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LEADING IN LIPSTICK: HOW GENDER BIAS AND LOOKISM IMPACT THE
CAREERS OF FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS

Presented by
Jillian Kelly

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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Faculty of
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LEADING IN LIPSTICK: HOW GENDER BIAS AND LOOKISM IMPACT THE
CAREERS OF FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS

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DEDICATION

"Here's to strong women, may we know them, may we be them, may we raise them."

-Amy Rees Anderson

To all the women who have ever been told no.
To all the women who have ever been told they can't.
To all the women who have ever been told they won't.
To all the women who have ever been told they shouldn't.
And to my Mom, Jessica, Grandma, Aunt Linda, Aunt Laura,
And all the strong, powerful women in my life
Who didn't listen to them.
This is for you.

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ABSTRACT

LEADING IN LIPSTICK: HOW GENDER BIAS AND LOOKISM IMPACT THE CAREERS OF FEMALE SUPERINTENDENTS

This study investigates the impact of gender bias on female superintendents' careers on Long Island. Despite comprising the majority of teachers, women hold a significantly lower proportion of leadership positions. The research employed a mixed-method approach with quantitative and qualitative phases to explore this disparity. The findings reveal that gender bias and lookism significantly influence the career trajectories of female superintendents. Participants reported experiences of sexism, lookism, and ageism. They also highlighted the prevalence of "code-switching," adapting communication styles to navigate professional settings. Mentorship emerged as a valuable resource for career advancement, while acknowledging the additional challenges faced by women in leadership. The study emphasizes the need for systemic changes to address gender bias and promote equity in educational leadership. This includes dismantling deeply ingrained stereotypes, creating inclusive environments, and fostering mentorship programs tailored to women's needs. Future research recommendations include longitudinal studies, intersectional analyses, and comparative studies to gain a deeper understanding of these dynamics.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“In the near future, we shall have more women than men in charge of the vast educational system. It is a woman’s natural field, and she is no longer satisfied to do the large part of the work and yet be denied the leadership.”

Ella Flagg Young (1909), Superintendent of Chicago Public Schools

My memories of education are woven inextricably with the women who guided me. From the gentle hand that taught me to read to the patient voice that demystified long division, my early teachers were a tapestry of female brilliance. Even as my classrooms diversified in later years, it was these women who captivated me with their intellect, nurturing spirit, and unwavering command of the room. This pattern held true throughout my undergraduate education program, where a sea of female faces surrounded me, and now echoes in my doctoral classes, where the exception continues to be the occasional male voice.

Stepping into my own teaching career, I found myself surrounded by a familiar landscape of female colleagues. The qualities I admired as a student – sharp minds, dedication to students, the ability to build strong connections – were the very qualities I aspired to embody. Yet, while these women led in the classroom, this narrative seemed to shift when it came to leadership. The administrators who “ran” the school, those who held the reins and made the final decisions, were almost exclusively men. This dissonance between the leadership I experienced and the leadership I observed became a lingering question mark in my journey to where I am today and where I hope to go in the future.

Background of the Problem

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 77% of public school teachers in the United States were female, and 23% were male in 2020 through 2021 (NCES, 2022). School administration programs now enroll more women than men, but there remains

a comparatively low number of women employed as school leaders. These enrollment figures indicate that for women, aspiration is not the issue; rather, opportunity is (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006). Women constitute more than half of the doctoral students in educational administration, yet they occupy only about one-fourth of the administrative positions in the field (Glass, 2000). According to Grogan (2010), in the United States, women earn more degrees in higher education than men do. Women make up 77 percent of teachers and 52 percent of principals, yet a survey released by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) in March 2023 revealed only 26 percent of superintendents in the United States were women and only 9 percent were a race other than white (AASA, 2023).

For decades, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has tracked the evolving landscape of public school leadership in the United States, conducting in-depth studies every ten years. As early as the 1920s, their research shed light on the evolving role of the superintendent. Throughout the 20th century, the profession remained largely male-dominated, although the 1990s exemplified a significant shift. While women continued to hold a strong presence in education and administrator preparation programs, their representation as superintendents remained low, with only 6.6% in 1990. However, the latter portion of the decade saw a promising doubling of that percentage to 13.2% by the year 2000 (Glass, 2000).

The trend continued into the next decade, with the 2010 AASA survey revealing a further increase to 24.1%. Despite this progress, the 2019 data from the School Superintendents Association highlighted a persisting gender gap, showing that of the 13,728 superintendents nationwide, only 1,984 were women. While the number of female leaders rose, it remained significantly lower than their male counterparts. Continuing at this rate of a

0.7% annual increase, it will take approximately 77 more years for women to no longer be underrepresented in the superintendency (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

Conversely, the number of female superintendents in New York in 2010 was twice as large as the national data. While this trend bodes well for New York's female leaders, there was a disproportionality of female representation between teachers in the classroom and administrative positions, both nationally and in New York. In the U.S. 77% of all K-12 educators were women, according to the U.S. Department of Education (AASA, 2019). Likewise, in New York, 75.4% of classroom teachers within this statistic were female (New York State Education Department, 2020). As the positions in education increase in responsibility, status, and salaries, the representation of women decreases. The statistic further supports this state trend that 51.5% of school administrators were women, but only 36% of superintendent positions in New York were held by women (New York State Education Department, 2020). This shows a significant gender gap in educational leadership positions in both New York and the United States. While there are more female teachers than male teachers, there are fewer female superintendents and administrators than male.

In addition, the research shows that women and men share the same incentives and disincentives. According to a survey given to members of the American Association of School Administrators, as cited by Sutton (2008), “the top three incentives for those considering a career as a superintendent included making a difference, leading for learning and compensation.” The top three disincentives were “funding for public schools, family sacrifice, and school board relations.” There were no significant differences in ranking between males and females. According to the McKinney (2011) report, “Men are promoted based on potential, while women are promoted based on accomplishments” (Sandberg,

2013). Men have the upper hand when it comes to mentorship and networking. Like many male-dominated professions, school leadership often operates as an "old boys club," with men receiving preferential access to formal and informal mentoring (Muñoz et al., 2014). Through this "old boys club," men gain access to opportunities that women do not. Additionally, women encounter the self-imposed barrier of gender.

Prejudice based on physical appearance, known as *lookism*, also plays a major role in the career trajectory of a female superintendent. Despite its major role, it is certainly not a term that is widely discussed or even widely known. Studies have shown that attractive individuals are perceived as more competent, trustworthy, and even intelligent (Feingold, 2016). However, in a male-dominated field, physical attractiveness can become a double-edged sword, simultaneously drawing unwanted attention and undermining professional credibility. Since looks are something that is based on perception, lookism may reveal an implicit bias. If we can't talk about it, we cannot address it. This study aims to address this gap in the literature. My research builds upon the foundation laid by Dr. Teresa Grossane's dissertation, "The Lived Experiences of Women Navigating the Trajectory to the Position of Superintendent " (2019). Dr. Grossane's work explored the experiences of women who achieved the superintendency, examining the opportunities and challenges they encountered. Her semi-structured interviews with six female superintendents yielded themes around effective leadership qualities, the role of mentors, gender-specific challenges in leadership, and the transferability of skills from special education backgrounds. This research provided valuable insights into the career paths of successful female superintendents and the potential barriers they faced.

Expanding on Dr. Grossane's work, my study aims to incorporate the perspectives of both genders and delve deeper into the issue of lookism. By including male superintendents in the interview process, I hope to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how gender bias manifests in the educational leadership landscape. Furthermore, I will explore how both men and women perceive and navigate the often-unaddressed issue of lookism within the professional environment.

Research Question

What effect does gender bias and lookism have on the career trajectory of female superintendents?

Purpose of the Study

While eradicating gender bias might be monumental, even a single pebble can create ripples in a still pond. This study is not merely an academic paper; it is an invitation to open a dialogue, a conversation long overdue. Just as acknowledging darkness is the first step toward lighting a candle, recognizing the existence of gender bias is crucial to effectively addressing it. This paper does not claim to be a magical solution, but it aims to illuminate the issue, sparking awareness and setting a wave of change in motion. We can chip away at the embedded inequalities by starting the conversation, paving the way for a more equitable and just future. This study's purpose is to begin this important conversation.

Theoretical Framework

Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012) suggests that the differences we observe in behavior between men and women are largely shaped by the distinct roles they occupy in society. Historically, a division of labor emerged, with women primarily taking on domestic responsibilities and men venturing into the public sphere. This, in turn, led to the

development of distinct expectations for each gender. Men were expected to exhibit independence and assertiveness, aligning with their "agentic" roles. Conversely, women were expected to be nurturing and expressive, fostering "communal" behavior. These expectations are transmitted through socialization, where individuals learn the appropriate skills and qualities for their assigned roles. Parents, teachers, and society at large play a role in this process. Additionally, gender roles can directly influence individuals' choices in specific situations. This theory suggests that our social environment shapes our behavior in ways that often reinforce these traditional patterns.

Social Role Theory also suggests the potential consequences of these gendered expectations. For instance, women might be seen as less capable in leadership roles due to their perceived lack of agentic traits. This can lead to the underrepresentation of women in positions of power. However, as women gain access to traditionally male-dominated spaces, their social roles evolve and potentially challenge these stereotypes. One of the most impactful aspects of the theory is the observation that individuals who deviate from gender stereotypes often face negative consequences. Women who exhibit agentic traits might be perceived as less likable or competent, while men who display communal qualities can be seen as less masculine. This highlights the prescriptive nature of gender stereotypes and their influence on social interactions.

Definition of Terms

Code-Switching: The use of different dialects, accents, language combinations, and mannerisms within social groups in order to project a particular identity (United Language Group, 2023)

Superintendency: Also referred to as school superintendent, this position plays a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape of a district. The school superintendent delineates, initiates, implements, and champions the district's vision for academic success for all students. This multifaceted leadership role encompasses evaluating student achievement, leading personnel selection, and bridging the school board and community (Grogan, 2008; Kowalski et al., 2011; Sherman & Grogan, 2003).

Lookism: Discrimination based on appearance (Granleese & Sayer, 2006)

Expected Hypothesis

It is expected that gender bias has a negative effect on the career trajectories of women in the superintendency on Long Island. Additionally, I believe that female superintendents are more likely to experience sexism, lookism, ageism, and discrimination in the workplace. Such expectations suggest that gender bias is a significant factor in the career trajectories of female superintendents on Long Island.

Limitations

Several factors may limit the generalizability of this study. First, the geographical location of the sample population can skew the results in addition to varying attitudes toward gender roles and biases across cultures and regions. Second, the study relies on subjective perceptions, which are inherently prone to personal biases and influences of the current social climate. Individuals may unintentionally or unconsciously shade their responses based on their beliefs and social roles.

Furthermore, the current societal climate is particularly fraught with tension around the topic of gender, with strong opinions and polarized viewpoints. This creates an environment where individuals might feel pressure to conform or fear expressing dissenting

views, leading to inaccurate or incomplete responses. The study's findings could be skewed by those hesitant to voice their true opinions due to fear of being labeled or ostracized. Finally, the person's mood when answering can also significantly impact the data. A bad day, a recent disagreement, or simply the way the questions are phrased can influence individual responses and paint an inaccurate picture of their overall beliefs and attitudes.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The History of Women in the Workplace

The position of school superintendent (also referred to as *superintendency*) plays a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape of a district. As Kamler (2009) delineates, these individuals initiate, implement, and champion the district's vision for academic success for all students. This multifaceted leadership role encompasses evaluating student achievement, leading personnel selection, and bridging the school board and community (Grogan, 2008; Kowalski et al., 2011; Sherman & Grogan, 2003). Despite the critical importance of this position, women have been historically underrepresented in school superintendency roles, raising questions about gender equity and leadership diversity in educational administration. A deeper examination of the historical representation of women in such roles reveals a persistent gender gap. Blount (1998) details how women's superintendency representation fluctuated between nine percent and 11% from 1910 to 1950, dramatically declining to three percent between 1950 and 1970. While modest progress to five percent was observed by the year 1990, it still represents limited progress in a society striving for gender equality.

Brunner (2000) paints a stark picture of the historic dominance of men in school leadership positions. Since its inception in the late 19th century, white males predominantly occupied school superintendent positions. This trend persisted well into the 20th century, with Tallerico and Blount (2004) citing Brunner's assertion that "men occupied 85% to 96% of all superintendencies during this time". The progress of women in attaining superintendency positions has been slow and inconsistent. Mertz (2006) highlights the "continued scarcity" of women in these roles, arguing that Title IX, aimed at gender equity in

education, has had limited impact on the superintendency pipeline. Statistics reinforce this notion, with Kowalski et al. (2011) reporting that women currently hold only 24.1% of superintendent positions nationwide. Several factors have historically contributed to the underrepresentation of women in superintendency roles. Blount (1998) attributes the decline in female representation after World War II to the return of male veterans who took advantage of the G.I. Bill to pursue education careers. Glass (2000) further emphasizes societal shifts in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s that marginalized women in leadership positions, pushing them "to the back of the bus." Additionally, historical events like school consolidation, as mentioned by Kelsey et al. (2014), exacerbated the gender gap, reducing women's representation to a mere 1.3% in 1971.

With 77% of women constituting the education workforce, there is an ample supply of qualified leadership candidates. Dana and Bourisaw (2006) emphasize that "school administration programs now enroll more women than men, but there remains a comparatively low number of women employed as school leaders. These enrollment figures indicate that for women, aspiration is not the issue; opportunity is." Women constitute more than half of the doctoral students in educational administration, yet they occupy only about one-fourth of the administrative positions in the field. While women make up 77% of teachers, 52% of principals, and 78% of central office administrators, they account for less than a quarter of all superintendents (Superville, 2016). This underrepresentation is especially concerning, given the vast pool of talented women in the education system.

Moreover, research suggests that women's academic preparation for the superintendency is more current and aligned with contemporary educational trends. Forty-seven percent of women earned their highest degree within the past ten years

compared to 36% of men, and over 40% of men earned their highest degree 15 or more years prior. This suggests that women may be better equipped to meet the evolving demands of educational leadership. Women demonstrate a stronger connection to the classroom through their educational backgrounds, as more female (58%) than male (24%) superintendents hold undergraduate degrees in education (Burton & Weiner, 2016).

Additionally, women spent several more years than men teaching before transitioning into administrative roles, highlighting their commitment to and understanding of the challenges and rewards of classroom instruction. The apparent disconnect between qualifications and leadership opportunities is further underscored by Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011), who argue that the number of women achieving superintendencies does not reflect the number of qualified and aspiring women. This discrepancy paints a troubling picture of systemic barriers hindering women's advancement, raising critical questions about the nature and extent of these obstacles. While some may dismiss the evident difference as a statistical anomaly, others recognize it as a manifestation of complex challenges. Terms like "glass ceiling," "sticky floor," and "concrete wall" aptly capture the various hurdles women face.

The Impact of Societal Views on Female Career Pathways

Social Perceptions

Studies on school district superintendents, mirroring similar trends in business organizations, highlight the persistent perception of leadership as a masculine trait. This ingrained bias leaves women at a disadvantage when competing for leadership positions, even though they constitute a significant portion of the overall workforce and excel in various professional settings (Sandberg, 2013). Despite the great achievements of women in the workforce, the number of females in top executive positions has barely changed in the

last decade (Sandberg, 2013). Women constitute less than one-fourth (18%) of our elected congressional officials, and only 4.2% or 21 females as Fortune 500 CEOs (Sandberg, 2013). In its nearly 250 years, the United States has never elected a female president.

Historically, the teaching profession has been deeply intertwined with societal expectations of women as caretakers. Apple (1985), Carrington and McPhee (2008), and Goldstein (2014) highlight the feminization of teaching, aligning it neatly with the traditional role of women as nurturers of children's minds —this perception of female teachers as natural caregivers normalized their focus on building close relationships with students (Strober and Tyack, 1980; Grumet, 1988). At the same time, administrative roles were often seen as a male domain (Adams and Hambright, 2004). This historical context helps explain why many female teachers, even today, shy away from administrative positions or experience role conflict when assuming them (Loder and Spillane, 2005). The feminization of teaching and the persistent association of administration with masculinity continue to be significant barriers for women seeking leadership positions in education (Burton & Weiner, 2016).

Like many male-dominated professions, school leadership often operates as an "old boys club," with men receiving preferential access to formal and informal mentoring and women facing significant barriers to their professional advancement (Muñoz et al., 2014). As Gardiner et al. (2000) point out, this systemic bias perpetuates itself through a self-reinforcing cycle. Lemasters and Roach (2012) state that excluding women can happen subtly, often during informal gatherings, networking events, or after-hours activities like conference dinners, golfing, or fishing excursions. While many women might have the interest and skills to participate in these activities, they may lack awareness or invitations,

essentially facing a "gatekeeping of exclusion" simply by virtue of their gender (Lemasters & Roach, 2012). This lack of access to informal networks can be detrimental to women's career advancement. These social settings often provide valuable opportunities for building relationships with key decision-makers, discussing critical issues, and fostering mentorship. When women are excluded from these informal spaces, they miss out on crucial opportunities to develop the social capital and networks that can propel them toward leadership positions. Those in positions of authority, predominantly white males, readily offer professional support and guidance to those they see as most like themselves. This creates a "glass escalator" effect, where white males are quickly identified as having leadership potential and rise through the ranks with ease (Burton & Weiner, 2016).

However, the challenges for women extend beyond mere lack of access to mentorship. Mertz and McNeely (1990) conducted a qualitative study of women who succeeded in attaining a high school principalship or a superintendency in Tennessee. In interviewing 17 women regarding their success, they reported that females do not support other females, thus creating a self-barrier of gender. Female jealousy and network absences hinder women's success. Research suggests that a significant portion of workplace bullies are women, targeting other women in a phenomenon known as the "Queen Bee" dynamic (Crothers et al., 2009; Faniko et al., 2017). This behavior is characterized by women in positions of power exhibiting critical attitudes and withholding support from their female subordinates (Faniko et al., 2017). Spreading rumors and gossip is a common tactic used by "Queen Bees" to exert control and disempower other women (Crothers et al., 2009; Faniko et al., 2017). This behavior can damage the reputation and well-being of both the victim and the perpetrator, hindering their professional development (Derks et al., 2016).

Research suggests that women are not typically competitive with their female peers at the same level but rather with those they perceive as subordinates (Faniko et al., 2017). This self-serving behavior can manifest in several ways, including distancing themselves from lower-ranking women, adopting masculine behaviors to fit in with male superiors, and advocating for policies that perpetuate gender inequalities (Derks et al., 2016).

Furthermore, studies have shown that women can also hinder each other's progress even before reaching leadership positions. For example, female professors may perceive female students as less dedicated than their male counterparts (Kaiser & Spalding, 2015). This passive-aggressive sabotage, often driven by insecurity and jealousy, can have detrimental effects on the victim's career prospects (Brock, 2008; Zachry, 2010). The tendency for women to engage in such behaviors may stem from socialization experiences during their upbringing, leading them to be more attuned to subtle cues and harbor grudges (Ryder & Briles, 2003; Zachry, 2010).

The social expectation that "women take care, and men take charge" (Hoyt and Burnette, 2013) influences how women are evaluated in leadership positions. While communal traits are increasingly considered valuable in leadership, perceptions of what constitutes successful leadership remain firmly rooted in agentic, masculine characteristics (Grogan & Brunner, 2005). This creates a double bind for women as they are disadvantaged in leadership roles historically known to be dominated by men. Adopting traditionally masculine leadership styles risks being negatively evaluated and criticized for violating their prescribed social roles. Conversely, adhering to traditionally feminine and communal leadership styles can lead to being perceived as ineffective leaders. This double bind can manifest as biased performance evaluations, missed opportunities for advancement, and

disparate treatment in the workplace (Grogan & Brunner, 2005).

Adding to this complexity is the issue of implicit bias, where individuals hold unconscious and often prejudiced feelings towards certain groups. This unconscious bias can manifest subtly, for example, influencing how individuals perceive who they believe belongs in certain positions (e.g., women as teachers, men as principals) and impacting their behavior toward members of different groups (Grogan & Brunner, 2005).

While some might attribute the underrepresentation of women in leadership solely to external biases, research suggests a more profound interplay at work. When seeking leadership positions, women are often viewed as women first and administrators second. Kaufman and Grace's (2011) study found that more than half of the women surveyed reported they had experienced gender bias and stereotypes. Sperandio and Devdas (2015) argue that both school board members and their hired search consultants often harbor ingrained beliefs in men's superior leadership potential, influencing their selection of superintendents. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) conducted a study "Study of the American School Superintendency, 2000," which stated that

82% of the female superintendents indicated that school board members do not view them as strong managers, 76% of the female superintendents felt school boards did not view them as capable of handling district finances, and 61% of the woman superintendents felt that a glass ceiling existed in school management, which lessened their chances of being selected (AASA, 2000).

Forty-three percent of the male superintendents agreed that school boards tend to view women as incapable of managing a school district (Glass, 2000). The good old boys' networks, sexist bosses, and the unconscious biases that shape hiring and promotion are real

impediments for women. Notably, women tend to be perceived less favorably as potential candidates for leadership roles, and when performing these roles, their behavior is also judged less favorably (Meister, Sinclair & Jehn, 2017). This aligns with Carter and Silva's study (2010), which found that societal perceptions of leadership as inherently masculine impacted women's self-perception and career choices. Even highly qualified female graduates from top Master's in Business Administration (MBA) programs opted for lower-status positions than their male counterparts despite comparable experience and ambitions. This internalized conditioning led women to undervalue their own leadership skills and limit their pursuit of promotions, contributing to the persistent gender gap in leadership positions.

An internal report from Hewlett Packard found that women tend to apply for a new job only when they meet 100% of the listed criteria, compared to men, who usually apply when they meet about 60%. Women are hired for their first administrative position later than men because they make perfection the standard. High-achieving women tend to take failures deeply to heart and stew over mistakes rather than move on. Gender expectations are set from an early age, where girls were rewarded for being obedient, and have contributed to girls' pressure (Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018). Schools are more likely to penalize girls for acting out and for aggressive behaviors, while the same behaviors in boys are seen as “testosterone spurts” (Odum, 2010). Therefore, women often seek approval by striving to get everything right and avoiding mistakes. Helgesen and Goldsmith (2018) found that men at the executive level are rewarded for being daring and risk-taking, while women at similar executive levels are rewarded for precision and correctness. This results in an internalized expectation that women should be conscientious and precise, which results in an excessive

fear of making mistakes. Women typically are afraid to speak out of fear of embarrassment and shame because women's mistakes are often perceived more critically in organizations. Glass et al. (2000) found that men typically began their administrative position between the ages of 25 and 30 while women were typically hired for their first position between the ages of 31 and 40. Most women spend approximately 15 years of teaching before seeking an administrative role, whereas men spend an average of 5 years. This is because women seek to acquire as much experience as possible to perfect their craft. Researchers have also found that female superintendents have a range of site administration experience to central office administration experience (Odum, 2010). In addition, women reported participating in more professional development in curriculum and instruction (Odum, 2010). For example, 73% of women participated in the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, while only 39% of men participated (Odum, 2010). Women developing higher expertise in curriculum and instruction is a barrier because it is seen as a restriction to their ability to gain experience in diverse skills or develop a career path that will help them be effective superintendents.

Familial Perceptions

Beyond the underrepresentation of women in educational leadership, Sperandio and Devdas (2015) shed light on a subtle yet significant barrier: the pervasive expectation of a "superintendent's wife" to manage domestic burdens. School boards, steeped in this traditional assumption, often hold similar expectations for potential female superintendents. This creates a catch-22 for women; they must convince boards that they can handle the demands of their own families while navigating a position that historically pitted career against family. National surveys by AASA (Glass et al., 2000) corroborate this, revealing a

disproportionate number of female superintendents with no dependents or entering the role later in life when family demands are less pressing. This significantly contrasts the typical profile of a superintendent, which is that of a white male in his forties with a family (Glass et al., 2000). As Mahitivanichcha and Rorrer (2006) argue, women seeking the superintendency face a difficult choice; adapt their family life to the job's demands or forfeit their aspirations.

Carlson (1961) highlights the potential advantage of local familiarity for women overcoming bias, but relocation preferences and hiring practices favoring external candidates can create obstacles. Intertwined with personal aspirations and family dynamics, this dilemma shapes women's career trajectories across various fields, including education. Studies throughout the 1990s and early 2000s (Hardill, 2002; Pixley, 2008) reveal a persistent trend of families prioritizing the husbands' career over the wives', impacting women's career advancement, including their pursuit of the superintendency. Balancing a spouse's needs, family responsibilities, and societal expectations becomes a complex equation, necessitating a nuanced approach to address underrepresentation. However, resilience and flexibility also play a crucial role. Many female superintendents find creative solutions such as supportive partners who share household responsibilities, delaying the pursuit of the superintendency until children are older, or utilizing flexible work arrangements. Data suggests a potential "prime time" for the superintendency, with 36% of women attaining the position by age 45 (Grogan & Brunner, 2005). Despite these adaptations, the demanding nature of the superintendency can take an emotional toll, especially on relationships. Among divorced superintendents, 13% attribute the breakdown of their marriage directly to the job's lifestyle demands, highlighting the need for a more supportive professional environment. One superintendent explicitly linked her marital

dissolution to her husband's lack of support for her career aspirations (Grogan & Brunner, 2005).

Pathways to Superintendencies

Another barrier that exists is the path to the superintendency, which is paved differently for men and women. This most certainly shapes the landscape of educational leadership. A study by Kim and Brunner (2009) reveals distinct career trajectories where men typically climb a linear ladder, starting as secondary teachers, and progressing to assistant principals, principals, and ultimately superintendents. Over 75% of men follow this route, often gaining experience through athletic coaching and shorter teaching stints (7.3 years) before entering administration at an average age of 31.4 years. Notably, only 28.7% of men hold central office positions before becoming superintendents, highlighting a direct path from principal to the top.

Women, on the other hand, navigate a more complex and circuitous journey. Their typical pathway involves teaching (often on the elementary or secondary level(s)), followed by roles such as club advisors, elementary principals, central office directors/coordinators, assistant superintendents, and finally, superintendents. While 63% of women have experience in secondary schools, only 35% served as secondary principals, a crucial stepping stone for men. Instead, 57.4% of women held directorships in central office, suggesting a different focus and skill development. This longer, more diversified path also translates to a later entry point into the superintendency, with women starting their administrative careers at an average age of 35.9 years after 9.8 years of teaching (Brunner & Kim, 2010).

The gap is particularly evident in the critical role of secondary principals. Lemasters and Roach (2012) point out that "75% of all elementary teachers are women; many go on to

elementary principalships, a position from which is rarely seen a superintendent emerge."

This lack of experience at the secondary level hinders women's mobility to the top. Statistics speak for themselves, with 65% of male superintendents holding secondary principal positions compared to only 35.2% of female superintendents, revealing a stark discrepancy.

While the research doesn't suggest one path as inherently better, it highlights the distinct realities men and women face. Men's vertical climb through leadership positions offers visibility and interaction with stakeholders, while women's central office roles, though impactful, need a higher level of power and visibility. Coaching activities, preferred by male teachers, have traditionally provided junior high and secondary school teachers with an initial step toward administration (Glass, 2000). The lack of coaching and assistant administration positions may lead women to travel in diverse trails of career development rather than through traditional career paths to high levels of administration. The visibility of coaches (63% of male superintendents have such experiences) may increase aspiring candidates' chances of "being known more broadly" (Brunner & Kim, 2010). Men appear to have the advantage when they move through the visible entry position of coaching. With its broader scope and control over larger budgets, secondary principalships could provide women with the platform they need to bridge this gap and achieve greater representation in the highest ranks of educational leadership.

Lookism

While America has established legal protections against discrimination based on various visible characteristics such as race, gender, age, and physical disability, the concept of "lookism" – prejudice based on physical appearance – remains a complex and evolving issue. In 1991, Mary Dunn, then president of Smith College, brought this term into public

discourse, highlighting the potential for bias based on beauty standards. While not currently a protected category under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, lookism raises significant ethical and practical concerns in the realm of employment (Adomaitis et al., 2017)

While U.S. civil rights laws safeguard individuals against discrimination based on various characteristics such as race, religion, sex, and disability, the realm of "appearance" and its potential for bias remains complex. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), specifically prohibits discrimination based on the protected categories in employment contexts. However, physical appearance and attractiveness don't fall under these protected categories. This means that, legally, employers can base hiring decisions on appearance, potentially leading to concerns about fairness and equal opportunity. While physical attractiveness has long played a role in societal expectations, its influence in the workplace raises ethical concerns. Lookism refers to discrimination based on appearance, and its impact on employment is gaining traction in academic and public discourse. Studies by James (2008) and Corbett (2007) suggest that employers consider appearance in hiring decisions, reflecting a broader societal obsession with beauty standards. This practice raises questions about fairness and equal opportunity, as subjective judgments of attractiveness can disadvantage qualified candidates who don't meet certain societal aesthetic expectations. Addressing lookism requires acknowledging its potential for bias and promoting merit-based hiring practices focusing on skills and qualifications rather than subjective assessments of physical appeal.

Dress for Success

The workplace dress code can also be a complex and fraught terrain, particularly for women. While phrases like "dress for success" and "power suit" carry connotations of

empowerment, they also reflect the underlying reality of appearance-based biases in hiring and career advancement. Research suggests that certain physical attributes and attire can be perceived as indicators of "fit" for a job, with taller men and conventionally attractive individuals often benefiting from unconscious positive associations (Adomaitis et al., 2017). Studies by Easterling et al. and Kwon demonstrate that women in business attire are perceived as more competent, trustworthy, and employable by more reputable organizations. Similarly, Workman and Johnson (1992) found that clothing choices can influence inferences about the individual and the company they represent. Beyond mere fabric and accessories, clothing serves as a complex language of nonverbal communication, weaving a narrative about the wearer in real-time. As Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992) aptly point out, dress is a "coded sensor system" that shapes our interactions and navigates us through social landscapes. It is a dynamic assembly of modifications, from hairstyles and piercings to scented breath, layered upon garments, jewelry, and accessories that tell a story to the informed observer. This language, however, isn't simply decorative; it's explanatory. By choosing a specific outfit, we communicate aspects of ourselves to the world, whether athleticism through sneakers and sweat outfits or professionalism through a tailored suit.

Physical Appearance

While clothing is a powerful nonverbal language, appearance extends far beyond our garments. Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992) define physical appearance as encompassing the "undressed body, its shape and color, and expression through gestures and grimaces." This broader concept of appearance and its maintenance begins from a young age. In the U.S., gender expectations are often ingrained from birth, with the colors pink and blue marking the first lines of division. Girls are taught to embrace feminine aesthetics through bows,

eyelashes, and carefully curated smiles. At the same time, their clothing choices, makeup routines, and even hairstyles become increasingly influenced by societal beauty standards as they mature. Often described as "ideal beauty," these standards are far from objective.

Mahajan (2007) notes that they are culturally defined and fluid, evolving and intertwined with ingrained societal stereotypes. Our culture dictates what constitutes beauty, prescribing factors like body size, facial features, and even clothing choices. For example, the "ideal" physical appearance in Western culture often leans towards a thin physique, reinforcing harmful and unrealistic expectations. This emphasis on appearance and the pursuit of "ideal beauty" can contribute to lookism, where individuals are judged or treated based on their physical attractiveness.

The adage "a fair exterior is a silent recommendation" (Publilius Syrus, 42 BC) rings true in our society where physical attractiveness holds undeniable power. James (2008) states that in the context of the United States, physical attractiveness has become a "prized possession" that is inextricably linked to perceptions of success, happiness, and even intelligence (Corbett, 2011). James (2008) aptly describes our contemporary society as "obsessed with physical appearance," where beauty standards dictate perceptions not only of attractiveness but also of competence and worth. In the workplace, studies reveal a tendency to prioritize attractiveness over equally qualified candidates, perpetuating the notion that beauty equates to other desirable qualities .

The emphasis on appearance puts women in a bind. Aware of the existing bias, they face the pressure to conform to societal beauty standards and manipulate their appearance through clothing, makeup, and even perfume scents, in the pursuit of success and credibility. This constant self-monitoring and modification comes at a significant cost, impacting both

their financial resources and emotional as well as physical well-being.

While some aspects of appearance, such as height, are difficult to change, others offer more flexibility. This raises concerns about the equality of basing hiring and promotion decisions on subjective judgments influenced by potentially unconscious biases. The intricate relationship between physical appearance and economic opportunity is undeniable. Studies reveal a disturbing trend of people deemed more attractive as earning more, with the tallest 25% of workers pocketing 13% more than the shortest two percent (Lee, 1992). Conversely, research suggests that being overweight can lead to a wage penalty. This reality is amplified for women, who face a seemingly impossible choice of conforming to the ever-shifting beauty standards through cosmetics, surgery, and constant self-modification or risk falling behind in their careers.

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) paints a clear picture of this economic dilemma. Between 1997 and 2007, cosmetic procedures skyrocketed by nearly 500%, with young people and minority women driving a significant portion of this increase. These statistics highlight the pervasive influence of lookism, where employers base decisions on subjective judgments of attractiveness, often to the detriment of qualified candidates. This trend raises serious ethical concerns. The pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty standards not only fuels a multi-billion dollar industry but also perpetuates harmful stereotypes and reinforces an unequal playing field. It forces individuals, particularly women, to invest significant financial, emotional, and physical resources toward maintaining appearances, essentially taxing them for the right to succeed.

The Halo Effect, which states that physical attractiveness is unfairly associated with positive character traits, presents a unique challenge for female superintendents navigating

the male-dominated world of educational leadership. Studies have shown that attractive individuals are perceived as more competent, trustworthy, and intelligent (Feingold, 2016). The Halo Effect's association of attractiveness with competence can be advantageous for women in education seeking initial acceptance. It also leads to underestimating their skills and qualifications in the long run.

Female Barriers Versus Male Barriers

While academic careers are often perceived as meritocratic spaces where expertise and intellect reign supreme, the reality for female superintendents can be quite different. In a male-dominated field, physical attractiveness can become a double-edged sword, simultaneously drawing unwanted attention and undermining professional credibility. The "beauty tax" imposed on female academics goes beyond mere aesthetics. It creates a vulnerability, a constant awareness of being judged not only on their research and teaching but also on their appearance and demeanor. This pressure to conform to unspoken expectations of femininity can be exhausting and detrimental, forcing women to navigate a complex tightrope between being physically noticeable as opposed to being seen as serious employees. As stated by Granleese and Sayer (2006):

If you stand out, you seem like a threat to others, or others feel uncomfortable with your image, and that makes you feel uncomfortable. So the more you blend in because it is a male-dominated environment with color and style, the more you are like others, the more they feel comfortable towards you. (p. 16)

Studies have shown that male academics don't face or endure the same scrutiny regardless of their attractiveness. Their looks don't become a career barrier; rather, their age and even gender are often viewed as an asset. This contrast highlights the triple jeopardy

faced by female academics, who must grapple with sexism, ageism, and lookism all at once.

The impact of this pressure is multifaceted. It can lead to self-silencing, as women hesitate to speak up for fear of receiving harsh judgment. It can also fuel imposter syndrome, which undermines one's confidence and achievements. The constant vigilance required to manage one's appearance and demeanor can diminish valuable time and energy that could be directed toward research and scholarship. The pressure to conform to stereotypical expectations manifests in various ways. Some superintendents report being told to smile more, having their appearance scrutinized, or facing harsher treatment when asserting their authority. These experiences are rarely reported as encountered by their male counterparts (Granleese & Sayer, 2006). This discrepancy highlights the enduring influence of traditional gender roles within the education sector, even at leadership levels. Adding to the complexity, unspoken rules can discourage women superintendents from publicly acknowledging these inequalities. The fear of being labeled "difficult" or jeopardizing their position can lead to a culture of silence, further perpetuating the cycle of unfair treatment. This lack of open discussion hinders progress towards a more equitable work environment for all leaders.

The portrayal of studious characters in the media often falls into a predictable stereotype with them wearing glasses, having unkempt hair, and frumpy attire. If we consider the characters Brains from Thunderbirds or Velma from Scooby-Doo, they are depicted as overweight, plain, short, dark, and forever glued to books. These recurring societal assumptions of physical appearance and attraction suggest a harmful stereotype linking intelligence and academic success with physical attributes.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter will outline the research methodology for this mixed methods study, exploring the impact of gender bias on the career trajectories of superintendents throughout Long Island. It combines quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the experiences of superintendents. This research design emphasizes the importance of anonymity, data integrity, and rigorous analysis methods, enhancing the credibility and value of the research. This study was delineated into two parts: 1.) Survey offered to all Long Island Superintendents 2.) One-hour interviews of ten participants who agreed to take part in such conversations anonymously after completing the survey.

Research Question

What effect does gender bias and lookism have on the career trajectory of female superintendents?

Hypothesis

This study hypothesizes that gender bias hinders the career advancement of female superintendents on Long Island. It is anticipated that females experience more sexism, lookism, ageism, and workplace discrimination compared to their male counterparts. These expectations of gendered behavior and appearance are likely to impede progress towards their position as superintendents.

Setting

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender bias on Long Island's educational leadership, this mixed methods study encompassed a variety of school districts. The participants worked in diverse districts across Long Island, representing a range of

demographics and locations. These districts served student populations from middle to upper-income backgrounds. To protect participant confidentiality, specific names, specific locations and sizes of the districts are not disclosed in this study.

Sample

The quantitative phase of this study utilized a survey sent to 126 Long Island superintendents, with a response rate of 35 (28%). It is important to note that there are a total of 126 Long Island school districts. The sample skewed male (71.4%) compared to female (28.6%) participants. Age distribution varied, with the largest group (37.1%) falling between 50-54 years old, followed by 55-59 (20.0%) and 60+. Racially, the sample was predominantly white (94.3%), with smaller percentages identifying as Black and Hispanic (2.9% each). Educational backgrounds were diverse, with a significant portion holding graduate degrees (28.6%) and a majority holding EdD or PhD (71.4%). Marital status data revealed that 91.4% of respondents were married, while 8.6% were divorced.

The qualitative phase involved electronic interviews with ten participants, chosen to represent a variety of demographics and locations within Long Island. These districts served student populations ranging from middle to upper-income backgrounds. To ensure confidentiality, specific district names and sizes are not disclosed. Phone interviews were conducted with both men and women in leadership positions to gain a well-rounded and anonymous perspective on potential gender bias. This is important because men and women may have differing experiences with lookism, career barriers, and the impact of gender on their leadership journeys.

Data Collection

The first part of the study involved a comprehensive quantitative survey offered to all superintendents on Long Island through a Long Island Superintendent Consortium email listserv. Gender or stated gender identity was not a factor in survey distribution. This survey played a crucial role in establishing a broad foundation for the research and provided valuable insights into the overall demographics and perceptions within the educational leadership community (see appendix). This survey was developed under the guidance of Teresa Grossane, Ed. D., based on her dissertation entitled, *The Lived Experiences of Women Who Navigated the Trajectory to Superintendent* (2020).

An introductory email was sent through the listserv outlining the purpose of the study and inviting Superintendents to participate in the online survey. This correspondence also included a direct link to the survey for use if recipients chose to take part. There were no email addresses or identifying information requested or collected. The survey was designed to gather quantitative data on a range of variables relevant to the study, including:

Demographic Information: Age, gender, education level, years of experience, family status, and current district.

Professional Background: Career path, previous leadership positions, and professional affiliations.

Perception of Professional Environment: Superintendents' perceptions of gender equality, bias, opportunities for advancement, and the overall climate within the educational leadership field.

Physical Appearance in a Professional Setting: Self-reported assessments of superintendents' dress code and how they see themselves adhering to gendered norms in professional attire.

Open-Ended Question: The survey's final question asked superintendents if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview, allowing for qualitative data collection.

The study utilized Google Forms to conduct the survey. To ensure anonymity, emails were not collected. Following the survey, a recruitment email with a specialized and non identifying link was sent to subjects, specifically targeting sitting superintendents interested in sharing their experiences through an interview. The survey concluded with a question gauging interest in participating in an interview. Those who expressed interest were then contacted via email or phone.

The survey itself was designed to take approximately 20 minutes. For administration purposes, a secure and user-friendly online platform was chosen. All information collected through this platform was stored electronically in password-protected files. To ensure anonymity, identifying information was excluded from the storage process. Instead, confidential and anonymous numbers were used to both identify participants and organize their responses. This platform safeguarded data integrity and anonymity for all participants.

The same principles of anonymity applied to the interview process. Interested participants were invited to contact the researcher via phone, but were not required to disclose their names during the call. Additionally, voicemails were not left by the researcher. Following their expression of interest, interview volunteers were contacted to discuss their experiences as superintendents in more detail. The 14 interview questions echoed the survey's themes, but delved deeper into how these experiences impacted the superintendents as male or female members of society. Interview lengths varied between 20 minutes and one hour. Each interview began with a reiteration of confidentiality and the study's purpose. The interviews followed a semi-structured format. While maintaining the core structure,

interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on specific areas within the question themes, offering their unique perspectives and taking the discussion in new directions. This approach ensured a comprehensive exploration of the superintendents' experiences.

To increase the validity and reliability of the findings, the sample of women superintendents and male superintendents was representative of the population of superintendents on Long Island. This was achieved by using a random sampling method. Furthermore, the research process was well-documented to allow for transparency and reproducibility. This includes documenting the research design, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and findings.

Research Design

The research employed a two-phased approach, beginning with a quantitative analysis in Phase 1. This phase utilized descriptive and multivariate variance analysis (MANOVA) methodologies. Descriptive analysis provided insights into the respondents' demographics, while MANOVA explored the impact of gender bias on various aspects. Specifically, MANOVA examined how gender bias affected personal and professional background, perception of the professional environment and physical appearance. Furthermore, MANOVA was used to assess the specific impact of gender bias on the career trajectory of female superintendents in Long Island. The survey distributed to Long Island superintendents garnered 35 responses. This data underwent a cleaning and preparation process before being analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.

The second phase of the study shifted to a qualitative approach. Participants who expressed interest in an interview were contacted by phone. These ten interviews explored the same themes as the survey but delved deeper into participants' perceptions and lived

experiences of the gap between gender bias and superintendent positions. To analyze this qualitative data, a thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2019) six-step process was employed. This process involved (a) immersing the researcher in the data through repeated review and highlighting of meaningful passages, (b) generating codes by identifying commonly used words, phrases, and ideas expressed by participants across multiple reviews of the interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This iterative process continued through the remaining steps of (c) developing themes, (d) reviewing themes for coherence and distinctiveness, (e) finalizing the themes, and (f) writing the report based on the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this mixed methods study utilized a comprehensive approach to investigate the impact of gender bias on the career trajectories of superintendents across Long Island. The quantitative phase, employing a survey and MANOVA analysis, provided insights into demographics and the potential influence of gender bias on various aspects of superintendents' experiences. The qualitative phase, through interviews and thematic analysis, delved deeper into participants' lived experiences and perceptions of gender bias within the educational leadership landscape. By combining these methodologies, this study aimed to achieve a well-rounded understanding of this complex issue and its ramifications for aspiring female superintendents. The research design prioritized anonymity, data integrity, and rigorous analysis methods to ensure the credibility and value of the findings.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Introduction

This study addressed how gender inequality affected educational leadership in the US. Although women make up most public school teachers—77% against 23% of men—their share of teaching positions decreases dramatically when they move up to higher managerial positions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Though women comprise 77% of all teachers, women only occupy 52% of principal posts and 78% of administrative responsibilities in central offices which could include administrative or clerical positions/responsibilities (The American Association of School Administrators, n.d.). Furthermore, the difference is much more noticeable when looking at superintendents, where the percentage of women is only 27%. This underrepresentation is especially startling because women account for over half of Ed.D. candidates in educational administration yet hold only approximately 25% of administrative positions (Glass, 2000).

Moreover, the rate of advancement in mitigating this gender gap is lagging. It is expected that it will take women 77 more years to reach proportionate representation in the superintendency, given the less than 3% rise in female superintendents over the last ten years and the projected 0.7% yearly increase (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). In addition to maintaining a structural imbalance in educational leadership, this standstill highlights long-standing obstacles that prevent women from moving up the administrative ladder. Coordinated efforts are required to address structural prejudices, advance gender equity in leadership, and implement policies that support inclusive settings and women's leadership development in the educational sector (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

This study aimed to determine whether gender bias affected female superintendents on Long Island. It utilized a mixed-method, two-phase design.

When conducting this mixed-methods study, the researcher was guided by the following research question:

What effect does gender bias and lookism have on the career trajectory of female superintendents?

This chapter will report the study's results and findings from both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

Findings

Quantitative Results

This phase of data collection included a quantitative analytical methodology encompassing descriptive and multivariate variance analysis (MANOVA) methodologies. While the MANOVA determined how gender bias affected an individual's personal and professional background, perception of the professional environment, and physical appearance, the descriptive analysis method gathered information regarding the respondents' demographics. Additionally, the MANOVA was used to determine how well gender bias impacted the career trajectory of female superintendents on Long Island. The survey sent out to Long Island superintendents had 35 responses, and data were prepared for an analysis to be conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) vs. 27.

Participant Demographic Characteristics

With a primary focus on gender, age range, ethnicity, educational background, marital status, and engagement in applying for and interviewing for superintendent jobs, the data displayed in Table 1 below includes the demographic information and professional experiences of the surveyed respondents.

Table 1*Participants' Demographic Characteristics*

(N = 35)		
	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Female	10	28.6%
Male	25	71.4%
Age range		
35-39	1	2.9%
40-44	3	8.6%
45-49	5	14.3%
50-54	13	37.1%
55-59	7	20.0%
60+	6	17.1%
Ethnicity		
Black	1	2.9%
Hispanic	1	2.9%
White	33	94.3%
Educational Background		
EdD or PhD	25	71.4%
Graduate degree	10	28.6%

Marital Status

Divorced	3	8.6%
Married	32	91.4%

How many times did you apply for a superintendent position?

1-2	17	48.6%
3-5	13	37.1%
6-7	2	5.7%
8+	3	8.6%

How many times were you interviewed for a superintendent position?

1-2	16	45.7%
3-5	12	34.3%
6-7	4	11.4%
8+	3	8.6%

As highlighted in Table 1, according to gender, 71.4% of respondents were men, and 28.6% of the sample was women. The age range of the respondents varied, with the majority (37.1%) falling between 50 and 54 years, followed by 55 to 59 (20.0%), and 60 and above (17.1%). Regarding ethnicity, most respondents (94.3%) identified as White, while the percentages of Black and Hispanic respondents (2.9% each) were lower. The participants reported various educational achievements, as a significant percentage of participants had completed a graduate degree (28.6%), and 71.4% held an EdD or PhD. In addition, the data on marital status indicated that 91.4% of the respondents were married, while only 8.6% were divorced.

The information gathered from interview responses also provides insight into the tenacity and experiences of those who applied for superintendent positions. A significant fraction of the respondents (37.1%) applied for such employment three to five times, compared to nearly half (48.6%) who applied one to two times. Smaller percentages (5.7% and 8.6%) of the respondents applied six to seven times or more. Comparably, when it came to interviews, a sizable fraction (45.7%) said they had had one to two interviews for superintendent positions, followed by three to five interviews (34.3%), while lesser numbers (11.4%) and (8.6%) said they had had six to seven or more interviews.

MANOVA Result

The multivariate test as highlighted in Table 2 below, can be likened to an interaction in a two-way ANOVA. In other words, the interaction effect establishes whether the impact of gender is constant across several factors, which include perceptions of the professional environment, personal and professional backgrounds, and physical appearance in a professional setting. Similarly, the interaction effect shows whether the effects of the factors are comparable for males and females. With a p-value (e.g., value in the sig column) less than 0.05 ($p < .05$), Wilks' Lambda showed a statistically significant interaction effect. The row that has been highlighted in red illustrates this, indicating that there was a statistically significant difference in the gender of an individual on the career trajectory of women in the Long Island superintendency. This indicates that the results were not by chance but by a factor of interest. This could be indicated as gender as it affects the career trajectories of female superintendents.

Table 2*Multivariate Tests*

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.990	1071.776 ^b	3.000	31.000	.000	.990
	Wilks' Lambda	.010	1071.776 ^b	3.000	31.000	.000	.990
	Hotelling's Trace	103.720	1071.776 ^b	3.000	31.000	.000	.990
	Roy's Largest Root	103.720	1071.776 ^b	3.000	31.000	.000	.990
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.245	3.347 ^b	3.000	31.000	.032	.245
	Wilks' Lambda	.755	3.347 ^b	3.000	31.000	.032	.245
	Hotelling's Trace	.324	3.347 ^b	3.000	31.000	.032	.245
	Roy's Largest Root	.324	3.347 ^b	3.000	31.000	.032	.245

a. Design: Intercept + Gender

b. Exact statistic

Specific Factor Analysis

To determine how the dependent variables, career trajectory factors of female superintendents in Longs Island, differ for the independent variable gender, the tests of between-subjects effects as depicted in Table below and the area highlighted in red will be used to understand each factor effect. The study shows that gender bias has a statistically significant effect on only *appearance in professional settings* ($F(1, 33) = 5.841$; $p < .021$; partial $\eta^2 = .150$).

Table 3*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
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Corrected Model	Personal and Professional Background	2.161 ^a	1	2.161	4.023	.053	.109
	Appearance in professional Setting	2.727 ^b	1	2.727	5.841	.021	.150
	Perception of Professional Environment	.046 ^c	1	.046	.169	.684	.005
Intercept	Personal and Professional Background	407.161	1	407.161	758.043	.000	.958
	Appearance in professional Setting	217.286	1	217.286	465.423	.000	.934
	Perception of Professional Environment	426.806	1	426.806	1573.260	.000	.979
Gender	Personal and Professional Background	2.161	1	2.161	4.023	.053	.109
	Appearance in professional Setting	2.727	1	2.727	5.841	.021	.150
	Perception of Professional Environment	.046	1	.046	.169	.684	.005
Error	Personal and Professional Background	17.725	33	.537			
	Appearance in professional Setting	15.406	33	.467			
	Perception of Professional Environment	8.953	33	.271			

Total	Personal and Professional Background	488.000	35				
	Appearance in professional Setting	259.362	35				
	Perception of Professional Environment	536.484	35				
Corrected Total	Personal and Professional Background	19.886	34				
	Appearance in professional Setting	18.133	34				
	Perception of Professional Environment	8.998	34				

a. R Squared = .109 (Adjusted R Squared = .082)

b. R Squared = .150 (Adjusted R Squared = .125)

c. R Squared = .005 (Adjusted R Squared = -.025)

Quantitative Result Summary

This phase found that gender bias has a statistically significant effect on the career trajectories of women in the superintendency in Long Island, thus agreeing that women superintendents are more likely to experience sexism, lookism, ageism, and discrimination in the workplace (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). The quantitative results also found that gender bias has a statistically significant effect on appearance. These findings suggest that gender bias is a critical factor in the appearance of female superintendents in their careers. These appearance biases on female superintendents may influence others perceptions of a woman's competence, leadership abilities, or professionalism based on appearance. This could potentially hinder their career advancement opportunities or also impact workplace dynamics. Thus, understanding and addressing these biases, such as the ones raised in this

study, is crucial for promoting gender equity and creating a better inclusive workplace environment for female superintendents.

Qualitative Results

The second phase of this study included a qualitative component, where survey participants were able to express interest in completing an interview. The researcher interviewed 10 participants by telephone, following the same themes found in the survey. During the interviews, the researcher explored the participants' perceptions and lived experiences to better understand the gap between gender bias and superintendent positions.

Participant Demographic Characteristics

The 10 individuals who participated in the interviews presented with a variety of demographic characteristics, as depicted in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

	Age	Gender	Experience
Participant 1	42	Female	5 years
Participant 2	58	Male	10 years
Participant 3	51	Male	10 years
Participant 4	48	Female	7 years
Participant 5	49	Female	2 years
Participant 6	44	Female	5 years
Participant 7	38	Female	13 years
Participant 8	39	Male	4 years
Participant 9	47	Female	3 years
Participant 10	46	Female	6 years

As highlighted in Table 1, the participants comprised of 10 individuals with varying demographics. Gender distribution was relatively balanced, with seven female and three male participants. Ages ranged from 39 to 58 years old, reflecting a broad spectrum of life stages and experiences. On average, participants had been involved in their superintendent positions for 6.5 years, with individual durations varying from 2 to 13 years. The group's composition reflects a heterogeneous and potentially robust sample for the study's objectives.

Coding Process

When coding the qualitative data, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2019) six steps. The six steps include (a) becoming familiar with the data, (b) code generation, (c) theme development, (d) reviewing themes, (e) finalizing themes, and (f) writing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2019). When completing the first step, the researcher became familiar with the transcripts by continuously reviewing them and highlighting meaningful passages. Then, the researcher began identifying codes (Braun & Clarke, 2019). When identifying codes, the researcher reviewed each interview transcript multiple times and highlighted commonly used words, phrases, and ideas as stated by the participants. A list of initial codes can be found in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Initial Codes

Physical appearance	Mentorship
Looked weird.	Mentors
Conservative Dresser	Good mentors
Reasonably well-dressed	Hired me
Style	Maintained me
Great dresser	Engaging
Overweight	Encourage me
Attractive	Opened doors.
Color	Work harder.
Look	Working harder
Appearance	Achieve
Dressed professionally.	Preparation
Tone themselves down	Demanding
Comfortable clothing	Busy
Dressing professionally	I had young kids.
Code switching.	Spend your time.
Tone of my voice	Assistance
Suffixes	Curriculum
Casual conversation	Professional associations
Reflection	Networking
Dichotomy	Coaching routes
Vernacular	Too many hours
Dialect	Away from home
Language	Opportunities
Communication	Become involved

Theme Generation

After identifying initial codes, the researcher began categorizing the codes into different themes, following the third step of Braun and Clarke (2019). When categorizing the codes, the researcher ensured that she aligned the categories with the research question:

What effect does gender bias and lookism have on the career trajectory of female

superintendents?

Table 6 below depicts the process of how the researcher categorized the codes into themes in alignment with the research question.

Table 6

Theme Development

Codes	Initial Thematic Category
Physical appearance Looked weird. Conservative Dresser Reasonably well-dressed Style Great dresser Overweight Attractive Color Look Appearance Dressed professionally. Tone themselves down Comfortable clothing Dressing professionally	Physical Appearance
Code switching. Tone of my voice Suffixes Casual conversation Reflection Dichotomy Vernacular Dialect Language Communication	Code Switching

Codes	Initial Thematic Category
Mentorship Mentors Good mentors Hired me Maintained me Engaging Encourage me Opened doors.	Mentorship
Work harder. Working harder Achieve Preparation Demanding Busy I had young kids. Spend your time. Assistance Curriculum Professional associations Networking Coaching routes Too many hours Away from home Opportunities Become involved	Working Harder

The fourth step of Braun and Clarke's (2019) thematic analysis involved the researcher reviewing the themes to ensure that they were succinct and in alignment with the research question. Alignment was ensured by the researcher's ability to provide a definition of the code through direct participant quotations. This process is highlighted in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Alignment of Themes

Theme	Example of Quotation From Participant
Physical Appearance	<p>“Women have to tone themselves down to prove that they are just as capable as any man. They have to prove there is a brain in there. Otherwise, all they see is a woman in a short skirt with long red nails.” (Participant 6)</p>
Code Switching	<p>“I'm very conscious of the tone of my voice. I'm very conscious of whether I'm hitting my suffixes, right like, you know, I don't want to say “I'm gonna.” I might say that in casual conversation with my friends. I'm less likely to say that in casual conversation that you and I have. I'm way less likely to say it right now. So, I am code switching right now.” (Participant 1)</p>
Mentorship	<p>“Because not only did I have mentors, but I had mentors who opened doors for me who helped me not just, you know, open the door, but encouraged me to step through the door. And I guess the term would be sponsors in recommending me for positions.” (Participant 5)</p>
Working Harder	<p>“The preparation part is that I really busted my butt to learn and I went to the best school I could get into my doctorate like I did. Also lots of conferences. I went to three different aspiring superintendent programs.” (Participant 3)</p>

The researcher then finalized the themes by ensuring that they were succinct and in alignment to answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This process is highlighted in Table 8 below.

Finalizing Themes

Initial Thematic Category	Final Theme
Physical Appearance	Physical appearance can affect the career trajectory of female superintendents
Code Switching	Female superintendents experience code switching
Mentorship	Mentorship provides opportunities for female superintendents
Working Harder	Female superintendents must work harder to achieve their positions

Finally, the researcher then reported the results below. When reporting the results, the researcher identified the themes that acted as the finding for the qualitative portion of this study, while corroborating each theme with direct participant quotations. In this study, four themes emerged from the data, acting as the findings for this phase of the study: (a) physical appearance can affect the career trajectory of female superintendents, (b) female superintendents experience code switching, (c) mentorship provides opportunities for female superintendents, and (d) female superintendents must work harder to achieve their positions.

Qualitative Result Summary

This study was guided by the following research question:

What effect does gender bias and lookism have on the career trajectory of female superintendents?

After completing a qualitative thematic analysis, four themes emerged from the dataset: (a) physical appearance can affect the career trajectory of female superintendents, (b)

female superintendents experience code switching, (c) mentorship provides opportunities for female superintendents, and (d) female superintendents must work harder to achieve their positions. This section will report the findings by providing direct quotations from the participants that support each thematic category.

Theme 1: Physical Appearance Affects the Career Trajectory of Female Superintendents

The first theme that emerged from the dataset highlighted how the participants perceived that physical appearance affects the career trajectory of female superintendents. For example, Participant 1 (P1) discussed how they feel judged when walking into a room within a professional setting. P1 stated:

That's the first that's the one I walked into the room. I am sure they looked at me and said, can this person be the superintendent? Right. And if I looked weird, I would. Whatever weird means. It would have diminished my chances. (P1)

In addition, P1 continued to report:

Yeah. I am a very conventional looking person. So, I think for me, it wasn't that big a deal. I think I'm reasonably well dressed. I don't have, like a style. So, there was really nothing for me to tone down.. I think if I were more stylish, I might have to make it more conservative. (P1)

Moreover, Participant 2 (P2) discussed how women can be judged based upon their marital status and whether they would become a mother:

But to some people it matters, you know, a young girl not wearing a ring. You're like, okay, that person you know isn't going to have a baby next week. Then two weeks later, she's pregnant. You're not allowed to care about that stuff. Right? So, I tried to train myself not to be swayed by looking at them. But it's hard, you know, because we

make judgments about how people care for themselves. And then you think well, if they're well put together, they're going to translate that to the classroom. But that doesn't always work. Doesn't always happen. You can be a super great dresser and be terrible. Really, and you could be kind of sloppy and be excellent, you know, and that's what I have found.

In addition, P2 discussed her physical appearance regarding her hair color. For example, the participant stated that she is tempted to continue coloring her hair; however, reported that she is waiting to go gray until after she retires:

I would have continued to dye my hair. And I am 100% aware of its vanity but it's also a realization that you don't want other people at the table looking at you across the table and saying, good Lord, this woman doesn't even take care of herself. Right. And I think men, they don't worry about the grays. (P2)

Participant 3 (P3) discussed how physical appearance can affect a woman's career trajectory due to weight and the color of their skin:

I think if you're a person who's overweight people, people look down on you. I'm shorter and sometimes overweight. Depends on my habits, I'm like a yoyo. And then I think, of course, sadly, you know, for females, it's even worse. I've also been on interview committees where I've had parents say ridiculous things when an applicant leaves the room because the applicant is of color. (P3)

Although Participant 4 (P4) agreed that physical appearance can affect career trajectories for women, he also discussed that his career had not been affected in this area:

No, not really. I mean, I've always just been myself. I wanted folks hiring me to be happy with me and I wanted it to be the right fit for me. (P4)

Participant 6 (P6) reported that women are constantly judged in the education field due to the way that they dress and present themselves:

Women have to tone themselves down to prove that they are just as capable as any man. They have to prove there is a brain in there. Otherwise, all they see is a woman in a short skirt with long red nails. (P6)

In continuing to discuss how women are judged, P6 talked about how something as simple as having her nails done was problematic. She reported:

So early in my position as assistant superintendent, I was in a district and the female superintendent, and I were in our office, and we had a great relationship with the board, and we were very collaborative with the board and of course with each other as a leadership team, an all-female leadership team. I will mention at the time that it was a big team and the two assistant superintendents, and a superintendent and all three of us were female, or still are female. And one of the board members, a male, came into our office and said I need to tell you guys something. He wanted to bring to our attention that there was some rumor in the community that our nails are too nice and that we both always have nice manicures. And I believe you know; the underlying message was if they're if we're paying their salaries with our tax dollars, how do they have time to go get their nails done?

Participant 9 (P9) discussed how men and women have different standards when it comes to dress in the workplace:

So, I hate wearing heels. So that annoys me. I know men have much more comfortable clothing. And if I could wear Dockers and sweatshirts from the district or some kind of Northface from the district, like I see a lot of my male counterparts getting away

with, they look like kind of quasi upscaled coaches, I would. But I couldn't show up like that. (P9)

P9 continued to discuss how a woman's credibility can be decreased also by other appearance issues such as age:

I was young, and probably presented young as I think that you know, I read an article that said women are never the perfect age. So, when you're young, you're too young. And I became a principal at 32 years old. And so, this idea of always, you know, having your credibility as a young woman questioned. (P9)

For this theme, there were some interesting differences in the way that male and female superintendents viewed being judged for their appearances. For example, Participant 5 reported that he did not find any barriers in becoming a superintendent. Moreover, the male participants of this study did not necessarily perceive themselves as being affected by appearance or being judged. However, most of the female participants reported varying instances in their professional careers where they had been judged by their appearance and had to work to tone themselves down. These responses highlight how women perceive barriers differently than men regarding their appearance in the workforce.

Theme 2: Female Superintendents Experience Code Switching

The second theme that emerged from the dataset highlighted how participants reported that female superintendents experience code switching. For example, P1 discussed how code switching was a common occurrence when working as a superintendent, even when she was participating in this interview. P1 reported:

I'm very conscious of the tone of my voice. I'm very conscious of whether I'm hitting my suffixes, right like, you know, I don't want to, I don't want to say I'm gonna, or I'm

going to. I might say that in casual conversation with my friends. I'm less likely to say that in casual conversation that you and I have. I'm way less likely to say it right.

Now. So, I am code switching right now. (P1)

Similarly, P2 also discussed how she regularly experiences code switching when she is in front of certain male board members:

And then that's what I did. I really almost had to dumb myself down for him because if I tried to, I don't know, make a certain point and be very firm with it, he perceived that as sarcasm. So, I had to make myself not appear as smart as I was with him.

Anyway, I didn't use big words (P2).

P5 discussed how she experienced code switching due to having to work with a majority of men:

But a big part of the superintendency is the strong network, the collaboration, but along with that is also the letting your hair down at the conferences, et cetera. And I will say that being able to hang with the guys, even if they were all out there smoking cigars, and I certainly was not used to being part of that kind of atmosphere, I think it gave me some gravitas that I am strong. In terms of other code switching, I know that I lead with heart, and I know that I did a lot of reflection on do I lead with too much feel? and not enough brain? even though I think I tried to do both. I tried very hard when I communicated to not always lead with feeling but more to lead with thinking. (P5)

P7 reported that code sharing does not allow female superintendents to be authentic and real with people, otherwise other individuals can detect this lack of authenticity. P7 stated:

I'm sure I have at some point, but, you know, for me, it's offensive. You have to be real with people. And if you start to be something you're not I think people pick up on it very fast. (P7)

P8 discussed the importance of being aware of code sharing; the participant stated that she has to catch herself so that she can understand why she is participating in these behaviors:

It's like once you recognize you just have to be aware and guard against it. We've all experienced, you know, what is enough and that's when you know, you can operate out of abundance, that one that's important to me. Is that the dichotomy like are you operating out of abundance or scarcity? And I always find when I'm operating from a place of abundance, I'm at my best and when it's scarcity I have to take a moment like why am I feeling threatened? Why am I holding back something? You know? (P8)

P9 reported that she code switches frequently because she does not want to be seen as talking “ghetto”. P9 reported:

Yes. I'm very intentional about my vernacular and my dialect and honoring that because I believe that all peoples of the world have a deck of vernacular, as I think there's an equity in which the vernacular that Black Americans speak, is perceived as ghetto. As uneducated or as uncouth. There's a language that we all speak with our families that we don't speak in a board room. So, I code switch and a lot of times it's very intentional.

Finally, P10 discussed how she frequently code switches, and further reported that she has to be aware of this when communicating electronically:

I think in terms of code switching, I think I'm doing it all the time. Yeah. I think that when I'm writing emails and things like that, I'll look at that. Like my communication and my tone on things, like sometimes I'll put a smiley face in there. (P10)

Theme 3: Mentorship Provides Opportunities for Female Superintendents

The third theme that emerged from the dataset highlighted how the participants perceived that mentorship provides opportunities for the career trajectories of female superintendents. For example, P1 discussed how their mentors have helped them prepare for their careers in different ways:

I have been very, very fortunate to work for people who mentored me, like for the first AP that I worked for, and the first principal that I worked for that were my bosses, they really schooled me a lot about my teaching and more. (P1)

P2 reported that their mentorship experienced provided them with motivation and confidence to apply for positions that helped boost their career trajectories:

And those mentors were important to me because they did kind of shine that light on myself and say, You could do this you know when [name of mentor] said you have to apply for this job, you're gonna get it and then I did and your confidence builds and then when I came to [name of employer], this part for me was so different as an assistant because you are kind of the buffer between the superintendent and you know, everybody else. (P2)

However, P2 also reported that when being mentored by a male, it made their relationship a little more difficult:

Now for me, you know, with deals, I would say the last two years we started to kind of get along with each other, but it was hard in the beginning. It was like I said black he said white, and it was just because I was a woman. I felt that way. (P2)

P3 reported that their mentor had helped their career trajectory because they hired them and maintained them in their career. P3 stated:

So, a couple of mentors... those are people that I've that have been good mentors to me and the first person who's a principal I told you about, I still talk to him, and he hired me and mentored me. And the other person also hired me and mentored me within the same school district, and he's retired for quite a while, but I am still in touch with. (P3)

P4 stated that if it was not for their mentor, they would never have been afforded opportunities that helped them to achieve a superintendent position:

I think there are people that I look back in my career that I certainly wouldn't be in a position if were not for those folks. I only been teaching for seven years, six, seven years, I guess the time when I was fortunate enough to get my first leadership role. It was really the principal in that building that kind of came to me and said, look, I know you probably weren't thinking about applying for this, but I think you'd be great and that we really like you to encourage me to and then really was a great mentor to me throughout. (P4)

Similarly, P5 identified mentors that have opened doors for her throughout her career. P5 claimed:

Because not only did I have mentors, but I had mentors who opened doors for me who helped me not just, you know, open the door, but encouraged me to step through the door. And I guess the term would be sponsors in recommending me for positions. (P5)

Finally, P7 discussed how their mentorship experiences have helped them move into their roles:

A series of amazing mentors. Very nice and [they] care more about their contract and then doing right by people or the system. But I've worked for several superintendents who have completely different styles. For somebody to you know, for me to see is I moved into this role. (P7)

Theme 4: Female Superintendents Work Harder to Achieve their Positions

The fourth theme that emerged from the dataset highlighted how the participants perceived that female superintendents not only had to work hard in their current positions, but also had to work harder to achieve such position. For example, P1 was able to discuss things that women must do to obtain a superintendent position:

Work very, very, very hard. Know yourself, know your vision of things. Know what your vision for education is. Have some concrete ways. Have two or three concrete ways that you can execute and achieve that vision and like not to be trite, but I would say don't care what anybody else thinks and care what everybody else thinks. (P1)

P2 discussed how their experiences with female superintendents was that they needed to be smart and hard-working:

And I ended up working for a female superintendent and it was really bad. It was like my first time, but I had a very strong male mentor, and I don't know if that will turn up in your research but for me, you know, [name of male mentor] kept me from quitting.

I was gonna go right back into the classroom and he was like, yeah, it was you know, [name of superintendent] is crazy. And when I finally won her over, he said too bad you can't put that on your resume. It took a while. But I did want to win her over because she was a very hard-working smart woman.

P3 discussed the things that she had to do to achieve her superintendent position:

The preparation part is that I really busted my butt to learn and so I went to the best school I could get into my doctorate like I did. Just lots of conferences. I went to three different aspiring superintendent programs. (P3)

P3 continued to report:

I think whether you're a male or a female, I think that you have to make sure your partner is all in because whether it's high school principal or superintendent, the job is really tight, demanding and very busy. And you have to have a partner that will embrace the aspiration and be excited for you and excited to take the journey with you. Because I think I'm gonna say something that might sound stupid. But what I noticed is that there's a lot of cases where there's a female who's really happy and successful at her work, and it is because she has a really supportive husband. Yes. And, and I don't say that to detract from what the females are capable of. (P3)

P5 reported no barriers in becoming a superintendent; however, he did acknowledge that he had to work very hard:

I didn't perceive any barriers to becoming a superintendent or any other position I held and perhaps that because the times have changed, perhaps it's because I always worked really, really hard and always had very strong relationships and was very proud that I never burnt bridges.

P8 discussed the difficulties of having to work harder than men, simply because of her status of being a mother. P8 stated:

So, I'm a mom of five. I worked in the city prior to having children. So, this is important because when I had my daughter, when I was pregnant with her, and I was getting off the train at like, 7:30 at night, and that wasn't even budget season. So, it was not that it was late, late, but it wasn't early. And I thought wow I would never see this baby. It just like hit me and I thought I was so stupid. I didn't even think of that like, oh god I'll deliver like, and it really like a really effective thing. (P8)

Finally, P9 reported how women must work harder by aligning themselves with professional organizations, networking opportunities, and coaching:

I think you have to be very intentional around how you spend your time and who you spend time with in terms of professional associations, and networking and coaching routes. And I also think that the assistant superintendent or curriculum position can be a trap for women, because that's not where most not for women. For men, they can see this as a super curriculum, become a superintendent. For women, the data doesn't really bear that out. (P9)

Conclusion

This study addressed how gender inequality affected educational leadership in the United States. This study aimed to ascertain whether gender bias affected female superintendents in Long Island. This research utilized a mixed-method two-phase design. When conducting this mixed-methods study, the researcher was guided by the following research question:

What effect does gender bias and lookism have on the career trajectory of female superintendents?

This chapter reported the study's results and findings from both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Phase 1 included a quantitative analytical methodology encompassing descriptive and multivariate variance analysis (MANOVA) methodologies. The quantitative part of the study found that gender bias has a statistically significant effect on the career trajectories of women in the superintendency in Long Island, thus agreeing that women superintendents are more likely to experience sexism, lookism, ageism, and discrimination in the workplace (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). This process also found that gender bias has a statistically significant effect on appearance. These findings suggest that gender bias is a critical factor in the appearance of female superintendents in their careers.

The second phase of this study included a qualitative component, where survey participants were able to express interest in completing an interview. The researcher interviewed 10 participants by telephone, following the same themes found in the survey. During the interviews, the researcher explored the participants' reported perceptions and lived experiences to better understand the gap between gender bias and superintendent positions. The findings of Phase 2 aligned with the results from Phase 1. In this study, four themes emerged from the dataset, acting as the findings for this phase of the study: (a) physical appearance can affect the career trajectory of female superintendents, (b) female superintendents experience code switching, (c) mentorship provides opportunities for female superintendents, and (d) female superintendents must work harder to achieve their positions. The next chapter, Chapter 5, will conclude this dissertation by discussing the results in

relation to previous literature, the study's implications, identified limitations, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, OUTCOMES, and DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study explored how gender inequality influenced educational leadership in the United States. Despite women comprising 77% of public school teachers, their representation dropped significantly in higher managerial roles (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). For example, while women comprised 77% of teachers, they only held 52% of principal positions and 27% of superintendent roles (The American Association of School Administrators, n.d.). This disparity persisted even though women constitute over half of Ph.D. candidates in educational administration. Progress in closing this gender gap has been slow, with projections suggesting that women would take 77 years to achieve proportionate representation in the superintendency (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). These findings have highlighted the need for concerted efforts to address structural biases and promote gender equity in educational leadership. Therefore, this study focused on whether gender bias affected female superintendents on Long Island, employing a mixed-method two-phase design to investigate.

This chapter will conclude the study by summarizing the findings and discussing implications and outcomes. This chapter will begin by summarizing the findings and identifying essential implications. Then, this chapter will discuss the findings, highlighting how they align with previous research. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the study's limitations and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

This study was guided by the following research question:

What effect does gender bias and lookism have on the career trajectory of female superintendents?

After conducting both quantitative and qualitative analysis, important findings were concluded. In Phase 1, quantitative analysis using descriptive and multivariate variance analysis (MANOVA) revealed that gender bias significantly influences the career paths of female superintendents on Long Island, leading to experiences of sexism, lookism, ageism, and discrimination in the workplace. Additionally, appearance was found to be affected by gender bias, indicating its critical role in the careers of female superintendents. Phase 2 involved qualitative interviews with 10 participants, exploring themes identified in the survey. Findings aligned with Phase 1 and revealed four key themes:

1. Physical appearance does impact female superintendents' careers.
2. Code-switching, defined as the use of different dialects, accents, language combinations, and mannerisms within social groups in order to project a particular identity, is common among female superintendents.
3. Mentorship provides more opportunities.
4. Female superintendents face heightened challenges to achieve their positions.

When considering the four themes that emerged from the dataset, the participants highlighted the impact of physical appearance on career trajectories, with women often facing judgment and feeling the need to downplay their appearance significantly to gain acceptance. This contrasted with male counterparts who did not perceive such barriers. In addition, participants reported the prevalence of code-switching among female superintendents, adjusting their behavior and communication style in different professional settings. Moreover, participants recognized mentorship as a valuable resource in advancing

the careers of female superintendents, providing opportunities for growth and development. This was done while noting the additional challenges female superintendents face in striving for and maintaining their positions. The participants emphasized the need for heightened effort compared to their male counterparts. These findings highlighted the complex dynamics surrounding gender and leadership in educational settings.

Implications

The results of this study are significant for both academic and practical purposes. First, the barriers that the participants discussed relating to appearance show that organizations must keep confronting and challenging gender biases and stereotypes that are deeply entrenched in leadership roles (Dahlvig & Longman, 2020). To create inclusive environments, academic institutions must take proactive measures to break down discriminatory attitudes and promote evaluations based on merit (Kashkhynbay et al., 2024). Second, the prevalence of code-switching among female superintendents illustrates the crucial role that organizational culture and support networks play in enabling genuine expression and professional success (Halley, 2020). Institutions must prioritize creating environments where individuals feel empowered to be themselves at work without judgment or the consequences that can result from judgment.

Recognizing the importance of mentorship in career advancement indicates the need for formalized mentorship programs and tailored networking opportunities that address female leaders' unique challenges (Clarke & Matthews, 2021). Institutions should actively support the development of mentorship relationships and allocate resources for professional growth. Finally, the acknowledgment of the extra effort required by female superintendents to attain and maintain their positions highlights the need for systemic changes that address

structural barriers and promote equitable opportunities for career progression (Spitzer, 2023). Initiatives that promote gender diversity in leadership must prioritize the creation of accessible and supportive pathways for advancement, regardless of gender (Spitzer, 2023).

Conclusions

Interpreting the results considering the study's findings offers valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of gender dynamics within educational leadership. Despite their persistence, the identification of appearance-related barriers highlights the resilience of female superintendents in navigating societal stereotypes (Allred et al., 2017). This underscores the persistent need to challenge conventional norms and advocate for evaluation criteria based solely on merit rather than superficial attributes, mandating continued efforts in this direction.

Furthermore, the prevalence of code-switching among female superintendents demonstrates their experiences within professional environments. While code-switching may be perceived as a pragmatic adaptation strategy, it also highlights the inherent pressure for individuals to conform to prevailing cultural norms (Halley, 2020). These findings depict the importance of fostering inclusive organizational cultures that tolerate and actively celebrate diverse perspectives and authentic expressions (Miranda-Wolff, 2022).

Moreover, Bishop (2021) discusses the significance that mentorship opportunities can bring when working to advance the careers of female superintendents. The author reported that the main goal of mentorship is to provide women with opportunities for growth, acquiring developmental skills, and being guided through the complexities of educational leadership (Bishop, 2021). However, the findings of this study also highlighted how educational institutions need to provide women leaders with mentorship opportunities. By

providing mentorship opportunities to women leaders, educational environments can increase equitable access for all. It is important to note that these findings do not imply any shortcomings in the capabilities of female superintendents; instead, these findings demonstrate systemic barriers and norms that tend to perpetuate gender inequality (Allen et al., 2021). Therefore, addressing these barriers requires collaborative efforts as well as systemic changes that foster inclusive environments where individuals are evaluated and recognized based on their skills, expertise, and contributions rather than their gender or appearance.

Discussion

There were four major findings that emerged from the data analysis that highlight how gender bias significantly influences the career paths of female superintendents in Long Island. This section will discuss the four major findings: (a) physical appearance can affect the career trajectory of female superintendents, (b) female superintendents experience code switching, (c) mentorship provides opportunities for female superintendents, and (d) female superintendents must work harder to achieve their positions.

The Impact of Physical Appearance on Female Superintendents' Careers

The effect of physical appearance on the trajectory of female superintendents' careers has been extensively studied, with many studies focusing on how physical appearance ties into appearance-related biases and stereotypes throughout various fields, including educational leadership (Cassidy et al., 2021). For example, Dwivedi et al. (2021) reported that women working within leadership roles are oftentimes subjected to heightened scrutiny based on physical appearance. The authors reported that when women experience this level of scrutiny, their competence for the position is frequently questioned or

undermined. Moreover, this finding also aligns with the gendered nature of workplace expectations and the phenomenon of beauty bias, which is experienced when individuals who conform to societal beauty standards receive preferential treatment or opportunities for advancement (Nault et al., 2020). Consequently, Fasel (2023) reported that female superintendents may face additional hurdles in their career progression due to appearance-related biases, further perpetuating gender inequalities within educational leadership. The authors reported that these appearance-related biases could include weight, clothing styles, and hairstyles (Fasel, 2023).

This finding illustrates the impact of physical appearance on career advancement for female superintendents. Cavico et al. (2012) reported that because of appearance-related biases, organizations must quickly work to address appearance-related biases in leadership evaluation processes. By creating awareness and applying strategies that promote equitable assessment based on qualifications and merit alone, organizations can address any effects of appearance-based discrimination, creating a more inclusive environment for all aspiring leaders, irrespective of gender.

Code Switching Among Female Superintendents

Previous research has highlighted how women leaders adapt their communication styles and behaviors to fit prevailing norms (e.g., Diehl et al., 2020; Sueda, 2022). This phenomenon is not unique to educational settings; research across various sectors reveals women's use of code-switching to navigate gender biases while asserting their authority (e.g., Carter & Sisco, 2024; Spencer et al., 2022). Furthermore, this finding aligns with broader discussions on women's strategic challenges in managing their professional identities in leadership roles. For example, Halley (2020) reported that when female superintendents

continuously engage in code switching, it can become a strategic tool to negotiate their identities within educational institutions. In addition, Winston (2020) argued that by employing different communication strategies in diverse contexts, female superintendents strive to balance asserting leadership and conforming to organizational norms.

Moreover, this finding highlights the importance of recognizing the intersectionality of gender with other identity dimensions (Kingsberry & Jean-Marie, 2021). For example, Macklin (2021) reported that women representing marginalized backgrounds working in educational leadership tend to utilize code-switching as a survival mechanism to navigate intersecting forms of discrimination. Therefore, understanding code-switching among female superintendents can help provide an intersectional lens considering the relationships of gender and race.

The Role of Mentorship for Female Superintendents

Previous research, such as studies conducted by Barkhuizen et al. (2022) and Read et al. (2020), have emphasized the importance of mentorship in facilitating women's career progression and professional growth within their leadership roles. Studies have also concluded that mentoring relationships offer invaluable guidance, support, and networking opportunities, allowing female leaders to navigate organizational hurdles and overcome barriers to advancement (e.g., Jones & Marlier, 2022; Madsen, 2024).

Furthermore, this finding aligns with the significance of mentorship in cultivating inclusive and supportive environments for women in educational leadership positions. Norander and Zenk (2023) reported that mentorship is a vital resource for female superintendents, granting them access to valuable insights, knowledge, and avenues for development. The authors argued that mentors can assist female superintendents in

navigating their roles, honing their leadership skills, and bolstering confidence in their capabilities by offering guidance and encouragement (Norander & Zenk, 2023).

Moreover, this finding highlights the necessity for organizations to prioritize mentorship programs and initiatives tailored to supporting the career advancement of female leaders. Previous research has reported that formal mentorship programs catering to women's needs can effectively mitigate gender disparities in leadership roles (e.g., Deng et al., 2022). Therefore, by investing in mentorship opportunities, educational institutions can empower female superintendents to overcome obstacles and flourish in their leadership capacities. While the concept of employing mentors has proven to be crucial, we must take this role one step further and educate mentors on the difference in the career trajectories of male versus female administrators as it relates to gender and lookism. For example, the mentoring relationship that is rooted in the understanding of code switching as it relates to underlying issues of gender and race will be deeper and more effective in the growth of mentees.

Additional Struggles for Female Superintendents in Attaining Positions

Previous research has documented obstacles that women who aspire to leadership roles encounter (e.g., Abalkhail, 2017; Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023). Most of these studies have highlighted systemic barriers and biases that hinder their career advancement (e.g., Brown et al., 2020). For example, Diehl and Dzubinski (2017) highlighted how gender-based discrimination and stereotypes pose significant challenges for women seeking access to and progression in leadership positions. The authors found this particularly true within traditionally male-dominated domains like educational administration (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2017).

Moreover, this finding aligns with studies that have concentrated on the experience of persistent gender disparities in leadership representation (e.g., Hamplová et al., 2022). For example, Banker (2023) discussed how women have consistently confronted many barriers within their careers, including the glass ceiling phenomenon. The glass ceiling phenomenon limits any prospects of advancement, while restricting their entry into senior leadership roles. Furthermore, previous research has also acknowledged that women oftentimes face skepticism and resistance during their journeys of pursuing leadership positions. These experiences require women to exhibit exceptional competence and resilience, not only to navigate ingrained biases, but to also receive a level-playing field in relation to their male counterparts (e.g., Mah et al., 2022). Finally, previous research has also discussed the significance of organizational policies and practices that protect women and foster gender diversity and inclusion within leadership ranks (e.g., Kaur & Arora, 2020). Mentorship programs and leadership development initiatives help to alleviate any additional challenges faced by female superintendents (Kaur & Arora, 2020).

Suggestions for Future Research

Recommendations for future research are pivotal in building a more robust understanding of gender dynamics in educational leadership. One recommendation for future research would be to complete a longitudinal study on the same topic. Longitudinal studies will allow future researchers to effectively track the career trajectories of female superintendents over extended periods (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2019). By examining trends and patterns over time, future researchers can uncover the enduring effects of gender bias and appearance-related barriers on professional advancement, highlighting strategies female superintendents employ to navigate these challenges successfully. Furthermore, future

research could include an intersectional analysis to comprehensively examine female superintendents' experiences (Showunmi, 2020). An intersectional analysis will allow future researchers to explore how gender intersects with other areas of identity, such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (Showunmi, 2020). This research can help understand the challenges that female superintendents experience regarding the double glass ceiling effect (Johnson & Fournillier, 2021).

Another recommendation for future research is to complete a comparative study. Comparative studies across various geographical regions and educational systems can offer another avenue to enrich any understanding of gender dynamics in educational leadership (Ashraf, 2021). By examining variations in leadership practices, organizational cultures, and societal norms, researchers can better discern any contextual influences on women's leadership experiences.

These recommendations for future research may uncover promising strategies and best practices for promoting gender equity and fostering inclusive leadership environments across diverse settings. Moreover, qualitative inquiries can provide invaluable opportunities to explore more deeply the lived experiences of female superintendents' and their coping strategies in response to gender bias and other challenges. Future researchers can capture the dynamics of gendered interactions within educational leadership contexts through in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Conclusion

It is concerning that even though women make up the majority of the population of public school teachers, they are still significantly underrepresented in higher managerial positions (Glass, 2000). This study found that female superintendents face gender bias,

sexism, and discrimination, which are persistent issues. Physical appearance and code-switching were identified as critical factors that influence career progression. On the other hand, the participants discussed how mentorship provides many opportunities for advancement. However, female superintendents face more significant challenges than male counterparts (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). This study highlighted the urgency of addressing structural biases to promote gender equity in educational leadership. Integrating these insights into policies and practices is crucial to fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in educational leadership roles.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Email

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to you to invite you to be part of my research study on gender stereotypes in education and their impact on female superintendents' career trajectories. The purpose of the research is to provide a baseline for further research and to continue the eradication of negative gender stereotypes.

This research is connected to the College of Education, Information, and Technology at Long Island University through which I am pursuing my doctorate in education. This research is my culminating dissertation marking the completion of my studies. I am seeking male and female superintendents to participate in my research by taking a survey. It will take you approximately 20 minutes to participate in the survey.

There will also be an opportunity at the end of the survey for female superintendents to volunteer to be interviewed on their experiences as a female superintendent. The interview will take approximately two hours and will be conducted anonymously via phone.

If you are interested, click the link below.

<https://forms.gle/w3Fa98u1upRksrtC8>

Please note that no identifying information will be present on the survey or in the results of the interview, if applicable.

Thank you,
Jillian Kelly
Long Island University
jillian.kelly5@my.liu.edu
516-859-7435

APPENDIX B



NOTICE TO ALL RESEARCHERS:

Please be aware that a protocol violation (e.g., failure to submit a modification for any change) of an IRB approved protocol may result in mandatory remedial education, additional audits, re-consenting subjects, researcher probation, suspension of any

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. Can you describe the pathway to the superintendency that you took?
3. What qualities do you think leaders need to possess to be effective?
4. What experience, characteristics, and qualifications do you think a superintendent should have
 - a. What role do you think superintendent search firms play in this process?
5. In your role as a female superintendent, have you ever felt the need to consciously code-switch in order to appear less feminine?
 - a. Have you ever had to alter your physical appearance or dress?
 - b. Do you think looks play a factor in the hiring process?
6. What do you see as the most significant barrier to women achieving leadership positions in education? Why that/those?
 - a. Did you have a similar experience? How did you overcome these obstacles?
 - b. Some suggest this profession is more of a male than female profession and is the reason there are fewer women superintendents in this position. What are your thoughts regarding this perception?
7. From your observations, are there different ways that women handle challenging or difficult situations than men? Please describe.

8. What supports, influential role models, mentoring and/or networking did you experience in obtaining this position? Could you describe how this informed you?
 - a. Do you serve as a mentor? If so, please describe what you do as a mentor. If not, what are your thoughts regarding mentoring being a part of aspiring leaders' experiences?
9. What do you believe are the best practices to assist women in developing leadership skills?
10. How would you describe the working relationship you have with the stakeholders in the school system? (Board, parents, community leaders, teachers, students). How do you maintain these relationships—what strategies do you employ?
11. What recommendations would you have for women aspiring to the Superintendency? Why those?
12. Are there any questions that you have for me?

APPENDIX D

Superintendent Survey

This survey is completely anonymous. Email addresses are not being collected.

This survey is not a published work, but developed under the guidance of Dr. Teresa Grossane based on her study, *The Lived Experiences of Women Who Navigated the Trajectory to Superintendent* (2020), along with the researcher's work to date in the review of literature. This survey has been approved by the IRB.

Professional and Personal Background

1. What is your identified gender?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other: _____

2. Which category below includes your age?

Mark only one oval.

☐ 30-34

☐ 35-39

☐ 40-44

3. **Please choose what best describes you:**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African-American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander
- ☐ From multiple races
- ☐ Other: _____

4. **Are you currently married, widowed, divorced, separated, or never married?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Never married

5. **What is the highest degree you have earned?**

Mark only one oval.

6. How many children do you have?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5+
- ☐ I don't have children

7. Select the category that best describes your current school district:

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ High Need
- ☐ Average Need
- ☐ Low Need

8. At what age did you begin your career as superintendent?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 30-34
- ☐ 35-39
- ☐ 40-44
- ☐ 45-49
- ☐ 50-54
- ☐ 55-60
- ☐ After 60

9. How many administrative positions did you hold before you began your superintendent position? Check all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Chairperson
- ☐ Director
- ☐ Executive Director
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Assistant Superintendent
- ☐ Deputy Superintendent
- ☐ Other: _____

10. How many times did you **apply** for a superintendent position?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-2
- ☐ 3-5
- ☐ 6-7
- ☐ 8+

11. How many times were you **interviewed** for a superintendent position?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-2
- ☐ 3-5
- ☐ 6-7
- ☐ 8+

12. How many superintendent positions have you held prior to the one you are sitting in now? (This does not include assistant superintendent positions)

13. How important were the following **incentives** in making your decision to apply for a superintendent position?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not important	Slightly important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Very important
Leadership opportunity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sense of achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity for service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self development and growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Power	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. How concerned were you with the following **discentives or challenges** in making your decision to apply for a superintendent position?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not at all concerned	Slightly concerned	Somewhat concerned	Moderately concerned	Very concerned
Funding for public schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family sacrifices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School board relations/challenges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exclusion from established network system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Possibility of relocation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Do you have or have you ever had a mentor that encouraged or supported your career aspirations?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. **Do you currently serve or have you ever served as a mentor who has encouraged or supported the career aspirations of others?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Perception of Professional Environment

17. **I believe that my gender has had an effect on the trajectory of my career.**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Undecided
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

18. **I believe that my gender impacts the way in which others interact with me professionally.**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Undecided
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

19. I feel that I need to alter my **actions** to demonstrate less feminine or more masculine qualities while performing my job.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Very Frequently
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Very Rarely
- ☐ Never

20. I feel that I need to alter my **talk** to demonstrate less feminine or more masculine qualities while performing my job.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Very Frequently
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Very Rarely
- ☐ Never

21. I feel that I need to alter my **physical appearance** to demonstrate less feminine or more masculine qualities while performing my job.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Very Frequently
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Very Rarely
- ☐ Never

Physical Appearance in a Professional Setting

22. Have you or did you ever *intentionally* do the following **while preparing for an interview** for a superintendent position?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Does not apply to me
Dyed hair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kept hair short (shoulder length or above) or pulled back (ponytail, bun).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Toned down makeup.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wore perfume/ cologne.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wore jewelry to enhance appearance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wore jewelry associated with faith.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Painted nails neutral colors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wore clothes that hide body figure (loose, oversized).).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wore pants more often than a dress/skirt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Wore neutral
or dark
clothes.**

☐☐☐☐

**Felt the need
to wear heels.**

☐☐☐☐

**Diet in order
to lose/
maintain my
weight mainly
to enhance
self
professionally.**

☐☐☐☐

23. Have you ever or do you currently *intentionally* do the following while serving as a superintendent?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Does not apply to me
Dye hair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keep hair short (shoulder length or above).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tone down makeup.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wear perfume/ cologne.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wear jewelry to enhance appearance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wear jewelry associated with faith.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paint nails neutral colors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wear clothes that hide body figure (loose, oversized).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wear pants more often than a dress/skirt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wear neutral or dark clothes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

clothes.
clothes.

Feel the need
to wear heels.
to wear heels.

☐☐☐☐

Diet in order
to lose/
maintain my
weight mainly
to enhance
self
professionally.
professionally.

☐☐☐☐

Further Interview

This is ONLY an expression of interest. Further contact in setting up the interview will have no documented record.

24. If you are interested in being interviewed further by the researcher on this topic, please indicate below by leaving an email address or phone number. The researcher will reach out to you with a phone number to contact to set up an anonymous phone interview.

Thank you!

Thank you for your participation.