let go of a goal that I commit to, even at the expense of sacrificing goals and values that are more important to me.	0	4	3	7	7	4	I always emotionally let go of a goal that I am pursuing, if it's causing me to sacrifice goals and values that are more important to me.
45	I never demonstrate an understanding of my emotions during adversity and how these emotions affect my leadership performance.	0	0	0	1	15	9	I always demonstrate an understanding of my emotions during adversity and how these emotions affect my leadership performance.
50	I always create time for replenishing emotional energy.	3	11	6	3	2	0	I never create time for replenishing emotional energy.
55	I never have the overall strength of emotional well-being in my leadership role.	0	0	0	1	8	16	I always have the overall strength of emotional well-being in my leadership role.
Spiritual Well-Being								
16	I never draw strength during adversity from my connections to a higher purpose in life or causes greater than myself.	0	0	0	0	4	21	I always draw strength during adversity from my connections to a higher purpose in life or causes greater than myself.

22	I always draw strength from my sense of spirituality in the face of adversity.	20	4	0	0	0	1	I never draw strength from my sense of spirituality in the face of adversity.
29	During adversity, I never feel a deep sense of spiritual gratitude for the opportunity to pursue a calling of leadership.	0	2	0	3	8	12	During adversity, I always feel a deep sense of spiritual gratitude for the opportunity to pursue a calling of leadership.
35	I never protect sufficient time and space for renewing the spirit.	0	3	6	5	6	5	I always protect sufficient time and space for renewing the spirit.
40	I possess an overall strength of spiritual well-being in my leadership role.	20	5	0	0	0	0	I don't possess the overall strength of spiritual well-being in my leadership role.
72	I never turn to personal reflection or introspection to steady myself during adversity.	0	0	1	3	8	13	I always turn to personal reflection or introspection to steady myself during adversity.
Physical Well-Being								
4	I never manage my time so I can achieve rest and recovery.	0	3	10	2	6	4	I always manage my time so I can achieve rest and recovery.
10	I don't demonstrate the overall strength of physical well-being needed to effectively carry out my leadership role.	0	0	1	3	9	12	I demonstrate the overall strength of physical well-being needed to effectively carry out my leadership role.

59	I never seem to find healthy ways for channeling my physical energy to relieve stress.	0	0	6	7	8	4	I always find healthy ways for channeling my physical energy to relieve stress.
60	I never let adverse circumstances that inevitably happen disrupt my long-term focus on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.	4	10	9	2	0	0	I always let adverse circumstances that inevitably happen disrupt my long-term focus on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
65	I never monitor my personal health factors, then adjust my behavior accordingly.	0	1	6	8	5	5	I always monitor my personal health factors, then adjust my behavior accordingly.
71	I always seek the most current, research-based information about how to sustain healthy living in stressful times.	5	8	9	3	0	0	I never seek the most current, research-based information about how to sustain healthy living in stressful times.
Perseverance								
33	I always let adversity in one aspect of my life have a long-term impact on the resilience in other parts of my life.	1	1	1	5	9	8	I never let adversity in one aspect of my life have a long-term impact on the resilience in other parts of my life.
38	I persistently refuse to give up in overcoming adversity, unless it's absolutely clear all realistic strategies have been exhausted.	10	7	3	0	2	3	I stubbornly refuse to give up in overcoming adversity, even when it's absolutely clear all realistic strategies have been exhausted.

44	During adversity, I always sustain a steady, concentrated focus on the most important priorities until I achieve successful results.	13	8	4	0	0	0	During adversity, I never sustain until success is reached a steady, concentrated focus on the most important priorities.
49	I always let disruptive forces and other distractions interfere with my focus on important goals and tasks.	0	0	0	4	19	2	I never let disruptive forces and other distractions interfere with my focus on important goals and tasks.
54	I always demonstrate an overall strength of perseverance in my leadership role.	14	11	0	0	0	0	I never demonstrate an overall strength of perseverance in my leadership role.
69	I am always determined to be more persevering than before when confronted with the next round of adversity.	12	10	3	0	0	0	I never seem determined to be more persevering than before when confronted with the next round of adversity.
Adaptability								
3	I always use feedback about current reality plus what's possible in the future to make adjustments in my leadership strategies.	15	10	0	0	0	0	I never use feedback about current reality plus what's possible in the future to make adjustments in my leadership strategies.
9	I always adjust my expectations about what is possible based on what I've learned about the current situation.	13	10	2	0	0	0	I never adjust my expectations about what is possible based on what I've learned about the current situation.

15	I always demonstrate the ability to put my mistakes in perspective and move beyond them.	11	10	4	0	0	0	I never demonstrate the ability to put my mistakes in perspective and move beyond them.
21	I never demonstrate an overall strength of adaptability in my leadership role.	0	0	0	0	13	12	I always demonstrate an overall strength of adaptability in my leadership role.
43	I never try to find new or creative strategies to achieve positive results in a difficult situation.	0	0	0	0	7	18	I always search for various new or creative strategies to achieve positive results in a difficult situation.
64	I always quickly change course, as needed, to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.	9	8	6	1	0	1	I never quickly change course, as needed, to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.
Courageous Decision-Making								
5	I have a track record of being able to take appropriate action, even when some things about the situation remain ambiguous or confusing.	16	9	0	0	0	0	I have a track record of not being able to take appropriate action, even when some things about the situation remain ambiguous or confusing.
11	I always take prompt, principled action on unexpected threats before they escalate out of control.	14	10	1	0	0	0	When unexpected threats occur, I never take action before the threats escalate out of control.
17	I always take prompt, decisive action in emergency situations that demand an immediate response.	21	2	2	0	0	0	I never take prompt, decisive action in emergency situations that demand an immediate response.

23	never am able to make needed decisions if they run counter to respected advice by others.	0	0	0	5	16	4	I am always able to make needed decisions, even if they run counter to respected advice by others.
24	I demonstrate an overall strength of making courageous decisions in my leadership role.	13	10	1	0	1	0	I don't demonstrate an overall strength of making courageous decisions in my leadership role.
42	I always seek perspectives that differ significantly from mine, when I need to make tough decisions.	8	14	2	1	0	0	I never seek perspectives that differ significantly from mine, when I need to make tough decisions.
Personal Responsibility								
6	I never accept responsibility for making difficult leadership decisions that may negatively affect some individuals or groups.	0	0	0	0	4	21	I always accept responsibility for making difficult leadership decisions that may negatively affect some individuals or groups.
12	When I choose to take no leadership action in the face of adversity, I never accept personal accountability for this choice.	0	0	1	0	6	18	When I choose to take no leadership action in the face of adversity, I always accept personal accountability for this choice.
18	I always have trouble accepting accountability for the long-term organizational impact of any tough leadership decisions I make.	0	0	0	0	3	22	I always accept accountability for the long-term organizational impact of any tough leadership decisions I make.

25	I don't have an overall strength of accepting personal responsibility for my leadership actions.	0	0	0	0	4	21	I have an overall strength of accepting personal responsibility for my leadership actions.
62	I always accept responsibility for making needed changes personally in those cases where I contributed to the adversity.	13	9	2	0	1	0	I never seem to accept responsibility for making needed changes personally in those cases where I contributed to the adversity.
67	I never seem to acknowledge my mistakes in judgment as a leader.	0	0	0	0	5	20	When I make mistakes in judgment as a leader, I publicly accept responsibility to avoid making these mistakes in the future.