

JOB SATISFACTION LEVELS AMONG IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

by

Derrick Joel

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Dissertation Committee:
Catherine Gillespie, Ph.D., Chair
Thomas Buckmiller, Ph.D.
Anthony Aylsworth, Ph.D.

Dean of the School of Education:
Janet McMahonill, Ph. D.

Drake University

Des Moines, Iowa

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DEDICATION

For my beautiful wife Kari who made this journey possible and never once complaining about the many nights and weekends spent with Jackson, Charlotte, and Vivian without me.

For my father, mother, sister, family, co-workers, and teachers who have supported me in my educational journey and never let me quit.

ABSTRACT

While there is still much to learn about superintendent tenure, this study explored the importance of superintendent job satisfaction connected to longevity. The correlation research was designed to extract which factors increase superintendent job satisfaction and influence a superintendent to stay. The national average tenure for superintendents has been reported as 5.6 years, with other numbers between five and six years, depending on who conducts the study (Johnson, Huffman, Madden, & Shope, 2011). Regardless of the actual number, there is a general agreement that turnover occurs more frequently than is optimal (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty 2009; Pascopella, 2011). A de-centennial study done in December 2010 by the American School Superintendent found it has become very apparent that one of the key elements in running a successful district is stability.

This quantitative study measured public school superintendent job satisfaction in the state of Iowa. Five research questions guided this study: What are the demographics and school settings of the superintendents who participated in the study, what components of the PERMA Model contribute most strongly to superintendent job satisfaction, to what extent do number of total years of experience as a superintendent, total years of experience as superintendent in the current district, education level, and salary have on overall job satisfaction, to what extent do the various factors that superintendents indicate they might consider in deciding whether or not to leave their current position have on job satisfaction, to what extent does school setting, student enrollment, and student enrollment trend have on superintendent job satisfaction?

The survey instrument was based on the work of Dr. Martin Seligman, director of the positive psychology center at the University of Pennsylvania, who designed the PERMA

(positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment / achievement) Model and sent out to all Iowa public school superintendents. Overall, on a scale one to five, superintendents reported a job satisfaction level of 3.78. The findings yielded five statistically significant factors that either positively or negatively impacted overall superintendent job satisfaction.

This study is recommended to be replicated over the course of several years to generate comparable data sets. Another recommendation is to conduct the study and break down the results by the age of the superintendent and then sorted by the various generations such as baby boomers, generation x, and millennials.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With all of the demands superintendents are expected to meet, the challenge for school district leaders is to create environments that will retain leadership. As superintendents navigate the growing complexity of the profession, decisions regarding whether to remain with a district will be inevitable. A superintendent's tenure in a district is multifaceted, often involving personal characteristics, such as career aspirations and ability to build relationships with stakeholders including the school board, staff, and the community. In addition, superintendent tenure may also involve qualities not under direct control, such as the size of the district, location, and student achievement – all of which contribute to the overall school culture.

The impact of longevity on all levels of the district, primarily on student learning (Renchler, 1992), is one crucial reason school board members need to be mindful of keeping superintendents. Waters and Marzano (2006) argued that leadership from the superintendent is essential to the academic achievement of the students in a district. The connection between a superintendent's efforts and student achievement is difficult to assess due to the diverse roles superintendents fulfill on a day-to-day basis. Research shows that superintendents positively impact student achievement by fulfilling their duties in a responsive manner (Marzano & Waters, 2006) and by utilizing a comprehensive goal-setting process to develop board-adopted non-negotiable goals for achievement. Student achievement is one of many ways to gauge the success of schools, however, setting students up for success outside of K-12 education is most important (Education Writer's Association, 2003).

School districts, under the direction of the local school board, could benefit from understanding how community culture can influence superintendent tenure and how important it

is to keep stability in district leadership. While challenges are prevalent in every profession, they are especially so in positions of educational leadership. One overarching challenge for superintendents is influencing and facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives within their district (Yukl, 2012). Superintendents are trained to anticipate and solve problems, deal with difficult and challenging situations, and build conditions to make positive strides in their districts for students, staff and community (Sutton & Job, 2008). By defining the behaviors leaders must possess in conjunction with the culture and climate of the school district, superintendents can be better prepared to take their leadership to the next level and maximize time and energy to meet the needs of learners (Bottomley, Burgess, & Fox, 2014). Iowa school leaders should aim to understand the characteristics of effective leadership and implement quality practices to move adults and students forward. Understanding the factors and conditions necessary to increase tenure could help school district leaders make more informed hiring decisions in the future.

Iowa schools need quality administrators in their district to champion high quality education and the necessary resources to focus on student learning. Districts who see superintendents come and go within the matter of only a few years are suffering as a result of a lack of stability. Effective leaders are needed in every Midwest school to work side-by-side with local school boards to carry out the mission and vision of the school district. In order to create a change in practices that will move both students and staff forward, increasing the conditions for a successful superintendent tenure should be considered.

Theoretical Framework

Dr. Martin Seligman, director of the positive psychology center at the University of Pennsylvania, designed the PERMA Model with five core elements of psychological well-being

and happiness. Seligman (2011) believed that these five elements can help people reach a life of fulfillment, happiness and meaning. This theoretical model of happiness helps people understand the elements and what they can do to maximize each element to reach a life full of happiness. Knowing how positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments relate to the job satisfaction of a district administrator, the findings can assist both superintendents and school boards find the balance of responsibilities to increase longevity.

According to the PERMA Model: Your Scientific Theory of Happiness (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments), there are many ways to reach happiness, including training your mind for happiness, spending money on others to promote happiness, and following the code of well-being and happiness (Seligman, 2011). Assumptions can be made of what happiness is; however, the PERMA Model has research to indicate what the actual elements are that promotes happiness within individuals (Seligman, 2011). To measure such happiness, a study was conducted using the PERMA Model in the medical industry.

No matter what one's is, finding job satisfaction can lead to a long and successful career. Never connecting to the work you are engaged in can have the reverse effect, leaving people with an unfulfilled feeling. The pursuit of happiness on personal and professional levels can be hard to come by nowadays. For those who work and learn in medical schools and teaching hospitals to develop their full potential, fundamental institutional change needs to occur (Slavin, Schindler, Chibnall, Fendell, & Shoss, 2012). Far too many medical students, residents, faculty, and staff not only fail to reach their full potential but also suffer unnecessarily from anxiety, burnout, and depression related to the unhealthy environment in which they work (Slavin et al., 2012).

Positive Emotion. Seligman (2011) defined positive emotion as being able to focus on positive emotions, more than just smiling, with the ability to be optimistic and view the past, present and future in a positive perspective. For example, superintendents can start with finding ways to reduce unnecessary stress and be transparent in decision-making that includes real and meaningful input from stakeholders. Providing timely and complete explanations for changes in policies and procedures can assist in positive relationships with stakeholders, model expected behavior, and preserve through challenges through being creative and developing alternative solutions.

Engagement. Everyone is different and finds enjoyment in different things while at work or at home during free time. It is important, according to Seligman (2011), to engage in activities in our lives because it is important for us to learn, grow and nurture person happiness. Seligman believes having something in life to absorb people into the present moment creates a flow of blissful immersion into the task or activity. According to Slavin et al. (2012), leaders should create opportunities for all to engage fully in their work through the reduction of nonvalued work, reduce unneeded policies, and streamline administrative policies. Superintendents can promote reflection, particularly for administrators and teachers, and encourage them to engage their learners in authentic work.

Relationships. Humans are social animals that thrive for connection, love, intimacy and a strong emotional and physical interaction with other humans according to Seligman (2011). Having strong relationships can support superintendents during difficult times. In an interview with Dr. Mitch Printein, a distinguished professor of psychology at the University of North Carolina, mentioned research that showed pain centers in our brains becoming activated when we are at risk of being isolated. In an evolutionary perspective, isolation would be the worse

thing we could do for survival, and isolation at the superintendent levels can be lonely leading to lower job satisfaction. Slavin et al. (2012), suggested leaders need to create programs to increase opportunities for meaningful and productive relationships among all stakeholders, develop learning communities, and promote interdivisional and interdepartmental activities.

Meaning. Having a purpose and meaning to why each of us are on this earth is important to living a life of happiness and fulfillment, according to Seligman (2011). Superintendents could focus on the greater impact of their work and reflect on why they chose to pursue this position, rather than a focus on material wealth. Slavin et al. (2012), suggested leaders institute programs where school employees have the opportunity to reflect on their work. Reflection may help revitalize the values and motivations for becoming a teacher, coach or administrator in the first place, as well as combat a culture of negativism and complaint. Leaders must also support programs to help people find greater meaning in their work.

Accomplishment/Achievement. Having goals and ambition in life can help people achieve things and experience a sense of accomplishment, according to Seligman (2011). Making realistic goals that can be met and putting forth effort to achieve these goals can provide a sense of fulfillment. Slavin et al. (2012), urged leaders to promote a culture of innovation and advancement while reducing barriers to individual initiative. Leaders need to avoid micromanagement, but instead delegate responsibility and empower employees to work to their potential. Slavin et al. (2012), recommend leaders align incentives and work with the institutions mission, vision, and core values. Leaders must also recognize success and celebrate when goals are met.

PERMA Model Summary. Too often organizations implement programs to promote the well-being of people in relative isolation without connection to other initiatives and a culture

of care (Slavin et al., 2012). When work is done in isolation, initiatives are often times met with skepticism and never fully implemented. The awareness of PERMA can help superintendents personally increase their well-being by focusing on combinations of feeling good, living meaningfully, establishing supportive and friendly relationships, accomplishing goals, and being fully engaged with life. The PERMA model can also provide insight on how to better manage people and how to move an organization forward. Further understanding these experiences can help superintendents go beyond surviving their job to thriving in their role and increasing their job satisfaction.

Research Problem

While there is still much to learn about superintendent tenure, this study explores the importance of superintendent job satisfaction connected to longevity, further supporting the research, which is designed to extract factors that increase superintendent job satisfaction and influence a superintendent to stay. The total public education student count in Iowa in 2015-2016 was 481,826 with 285 acting public school superintendents, according to the Iowa Department of Education (2015). Superintendents have served an average of 7.7 years in his or her current district during the 2014-2015 school year. A slight change from the 2000-2001 school year, when the average was 8.0 years. During the 2014-2015 school year, 56 districts (with two districts sharing an agreement bringing the total to 54) had a new superintendent (School Administrators of Iowa, 2015). Of the 54 superintendents new to a school district, 19 were entering their first year (School Administrators of Iowa, 2015).

A superintendent has numerous roles which factor daily into key decisions for the future of student learning. There are school districts across the nation who describe a “revolving door” of district leaders; in turn, leading to instability and a weakened district vision. Superintendent

turnover in Iowa school districts may differ from large urban districts across the country, but the turnover of superintendents is still an issue (Barlau, 2011). With the increasing number of public school students, the need for stability and effective leaders at the district level has never been more critical. School board members, aspiring superintendents, and community stakeholders must be aware of the impact superintendents have on the community and school district. Waters and Marzano (2006) stated that increasing superintendent tenure will enhance the learning experience for students and initiatives will have a higher probability of lasting.

The high rate of turnover in the superintendency is well documented, with recent tenure averages ranging from 3 to 5.6 years (Sutton & Job, 2008). The national average tenure for superintendents has been reported as 5.6 years, with other numbers between five and six years, depending on who conducts the study (Johnson, Huffman, Madden, & Shope, 2011). Regardless of the actual number, there is a general agreement that turnover occurs more frequently than is optimal (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty 2009; Pascopella, 2011). A decennial study done in December 2010 by the American School Superintendent found it has become very apparent that one of the key elements in running a successful district is stability.

Dan Domenech, speaking at the 2011 Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA) fall conference, stated that superintendents are the education field's "migrant workers" (as cited in Evert et. al, 2013). The high rate of superintendent turnover warrants a closer look at superintendent departures (Evert et al., 2013). Key positions, such as the superintendency, need longer tenures so that long term, positive influences occur (Trevino, Braley, Brown, & Slate, 2008). If current societal expectations are to increase student academic performance and attempt to reform our public education system, then the present challenges of the superintendent need to be better understood (Trevino et al., 2013)

Tenure in any position is positive, however, the individual must be the right fit and continue to improve the system. Becca Bracy, executive director of the Broad Center for the Management of School Systems, commented:

Tenure absolutely matters. We expect them to be superintendent for at least five years if they want to make the impact they want. They can clear out a lot of debris and right things that are incredibly wrong in a short time, but if you really want to lay a foundation and make things last and get the district where it needs to be, you need to stay longer (as cited in Pacopella, 2011).

Unfortunately, turnover of superintendents is too common in school districts and with every change in leadership comes a new direction and changes in priorities (Olson, 1995).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine superintendent job satisfaction in a Iowa to determine what factors lead to keeping a superintendent in a district longer than the national average. Literature shows that superintendents who spend longer than the national average have a better chance of creating lasting change that has a positive impact on student achievement (Education Writer's Association, 2003). The fact that there is a public discussion of the "crisis" of rapid turnover of superintendents underscores the conviction that superintendents need sufficient time to design the district changes, mobilize support for reform agendas, make adaptations as implementation unfolds, and work to institutionalize those innovations that have improved the quality of schooling (Yee & Cuban, 1996). According to Yee and Cuban (1996), a superintendent would need at least five years to accomplish the items listed above.

School district stakeholders are as stable, innovative, and focused on student growth, as is the superintendent. The role of superintendent is full of balancing a number of responsibilities,

including: student achievement, equity, school funding, and teacher quality issues, and more. The job is stressful and demands specific skills such as, communication, problem solving, and listening skills, as well as a passion to put kids first everyday. Being a superintendent has been labeled as stressful; with many arguing that the role is becoming more stressful, with no relief in sight. Pacopella (2011) placed a high value on job stability the superintendency has on a school district. If schools face a revolving door with the superintendent, there is never a chance for reform or newly created programs to make a difference (Pacopella, 2011). The greatest challenge for superintendents across the nation is for their schools to produce successful students despite shrinking or minimal funding. Despite the politics in education and the pressure that accompanies decision making, the factors that come into play when a superintendent chooses to stay in a district versus deciding to leave will be discussed in the literature review.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Classrooms, where school reform ultimately happens, are influenced by the superintendent's quality of leadership. Within a district, teaching and learning function in large part from the decisions and attitude of the superintendent. School districts get positive results in student achievement and are able to better prepare students for success outside of school when a superintendent is effective and stays in their position above the national average.

This study will aid organizations in the state of Iowa who work with school boards and school administrators to create conditions that will increase superintendent job satisfaction and encourage longevity. Understanding how job satisfaction and longevity impacts the superintendency can help potential superintendent candidates better understand the demands of the job. Additionally, school board members who believe it is important to have a

superintendent committed to a district for a longer tenure will benefit from understanding how to increase superintendent job satisfaction and longevity, as well as the role they play in it.

Research Questions.

This study examined the following research questions:

1. What are the demographics and school settings of the superintendents who participated in the study?
2. What components of the PERMA Model contribute most strongly to superintendent job satisfaction?
3. To what extent do number of total years of experience as a superintendent, total years of experience as superintendent in the current district, education level, and salary have on overall job satisfaction?
4. To what extent do the various factors that superintendents indicate they might consider in deciding whether or not to leave their current position have on job satisfaction?
5. To what extent does school setting, student enrollment, and student enrollment trend have on superintendent job satisfaction?

Urban school districts are the focus of much of the research on superintendent satisfaction and longevity. Iowa is a rural state with few urban school districts, yet there is turnover in the position of superintendent. Based on the findings of Marzano and Waters (2006), there is a need to study superintendent job satisfaction and longevity in rural states, such as Iowa. With the increased focus on improving schools, there is a need to better understand the environment school districts can create to improve superintendent job satisfaction and longevity.

Summary

Superintendents are an integral part of moving school districts moving forward and meeting the increasing demands of the public. When superintendents lose their jobs or resign, all levels of the districts' educational system feel the consequences (Renchler, 1992). When given proper time, superintendents can plan, implement and evaluate new programs and policies that can gradually lead to improvement (Renchler, 1992). Superintendent longevity has been an issue for many years and even though researchers have studied and identified the importance of leadership in the sustainability of school improvement efforts, the tenure of superintendents has not changed (Fullan, 2002). Understanding the impact of superintendent longevity is important to develop a better understanding of how to improve student performance (Berlau, 2011). The longer a superintendent remains in a district, the more likely his or her initiatives will have a positive impact and benefit the overall stability of the school. In a time when the landscape of Iowa education is rapidly changing, it is important to understand what current superintendents believe are factors associated with staying in a district for longer than the national average.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For decades job satisfaction has been a topic of intentional exploration for researchers. Defined as the “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job and job experience” (Locke, 1976), job satisfaction encompasses individual feelings about one’s job and its related aspects. According to Schneider and Snyder (1975), job satisfaction consists of intrinsic responses that individuals develop as a result of their understanding of the job. In the book *Professional Capital*, Hargreaves and Fullen (2012) described the importance of developing both human and social capital. “Individuals get confidence, learning and feedback from having the right kind of people and the right kinds of interactions and relationships around them” (p. 5). Establishing human and social capital within an organization is important as leaders look for ways to improve and is also an integral element of job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is often looked at a personal level, however, what leads to a happy work life can be different for everyone. To get a better idea of what impacts job satisfaction, researchers have developed a number of variables that lead to an increase or decrease in job satisfaction. As discussed in Zehir, Erdogan, and Basar’s (2011) *The Relationship Among Charismatic Leadership, Ethical Climate, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment in Companies*, the five identified variables of job satisfaction are: the work itself, pay, opportunity for promotion, supervision, and coworkers (Smith, Kendall, and Hulin, 1969). Churchill, Ford, and Walker (1969) developed seven components: satisfaction with overall job, co-workers, supervision, company policy and support, pay, promotion and advancement, and customers. The

distinct difference in the two lists of variables is the addition of company policy and support. The findings of Schwepker (2001), extended the thinking beyond these aspects to include the fact that job satisfaction is partially determined by policies and supervision, and, in fact, a firm's ethical climate are affected by both of these elements. In most organizations, management plays a key role in determining what the policy is and when people are in violation. Managers, like leaders, play a significant role in determining the organization's ethical climate and play an even more critical role in affecting employees' ethical behavior (Ferrel & Gresham, 1985). Therefore, the ethical climate is formed by management and becomes an important force driving not only ethical behavior, but also job-related outcomes (Zehir et al., 2011).

During the past several decades, the demand for school accountability has increased. With much of the attention and pressure on school leaders, particularly the public school superintendent, issues of job satisfaction have become even more significant. Since the 1950's, there has been a marked decline in the average longevity of superintendents in a district, shifting from an average of twenty-plus years to approximately six years (Giaquinto, 2010). The decline in district longevity places the superintendent in a challenging position, particularly because meaningful organizational change takes time, a resource that is often missing in the current state of the superintendency (Giaquinto, 2010). The purpose of this study is to investigate district factors that lead to the increase of superintendents' job satisfaction, resulting in them choosing to remain in the same district for at least six years. In addition, to identify superintendents' perceptions regarding longevity, and to contribute to the knowledge base regarding both superintendent job satisfaction and longevity in order to increase awareness of developing, supporting, and refining these qualities.

Job Satisfaction

Subjective well-being (SWB) is viewed as the most important element of people's lives (Diener, 2000) which is associated with a wide variety of positive outcomes, such as good health and work performance (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Weiss, Bates, & Luciano, 2008), and is often used as a measure of individuals' global judgments of life satisfaction (Zhai, Willis, O'Shea, Zhai & Yang, 2013). In the last 10 years there has been an increasing interest in the study of subjective well-being and it has been recognized for its significance to both individuals and the society as a whole (Diener & Seligman, 2004; Veenhoven, 2004; Jovanovic, 2010). There is, however, no uniformity when it comes to the use of the term SWB, and the acronym is often used as a synonym for happiness and vice versa. Different interpretations of SWB have led to an inconsistent and non-universal use of the term, which makes the interpretation of results derived from such studies difficult (Jovanovic, 2010).

Diener (1984) defined SWB as a construct divided into three categories. The first category contains satisfaction with life and refers to a global evaluation of an individual's satisfaction with life as a whole. This category in turn is defined as the cognitive component of SWB (Diener, 1984). The second category includes positive affect, which refers to an individual's experience of pleasant emotions. And the third category of SWB contains low level or negative affect, which implies an absence of unpleasant emotional states. These two last categories are in turn defined as the affective components of SWB (Diener et al., 1999). Several studies have indeed confirmed that these three categories together are best used to describe individuals' SWB (Arthaud-day, Road, Mooney & Near, 2005; Lucas, Diener & Suh, 1996). Job satisfaction has been argued to be a strong predictor for numerous behaviors such as workers' commitment, motivation, absenteeism, and other positive or negative emotional responses to aspects of the work or the employer (Lange, 2009).

Job satisfaction is basically defined by the same constructs as subjective well-being, whereas the affective part refers to either negative or positive affect and the cognitive piece refers to an individual's global evaluation of satisfaction with the job. Simply put, job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience (Locke, 1976). Locke (1976) indicated that "job satisfaction results from the perception that one's job fulfills or allows the fulfillment of one's important job values, providing and to the degree that those values are congruent with one's needs" (p. 1307).

Recognizing certain conditions for job satisfaction, Locke formulated the following:

1. mentally challenging work with which the individual can cope successfully;
2. personal interest in work itself;
3. work that is not too terribly tiring;
4. rewards for performance which are just, informative and in line with the individual's personal aspirations;
5. working conditions which are compatible with the individual physical needs and which facilitate the accomplishment of his work goals;
6. high self-esteem on the part of the employee; and
7. agents in the workplace who help the employee attain job values; such as, interesting work, pay and, promotions, whose basic values are similar to his own, and who minimizes role conflict and ambiguity (p. 1328).

The relationship between SWB and job satisfaction is well-known and the causal direction of the relationship is thought to be reciprocal, resulting in a so called spillover model, where job experiences spill over onto other domains of life and vice versa (Judge & Watanabe, 1993). Through a national stratified and randomized sample of workers, Judge and Watanabe

(1993) found that 68% of the workers experienced the spillover-effect while the remaining 32% either sought to compensate for a dissatisfying job by pursuing happiness outside the work, and vice versa, or felt that their work-life did not influence their life outside of work.

Job Satisfaction and Well-Being

Research supports a strong link between job satisfaction and overall health and well-being. For instance, a meta-analysis conducted by Fargher, Cass and Cooper (2005) on 485 cross-sectional studies found a correlation between job satisfaction and a variety of different health outcomes. These include outcomes such as burnout, self-esteem issues, depression, anxiety, and physical well-being. The researchers proposed that job satisfaction can have a positive effect on a peoples' feelings about themselves and their life, which eventually reduces their health issues (Fragher et al., 2005). Thus, the authors concluded that job satisfaction plays an important role for determining individual well-being. They further argued that there were good enough reasons to hypothesises that job satisfaction is a causal influence on health and mental well-being (Fragher et al., 2005). Other researchers have also highlighted the causal influence job satisfaction has on health and well-being. For instance, Kelloway and Barling (1991) identified job satisfaction as a key factor influencing people's mental health. In addition, Zhai et al. (2013) proposed that job satisfaction can spill over, and influence subjective well-being. A study conducted by Kern, Waters, Adler, and White (2014) indicated that positive emotions at work and physical health is positively correlated with job satisfaction, and negative emotions, whereas somatic symptoms were negatively related to job satisfaction.

Intent to Leave and Job Satisfaction

Tenure, gender, and age have been theorized and shown to be significant predictors of job satisfaction (Moblely, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979). Tenure, or the length a person has been

in a position, has had mixed results. Some studies suggest a positive relationship (Grossi & Bergman, 1991), while others have found no relationship (Curry, Wakefield, Price, & Mueller, 1986), or even a negative relationship (Buzawa, 1994). Herzberg, Mausner, Perterson, and Capwell (1959) argued that a significant relationship existed between age and job satisfaction. Studies are inconsistent with relation to gender and job satisfaction. Some studies demonstrate that females experienced greater job satisfaction than males (Martin, 1990), while some studies show that males experience greater job satisfaction (Britton, 1997). More often than not, gender fails to show any significant relationship with job satisfaction (Grossi & Berg, 1991; Finebaugh & Hurley, 1995).

Intent to leave and job satisfaction have been established as two of the most important predictors to voluntary employee turnover (Mobley, 1977, 1979, 1982). This section of the literature review will summarize the literature related to intent to leave and job satisfaction related to voluntary employee turnover. It will begin by suggesting intent to turnover as the most significant factor in the turnover equation. The review will then outline research that references job satisfaction and intent to leave.

George and Jones (1996) examined the multifaceted aspects of the work experience and their relationship on intent to leave. Findings suggested that job satisfaction and intent to leave were jointly moderated by value attainment and positive mood. The researchers also found that the job satisfaction and intent to leave relationship was strongest when workers' jobs did not allow for the attainment of terminal values and positive mood was experienced. The relationship was weakest when jobs helped workers attain terminal values and positive mood was experienced. Thus the interaction that had the most significant impact on intent to leave was the triple interaction of low job satisfaction, high positive mood, and low value attainment.

Cote and Morgan (2002) explored the association between emotional regulation (defined as the conscious manipulation of one's public displays of emotion), job satisfaction, and intent to leave. Findings suggested that the suppression of unpleasant emotions decreased job satisfaction. This in turn increased intent to leave. Findings also suggested that the amplification of pleasant emotions increased job satisfaction. There was no significant relationship between the amplification of pleasant emotions and intent to leave. Rosser and Javinar (2003) conducted a national study examining demographic and work life issues impact on morale and job satisfaction as well as the indirect effect on intent to leave. The researchers found that the more tenured with an organization and the higher salaried an individual, the lower the morale. But it was also found that this group was more likely to remain with the organization. In light of that finding, the researchers still found overall that the lower the level of morale the higher the intent to leave. The researchers also found that quality of work life issues had a significant, direct impact on job satisfaction and an indirect effect on intent to leave via job satisfaction. Those work life issues included adequate recognition, strong support from leader, good working conditions, and good external relationships. Job satisfaction was the significant predictor of intent to leave.

Cunningham and Saga (2004) examined athletic coaches. The researchers wanted to understand if values alignment led to greater job satisfaction and less intent to leave. The researchers found that when values were similar between organization and coach, there was greater job satisfaction and less intent to leave. Egan, Young, and Bartlett (2004) examined the relationship between an organization's learning culture, job satisfaction, and intent to leave. The researchers found that organizations that incorporated a learning culture were more likely to see greater job satisfaction among their employees. Intent to leave was found to be negatively

related to both organizational learning culture and job satisfaction. Firth, Mellor, Moore, and Loquet (2004) researched the impact of job stressors on 173 retail employees' intent to leave. The model that included self esteem, supervisor support, feelings of job stress, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction explained 52% of variance in intent to leave. The findings suggested that job stressors did not directly impact intent to leave. However, job stressors indirectly impacted intent to leave through job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and feelings of job stress. Thirty percent of the variance explained in job satisfaction was accounted for via a model including supervisor support, low levels of job stress, and low feelings of stress.

Entrepreneur Job Satisfaction

One way to increase job satisfaction is to own a business, according to research. Comparing entrepreneurs with regular employees across the United States, samples generally show that the self-employed feel a higher satisfaction with their jobs than regular employees (Hundley, 2001). Entrepreneurs, compared to regular employees, appear to strive for success, (Collins, Hanges & Locke, 2004), independency, autonomy, greater control, and a need for achievement (Benz & Frey, 2008) according to extensive research (as cited in Berglund, 2014, p. 4). These factors are in turn positively related to job satisfaction (Benz & Frey, 2008).

Another reason why entrepreneurs experience higher levels of job satisfaction, according to Loscocco and Roschell (1991), is that workers with more flexibility in their work life find their jobs more satisfying. Entrepreneur's ability to have control over their own schedule Hundley (2001) argues that entrepreneurs experience a lesser need to coordinate with work routines and coworkers. This also leads to a higher level of job satisfaction, according to Hundley (2001). Evidence suggests that there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and task autonomy (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) and that entrepreneurs tend to experience

greater task variety since they do not have to follow the organizational workflow in the same manner as regular employees (Hundley, 2001). It is argued that entrepreneurs should suffer a greater risk of insecurity toward job loss and therefore should experience a lower job satisfaction (Mandel, 1996). Hundley (2001) on the other hand found that entrepreneurs are less likely to be burdened by job insecurity, instead they tend to experience a higher security due to their ability to control their work-life and meet threats and opportunities to secure the survival of their company and their work.

CEO Job Satisfaction

The reputations of chief executive officers (CEOs) have been argued to be the most important facet of human capital affecting firm value in both practice and theory (Gaines-Ross, 2002). A practitioner survey from Burson-Marsteller shows that most financial analysts would recommend a particular company's stock to their clients based, at least in part, on the reputation of the company's CEO (Gaines-Ross, 2002). A large body of agency literature argues that CEOs try to improve their reputations as good leaders with high ability for their future careers (Fama 1980).

The symbolic image perspective, however, argues that the reputation of a CEO is mainly the perceived image of the CEO via the media (Malmendier & Tate, 2005). If CEO reputation mainly reflects the symbolic image of a CEO instead of ability, a well-known CEO will not necessarily maintain good firm performance or reverse poor performance. Celebrity CEOs are often media created and do not live up to the heightened expectations of stakeholders, a phenomenon called the "CEO Disease" in the business press (Byrne, Symonds, & Siler, 1991). This CEO disease phenomenon lends support to the prediction that a well known CEO may serve as a scapegoat for poor performance as argued by Khurana (2002) in his article "*The Curse of the*

Superstar CEO.” Positive CEO reputation often raises the expectations of stakeholders, which increases gaps between expectations and actual performance. Increased gaps between elevated expectations and poor performance are mostly attributed to a high-profile CEO because people believe that a symbolic leader determines the success or failure of an organization (Pfeffer, 1977).

These increased gaps due to elevated expectations and the attribution of poor performance to the well-known CEO decrease the satisfaction of stakeholders (Oliver, 1980) and result in more CEO turnovers. Thus, the symbolic image perspective suggests that the reputation of a CEO will impair his or her job retention under the circumstances of poor performance.

Job turnover theories suggest that employees with different employment histories differ in their levels of firm-specific human capital investments (Becker, 1962; Jovanovic, 1979) and firm-employee match qualities (Jovanovic, 1979; Mortensen, 1978). Both differences in specific human capital investments and firm-employee match qualities affect an employee’s risk preference. CEOs who spend most of his or her business careers in one firm make more firm-specific human capital investments than CEOs who change employers more frequently. Because specific human capital investments would be lost if the firm fails, a CEO with more firm-specific human capital investments will be more risk averse than a CEO with lower firm-specific human capital investments. CEOs with more employer changes and more diversified firm or industry experience have lower levels of firm-specific human capital investment and therefore, be less risk averse. Job matching theories (e.g., Jovanovic, 1979 and Mortensen, 1978) suggest that employees who match well with their firms are unlikely to change employers. CEOs with fewer employer changes are likely to be the ones that match well with their firms. Prospect theory (e.g. Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) predicts that individuals are more risk averse toward positive

outcomes than toward negative outcomes. Thus, CEOs who match well with their firms should be averse to lose the right matches (positive outcomes) and become more risk averse in decision making.

Empirical evidence also lends support to the proposition that employment history can reveal a CEO's risk-taking traits. Organizational behavior studies (e.g., Nicholson & West, 1988 and Nicholson et al., 2005) use the number of job changes as an indicator of willingness to engage in risky behavior. Nicholson et al. (2005) provided empirical evidence that people with higher frequencies of career and employer changes have higher risk propensities. Using a longitudinal survey of private households and persons in Germany, Pfeifer (2008) found that the number of employer changes relates positively and significantly to individual's risk-taking behaviors.

Superintendent Job Satisfaction

Studies indicate that superintendents are usually satisfied in their jobs (Cooper, Fusarelli, & Carella, 2000; Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000; Kowalski, 2006; Schoen, 2006; Glass & Francischini, 2007). Of the 2,979 respondents to a national survey, 91% "agree strongly that my work in this district has given me real career satisfaction" (Cooper, et al. 2000). In American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Ten-Year Study of American School Superintendent, approximately 56% of the 2,252 respondents nationwide reported "considerable" self-fulfillment and 17% reported "moderate levels (Glass et al., 2000). The AASA Mid-Decade Study of the superintendency continued to report similar results, with 90% of the 1,338 superintendents who responded reporting "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their positions (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Of the varying facets of the superintendent's job, the educational role appears to bring about such satisfaction, with areas such as building curriculum, developing

new programs, helping students and teachers contributing to society being named as factors (Cooper et al., 2000; Glass et al., 2000; Kowalski, 2006; Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Schoen (2006) also studied intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the superintendent job satisfaction and found that levels were high in both categories and included intrinsic factors, such as the amount of freedom and developing their own skills along with extrinsic experiences involving collaboration with colleagues and promoting change. To determine the level of superintendent job satisfaction, Sharp, Malone, and Walter (2002) created a survey instrument and used piloted it three states.

Sharp, Malone and Walter (2002) created a 49-item survey entitled the Positive Aspects and Motivation Survey and used it in a three-state study (Indiana, New York, and Texas) that found increasing job satisfaction. The survey questions asked superintendents about their feelings toward: working with a board of education, the property tax levy cap, the Gap Elimination Adjustment, the rollout of the Common Core standards, and the new Annual Professional Performance Review. Padalino (2009) used the same instrument and found increasing superintendent job satisfaction in New York State. The Padalino (2009) study, with a 75% superintendent job satisfaction rating was used for Bell's study, which found 81% of participants had a positive experience working with the board, 81% of participants would start their superintendency over again, and the other four factors (property tax, gap elimination, aligning to the common core, and the new Annual Performance Review) were found to have a negative correlation.

Although the results of research studies indicate superintendents are satisfied overall, dissatisfaction with facets of the role and responsibilities do exist. Dissatisfaction in the superintendency appears to come from a variety of external sources, which often create stress

and negatively impact the superintendent and school district. Based on a study of Connecticut superintendents, Richardson (1998) indicated, “Board relations, policies, personnel issues, workload, time, crisis management, complying with mandates, public criticism and expectations, high visibility, dealing with angry parents, and lack of recognition and feedback are among the major sources of stress perceived by superintendent” (p. 7). Superintendents respond to situations and stress in different ways. Some may decide to leave a particular district, retire from a district, or leave the profession entirely. Others remain in a district but alter their plans for the system by avoiding change, which may be needed for district progress but problematic and risky in nature (Kowalski, 2005; Glass & Fransceschini, 2007). Longevity arises from intersecting avenues: the superintendent’s handling of change, the superintendent’s fulfillment of the various roles, and the overall personal relationship with the school board. The same three areas influence superintendent job satisfaction, which, in turn, is directly related to the superintendent’s decision to stay in the district.

Superintendent Longevity and Turnover

The fact that there is a public discussion of the “crisis” of rapid turnover of superintendents underscores the conviction that superintendents need sufficient time to design the district changes, mobilize support for reform agendas, make adaptations as implementation unfolds and work to institutionalize those innovations that have improved the quality of schooling (Yee & Cuban, 1996). According to Yee and Cuban (1996) a superintendent would need at least five years to accomplish the items listed above. Education has been notorious, in the recent past, on creating initiatives and not following through with the movement, but instead switching directions without giving the original a chance to be successful (Yee & Cuban, 1996). Within the five years recommended by Yee and Cuban (1996), leaders must develop protocols to

check data on a regular basis to monitor progress and make changes as needed, without abandoning the work. Since organizational change take time, there exists a need for superintendent longevity (Renchler, 1992; Kowalski, 1995; Alborano, 2002; Natkins, Cooper, & Alborano, 2002)

Superintendencies have changed. The challenges created by heightened public demands for improved student performance, along with increasing enrollments of students from more diverse backgrounds, have led to more stress placed on educational leaders (Trevino et al., 2008). According to the study conducted by Trevino et al. (2008), superintendents reported teacher and principal shortages, inadequate school funding, deteriorating and crowded school facilities, excessive time demands, and increasing enrollments of students with diverse backgrounds leading to a leadership crisis and the gradual loss of respect for the role of superintendent as causes of turnover in the position.

In 2006, researchers with the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) surveyed superintendents across the country. The data revealed an average tenure of 5.5 years (Vogt, 2007). Superintendents continue to move from district to district for a variety of reasons and there have been studies as to why superintendents leave school districts (Natkin et al., 2002). The absence or presence of the elements of job satisfaction certainly contributes to retention of superintendents in an environment where longevity is a critical factor in moving a district forward. Superintendent tenure is short in American public schools for a variety of reasons, yet research supports the need for sustainable leadership in schools (Fullan, 2002).

In discussing the consequences of changing superintendents, Peterson and Klotz (1999) stated, "If anything, school reform efforts have brought to light the futility of trying to restructure schools without leadership stability, the brief window of opportunity accorded superintendents

has done nothing to move them toward the role of instructional leader” (p. 3). Alsbury (2008) conducted a study to determine if school board member and superintendent turnover had an impact on student achievement. Many believe that school board member and superintendent turnover create a disruption to the educational progress of schools, particularly during periods of educational reform or systemic school change (Alsbury, 2008). Alsbury’s study was conducted in Washington where students take the Washington State Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) test each year. Additionally, his research sought to determine if a significant relationship existed between change in student WASL scores and the rate of school board turnover, politically motivated school board turnover and superintendent turnover (Alsbury, 2008). Alsbury found that superintendent turnover had no statistical significance on test scores collectively, however, in districts of 500 students or more, a statistically significant relationship appeared (Alsbury, 2008).

Rapid turnover and lack of stability negatively affect a public school system (Alborano, 2000; Cooper et al., 2000). Time is needed for the superintendent to learn about the school district, build meaningful and diverse working relationships, identify needs and potential solutions, and effect meaningful change. According to Bryant (2002), the average tenure for superintendents in the 50 largest school districts drops to 4.6 years. Regardless of the actual number, there is a general agreement that turnover occurs more frequently than is optimal (Marzano et al., 2009; Pascopella, 2011). Dan Domenech, speaking at the 2011 Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA) fall conference, stated that superintendents are the education field’s “migrant workers” (as cited in Evert & Van Deuren, 2013). The high rate of superintendent tenure warrants a closer look at superintendent departures

(Evert & Van Deuren, 2013).

Turnover of employees at any level in an organization has an impact (Meier & Hicklin, 2007). When turnover occurs on a fairly regular basis at the highest level of the school district, the members, particularly teachers and principals, become wary of the new vision and proposed changes of each new leader. Throughout the book, *Leading to Change: the Challenge of the New Superintendency*, Johnson (1996) described these concerns:

Much of the feeling was, people come, get things started, you buy into various programs, and before you have the opportunity to refine what you are doing, you have new administration with new philosophy. (p. 42)

Superintendents who think they can install new programs and leave a district without harming it, and school board members who believe that firing a superintendent will open the way for better leadership may be mistaken. When school leaders depart suddenly or there is repeated turnover, teachers close their classroom doors. (p. 283)

Since turnover possesses negative consequences for school districts, it is important to identify what conditions lead to turnover, either through the board's dismissal of the superintendent or the superintendent's decision to leave. Problems with the political role of the superintendency seem to be most frequent. The political aspects include societal forces, community concerns, and superintendent-board of education relations (Alberanao, 2002). In a study of superintendent turnover, Byrd, Drews, and Johnson (2007) found 76% of superintendents who changed districts ranked "increased politics" as the number one or two contributing factor to the instability in the profession. Even when superintendents and the board seemingly have positive working relationships, if vocal community members become displeased

and board members feel the pressure, the superintendent's status with the board can rapidly deteriorate. Lee (2006) recommended, "Build your political capital every day. Remember the school board responds to the community and your success will be directly related to how well you are received by your community" (p. 47).

Unfortunately, turnover of superintendents is too common in school districts and with every change in leadership comes a new direction and changes in priorities (Olson, 1995). Change takes time and does not occur overnight. Leaders need to invest time into reform initiatives, to oversee them from the start to the finish, and better understand the impact to decide next steps.

In 1999, U.S. Secretary of Education Bennett claimed that public schools were full of people and organizations dedicated to protecting established programs and maintaining the status quo (Waters & Marzano, 2006). He referred to them as the "blob" which consumed resources but did not impact students, and superintendents were included in the blob (Waters & Marzano, 2006). To better understand the impact district leadership has on student performance, research was conducted resulting in significant findings. Waters and Marzano (2006) investigated further the role of leadership in improving schools when they conducted a meta-analysis to determine how superintendent leadership affects student performance in districts. There were three major findings from this study. First, district leadership matters. Second, effective superintendents focus on creating goal oriented school districts. Finally, superintendent tenure was positively correlated with student achievement, which was an unintended finding. Waters and Marzano (2006) 'bonus finding' supported the need to study superintendent longevity further.

Public education is facing significant scrutiny, coupled with demands for accountability and increased student achievement (Rammer, 2007). Leadership has significant effects on

student learning, and successful superintendents must work to respond to the opportunities and challenges of educating diverse groups of students (Leithwood & Reihl, 2003). Quality classroom instruction, facilitated by a professional teacher, has the greatest impact on student achievement, positive or negative (Rammer, 2007). Understanding the impact quality instruction has on student achievement, research suggests the next most influential factor is the quality of leadership within the school (Rammer, 2007). The leaders' roles require that they implement initiatives, policies, personnel, and strategies that support and improve student achievement (Rammer, 2007).

Glass (2001) emphasized that, "whether or not superintendents can measurably affect student achievement has not been the subject of extensive research" (p. 62). Ninety-eight percent of superintendents reported a collaborative relationship with their school board (Glass, 2001). However, 70% shared the belief that the existing governance structure should be replaced because it can foster micro-management (Glass, 2001). Overall, research shows that superintendents positively impact student achievement by fulfilling their duties in a responsive manner (Marzano & Waters, 2006) and by utilizing a comprehensive goal-setting process to develop board-adopted non-negotiable goals for achievement.

Superintendent Reasons to Stay or Go

When superintendents lose their jobs or quit, all levels of the district feel the consequences (Renchler, 1992). Many factors contribute to superintendent turnover, such as personal and family issues as well as professional advancement (Byrd et al., 2006). Other conditions, such as poor relationships with school boards, political agendas by board members, district financial challenges, and the pressure of the position lead to superintendent turnover. Natkin et al. (2002) identified factors significantly related to superintendent longevity: the extent

to which school boards are involved in the management of the district, support for needed construction projects to improve facilities, consolidation of school systems, district poverty level, and post-graduate work by the superintendent. These factors were the same regardless of size of school. Today, the conditions of the superintendent position have worsened due to declining resources and resulting staff reductions (Adams, 2011). When conditions in an organization are less than ideal for stakeholders, it can lead to a negative culture and eventually make it difficult for leaders to initiate reform.

Eadie (2012) comments that enough turmoil and unrest in a district can ultimately cripple a superintendent's ability to effectively lead. Often turmoil is exacerbated by the chaos that develops as more stakeholders become involved in the turmoil (Evert & Van Deuren, 2013). When issues arise and test the effectiveness of the superintendent, he or she must consider whether to stay and fight through the issue or whether it is time to consider leaving the position (Evert & Van Deuren, 2013).

One issue that challenges superintendents is increasing overall student achievement within the district. Superintendents in Iowa and across the country are expected to produce results and if they do not they are often replaced (Hargreaves, 2009). According to Myers (2011), in years past the definition of "success or failure" for a superintendent was fairly private. Generally speaking, if the educational product produced by the school system satisfied the local community, the district and superintendent were a success (Myers, 2011). When results are not seen or moving in the right direction, it forces leaders to pressure different levels in order to see results. Often times the pressure is met with mixed feelings and can potentially lead to poor school culture.

Another major source of pressure for superintendents comes from managing and leading the school board. With each school board being comprised of unique individuals, what one board member may want, need or expect most from their superintendent may be quite different than what is expected from neighboring districts' school boards (Klamfoth, 2013). According to Klamfoth (2013), this lack of clarity can have a negative impact from the onset of the relationship between the school board and the superintendents and, consequently, on the tenure of the superintendent.

Summary

Superintendent longevity stands as a critical issue in American public education. As the leaders of our school districts, superintendents hold instructional, managerial, and political roles. The successful superintendent understands each role, possesses the skills to fulfill each role, and learns how to balance the roles to meet the needs of the school community. Enhancing superintendents' satisfaction in their job may help to ensure that they remain longer in their school districts. Likewise, when superintendents and boards work together, they help to create a culture of trust between and among themselves as well as with the whole school district. Further, the superintendent's leadership in the district is affirmed by a supportive board of education.

When looking systemically at a school district's performance, one characteristic of a high performing system is effective and efficient leadership at every level. The essence of leadership in organizations is influencing and facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2012). Leaders are judged by their character, actions, and behaviors. By defining the behaviors leaders need, they can be better prepared to take their leadership to the next level (Bottomley et al., 2014).

District leaders must also feel safe and connected to their district. It is important for districts to understand how stability in district leadership can improve student learning and overall district culture over time. Being an educator has never been more challenging, and school district administrators need to do more to keep quality leaders in their schools for extended periods of time. Overall, the role of the superintendent has shifted from being able to manage the budget, buses, maintenance, and other supplemental components in facilitating the learning process, to one with an instructional focus on improving student achievement while balancing the management pieces. Andy Hargraves and Michael Fullen, in *Professional Capital*, capture what is needed to successfully lead a school district and which absolutely connects to the importance of job satisfaction:

Whole system change, we have learned, is not a kind of magic. It involves and absolutely requires individual and collective acts of investment, and an inspirational vision, and a coherent set of actions that build everyone's capability and keep everyone learning as they continue to move forward (p. xvii).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to understand how superintendent job satisfaction impacts longevity in that job and likewise, what school districts can do to actively increase both job satisfaction and longevity among superintendents. The myriad and complex challenges that confront those working as superintendents make it, at times, a thankless job (Lowry, 2015). The role of superintendent is associated with stressors such as scope of the role, loss of job security, school-age children, spousal considerations, and cost of living (Lowry, 2015). These stressors can lead to burnout and seeking other employment in a different district, leaving behind work that is still in progress. The study of superintendent job satisfaction in relationship to longevity is relevant to gain new knowledge regarding what school districts and leaders can do to improve working conditions to be more likely to retain their superintendents for longer.

This chapter provides the research design, methodological approach, setting, population/sample, data collection, instrumentation, and variables for the current study. This chapter will also describe the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Research Questions.

The purpose of this study was to answer the following five research questions based on the PERMA Model by Seligman (2011):

This study examines the following research questions:

1. What are the demographics and school settings of the superintendents who participated in the study?

2. What components of the PERMA Model contribute most strongly to superintendent job satisfaction?
3. To what extent do number of total years of experience as a superintendent, total years of experience as superintendent in the current district, education level, and salary have on overall job satisfaction?
4. To what extent do the various factors that superintendents indicate they might consider in deciding whether or not to leave their current position have on job satisfaction?
5. To what extent does school setting, student enrollment, and student enrollment trend have on superintendent job satisfaction?

Research Design

This study used a quantitative approach and survey research methodology connected to Seligman's PERMA Model of well being and happiness as a theoretical perspective. Choices made in the development of scholarly research stem from the way a researcher views the surrounding world and from the way questions are posed and answers are sought (Creswell, 2009).

The PERMA Model assumes there are five core elements of psychological well-being and happiness. Seligman believes that these five elements can help people reach a life of fulfillment, happiness, and meaning. The PERMA Model of well being and happiness helps people understand the elements and what they can do to maximize each element to reach a life of happiness. The five components: (1) positive emotion, (2) engagement, (3) relationships, (4) meaning, and (5) accomplishments can be effectively measured, given the correct tools and time, in regard to superintendent job satisfaction. Exploring the extent that job satisfaction can be

predicted by measuring the superintendent's perspective lies in the methodological design of the PERMA Model.

Methodological Approach

A common method to collect data in quantitative research is the use of surveys. Surveys can be designed to provide statistical descriptions of people (Fowler, 2009). Surveys can be designed to provide statistical descriptions of people (Fowler, 2009). Survey research is appropriate when the goal is to explore the relationships between responses (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

According to Babbie (1990), the three objectives of survey research are description, explanation and exploration. This study sought to describe the current demographics of acting superintendents in the state of Iowa through a survey with multiple components to collect data. According to Babbie (1990), survey research provides the vehicle for discovering such distributions to describe the total sample.

After providing the description of the sample, this study aimed to make explanatory assertions about the population through multivariate analysis. Multivariate analysis is the simultaneous examination of two or more variables (Babbie, 1990). By examining the relationships between superintendent job satisfaction and several explanatory variables, the researcher will attempt to "explain" the impact of the explanatory variables (Babbie, 1990, p. 52).

Exploration was not evident in this study because there will be a representative of the sample and data will be collected using a comprehensive survey. According to Babbie (1990) most studies have more than one objective, but these objectives provide useful organizing principles in

the design of surveys. This study utilized explanation and exploration as a foundation of the methodological approach.

The researcher first used survey data to quantify a list of internal and external variables for Iowa superintendents in regards to job satisfaction based on Dr. Seligman's PERMA Model. The researcher then combined the 23 questions associated with the PERMA Model to create a variable for overall job satisfaction. The researcher then analyzed the relationships between the variables to have a better understanding of characteristics impact superintendent job satisfaction.

Participants

Participants in this study included 128 public school superintendents from the state of Iowa. School district size ranged from 80 students to 33,000 students in this study. There were 105 rural schools, 15 suburban schools, 8 urban schools represented in this study. Overall, superintendent experience in this study ranged from superintendents being in their first year to superintendents completing their 33rd year as superintendent. Participants' experience in their current district was included in the study with a range of superintendents being in their first year to superintendents completing their 29th year. There are currently 282 full-time public school superintendents in the state of Iowa.

Survey Instrument

Butin (2010) described a protocol for a good survey as follows:

Your research questions (or subquestions) should be informed by your literature review, which will determine how you ask a particular questions. In turn, the answer to that question on the survey will simply and logically inform the results to your research. (p. 92)

Positive psychology is a scientific field that studies the optimal functioning of individuals, groups and institutions (Seligman, 2011). Since its inception, the field has grown rapidly, with a large volume of peer reviewed publications and expanding reach beyond the field of psychology to disciplines such as education and organizational behavior (Rusk & Waters, 2013). The survey instrument, (Appendix A) was developed from the PERMA Model questionnaire. Author approval for use of the instrument was received. Eight distinct sections comprise the survey. Part one contains questions to collect descriptive data designed by the researcher. The 13 questions that comprise part one are questions related to biographical background, including such items as gender, age, education experience, district enrollment, district location, salary, and goals.

Parts two through eight consist of 23 questions adopted from Seligman's (2011) multidimensional PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment/achievement). Participants will be asked to identify the degree to which each of the 23 questions satisfies them from a range, 1-5. The 1-5 ranges are 1 = never and 5 = always, 1 = not at all and 5 = completely, 1 = terrible and 5 = excellent. The 23 questions have been broken into 7 different blocks: (1) positive emotion, (2) engagement, (3) relationships, (4) meaning, (5) accomplishment / achievement, (6) health (7), and overall satisfaction. The questionnaire from Seligman used will examine the relationship between superintendent satisfaction with employee well being, physical health, work satisfaction, and professional thriving.

Data Collection

There are multiple modes of survey data collection including telephone, Internet, mail, and personal interviews (Fowler, 2009). The survey in this study was made available online via

Qualtrics software to Iowa public school superintendents. Researchers refer to this type of sampling as total population convenience sampling (Ellis, 1994), because all of the survey participants belonged to one group and are conveniently available for the study. Convenience sampling is the most common form of sampling because it is fast and inexpensive when participants are readily available. The sample frame in this study will include a convenience sample of all public school superintendents in the state of Iowa who agree to complete and return an online survey. The sample will omit all private school superintendents.

The goal of this study was to get a maximum return on response rate from Iowa superintendents in order to gather data for interpretation. According to Fowler (2009) response rate can be defined as:

Simply the number of people who complete the survey divided by the number of eligible people (or units) sampled. The denominator includes all people in the study population who were selected but did not respond for whatever reason: refusals, language problems, illness, or lack of availability. (p. 43)

The total response rate for the survey was 128 superintendents out of 282 (45%) possible.

This researcher contacted all participants via email and used an online survey through Qualtrics. A superintendent database through School Administrators of Iowa was used to obtain superintendent emails and loaded into Qualtrics to track the completion rate during the survey window.

The researcher attempted to minimize sample attrition and reduce sampling bias by following research-based methods to increase return rates as reported by Lee Ellis (1994). These methods include: 1) pre-notifying prospective participants; 2) writing a clear and concise cover letter; 3) identifying the university sponsoring the research; 4) sending follow-up emails; 5)

developing a well-organized and brief survey; and 6) identifying the relevance of the survey to the participants. Ellis (1994) stated that combining these suggestions yield the highest return rates in survey research.

Overall, the survey was open for superintendents to complete for a two week window. After the initial email was sent with an individual link, a follow-up email was sent to participants who had not completed the survey within three work days. One more follow-up email was sent after five business days to increase the total number of respondents. Sending individual links allowed the researcher to not duplicate follow-up emails to superintendents who had already completed the survey.

Variables

Through response to the survey questions, this study examined possible predictors of superintendent job satisfaction. The independent variables was superintendent demographics (including length of time on the job) and school setting. The dependent variable for this study was levels of superintendent job satisfaction.

Independent Variables

There are seven independent variables in this study. Race and ethnicity was excluded from the variables due to severe under-representation and inability to do valid analyses by race.

Superintendent Demographics. Superintendent demographics will include: gender, total years of experience of the superintendent, number years of experience for the superintendent in the current district, total years' experience in education, age, level of education past specialist degree, size of school district, student growth, and school district location.

Gender. Males have historically been the majority in the superintendency. The lowest percentage of female representation reported through the AASA studies was 1.2% reported in

1982 (Glass, 1992). Since that time, the percentages reported in the AASA studies present a gradual and steady increase with 6.6% in 1992 (Glass, 1992), 13.2% in 2000 (Glass et al., 2000), 22% in 2006 (Glass & Franceschini, 2007), and 24.1% in 2010 (Kowalski et al., 2011). Despite this increase, men still outnumber women by a ratio of four to one. According to Bjork and Keedy (2001), men are 20 times more likely to move from teaching into the superintendency than women.

Experience. At the time of the 2010 AASA survey, 6% of respondents were in their first year as superintendent. Slightly more than half, 54.3% had between two and eight years of experience in the position, and nearly one-fourth, 24.8%, had 13 or more years of experience in the position (Kowalski et al., 2011). Looking back a decade, superintendents in the 2000 AASA survey had been in the role of superintendent, regardless of the number of districts served, for an average of 8.75 years (Glass et al., 2000), and Glass and Franceschini (2007) estimated the percentage of first time superintendents to be slightly higher in 2006, at 15% from the 6% later reported in 2010.

Age. The AASA studies conducted between 1950 and 1991 indicated the median age of superintendents to be 48 to 50 (Kowalski et al., 2011). In 1992, the median age increased to 52.5 (Glass, et al., 2000). In the most recent AASA study, conducted in 2010, results indicated that the average age range has since broadened. Responses indicated that 14.6% of superintendents were less than 46 years old, 50% increase from 9.8% reported in the 2000 study (Kowalski et al., 2011). And in addition, in 2000, only 8% were over the age of 60, while in 2010 this percentage increased to 18.1%.

Education. Most superintendent preparation programs offer similar courses in school administration, including finance, personnel administration, organizational theory, school law,

and school-community relations (Glass et al., 2000). There is not national curriculum for the preparation and licensure of school superintendents. While some states allow the acquisition of a superintendents' license without having completed a specific preparation program. Kowlaski et al. (2011) found 84.9% of survey respondents had completed a specified superintendency licensure program. In Iowa, superintendents must complete a superintendent preparation program to hold the position.

In some case, superintendents complete a doctorate program, including both Ph.D. and Ed.D degrees. The state of Iowa does not require a doctorate for superintendent licensure, yet the percentage of superintendents holding these degrees increased gradually from 1971 AASA survey – 29.2% in 1971, 39.5% in 1982, 36% in 1992, and 45.3% in 2000 (Glass et al., 2000) – and has held steady from the 2000 survey – 51% in 2006 (Glass & Franceschini, 2007) and 45.3% in 2010 (Kowalski et al., 2011).

School Setting. When considering the school setting in which a superintendent works, school size is often a consideration. School size is gauged by the number of students enrolled in a district, and is considered to be the responsibility of the superintendent. Such data are often categorized into ranges of enrollment that then allow for layers of data disaggregation. For example, in the ongoing AASA surveys, district enrollment is grouped into four categories – fewer than 300 students, 300-2,999 students, 3,000 -24,999 students, and 25,000 or more students.

Connected to school district size is student growth. Student growth year to year is an important factor for superintendents in terms of new money and strategic planning. School districts can grow, decline or stay the same from year to year making it challenging for superintendents to create a strategic plan for budget, staff, and facilities.

Location also is a major component to school setting. In terms of location, not all schools are alike. Some are located in a rural setting, while others, referred to as urban schools, are located in the heart of the city. Others are neither and are located in the suburbs. Rural does not necessarily represent small. District type, be that that, rural, suburban, or urban, functions differently and has different challenges. This data will be self-reported using the online survey instrument.

Dependent Variable

Job Satisfaction. A significant source of data in this area is the ongoing series of AASA surveys, however, these lack analysis of relationships between variables and specific to Iowa. This study will provide job satisfaction levels of superintendents specific to the state of Iowa. Superintendent job satisfaction was reported using the online survey where individual leaders will be asked to rate their level of satisfaction through 23 questions based off Seligman's (2011) PERMA Model.

Data Analysis Procedures

Prior to data analysis, it is important to check for any missing data, and that the data meet the assumptions for normality required for inferential statistical analysis. According to Green and Salkind (2011), the assumptions that must be met are that the "test variables are normally distributed in the population" and that "participants included in the study are taken from a random sample and the scores on the test variable are independent of each other" (p. 164).

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) explained, "Descriptive statistics describes samples of subjects in terms of variables or combinations of variables" (p. 7). Descriptive statistical

analysis in this study will report means, standard deviations, and frequencies on demographic data, dependent and independent variables through the use of SPSS.

Inferential Statistical Analysis

Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) described inferential statistical analysis as “techniques that test hypotheses about differences in populations on the basis of measurements made on samples of subjects” (p. 7). Inferential analysis conducted in this study will include the Pearson correlation and multiple regression.

Factor Analysis. Factor analysis is based on the fundamental assumption that some underlying factors, which are smaller than the number of observed variables, are responsible for the covariation among the observed variables. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is used when the researcher does not know how many underlying dimensions there are for the given data (Kim & Mueller, 1978). Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) stated, “In exploratory factor analysis the question is: what are the underlying processes that could have produced correlations among these variables” (p. 585). The value of factor analysis is a meaningful organizational scheme that can be used to achieve a more parsimonious explanation of the variables (Tinsley & Tinsley, 1987). In factor analysis, although the results are objective, determining the number of components and assigning them conceptual meaning to the components is a experimental process.

Correlations. According to Green and Salkind (2011), “The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) assesses the degree that quantitative variables are linearly related in a sample” (p. 257). In other words, this correlation determines if there is a relationship between the variables in the sample. Green and Salkind (2011) further discussed the two assumptions essential to the significance test of the Pearson correlation coefficient. The first assumption suggested that the variables are bivariately normally distributed. This means that each of the

variables is normally distributed independent and at all levels. If the assumption does not hold true, there may be a nonlinear relationship that exists. Green and Salkind (2011) further described the second assumption which requires “the cases represent a random sample from the population and the scores on variables for one case are independent of scores on these variables for other cases” (p. 258). If this assumption does not hold true, there is no need to run a significance test. Finally, the Pearson correlation coefficient is reported as an effect size ranging -1 to +1, which is represented in a correlation matrix with all of the variables. Since several correlations will be computed in this study, a Bonferroni approach “requires dividing by .05 by the number of computed correlations” (p. 261). A correlation would only be significant if the *p*-value is less than the adjusted significance.

Regression. Regression is the statistical process used to find and make a prediction equation (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). Multiple regression is a technique that enables researchers to determine the correlation between a criterion variable (dependent) and two or more predictor variables (independent) (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). This study used a multiple regression analysis to determine the contribution of independent variables to the overall job satisfaction of superintendents, the dependent variable. Ordinal regression was selected because the dependent variable will be measured using an ordinal scale using a Lickert scale. After carrying out ordinal regression, the researcher determined which independent variables have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable (Ordinal Regressing Using SPSS, n.d.). For categorical independent variables the researcher will be able to interpret the odds that one group had a higher or lower value on the dependent variable compared to the second group (Ordinal Regressing Using SPSS, n.d.). For continuous independent variables, the researcher will be able to interpret how a single unit increase or decrease in that variable was associated

with the odds of the dependent variable having a higher or lower value (Ordinal Regressing Using SPSS, n.d.). This will be necessary due to the fact that there will be more than one independent variable and it will be necessary to differentiate the impact each independent variable will have on the dependent variable.

Delimitations

According to Creswell (2009), it is important that the researcher include information regarding the delimits of the scope of participation or research sites that are utilized in the study. For this study, two delimitations have been identified. First, this study's research site was limited to one state in the the U.S., in the Midwest. The scope of this study did not extend to other geographic areas beyond the Midwest. The information may not be generalizable to superintendents from other regions. Second, superintendent performance was not considered, only job satisfaction and longevity within the context of the studies variables.

Limitations

This study will focus on a limited population, public school superintendents in a Midwestern state. Future research should be expanded to other Midwest states and ultimately to the nation. Additionally, research could be expanded to include the local board of education to gather comparative data from the governing body.

The use of technology to administer a survey can be viewed as a strength and a weakness. While the use of the online survey will expedite the data collection process, it may also hamper the response rate depending on the comfort level of each participant in regards to technology and sharing information online. It will also assume that the person submitting the online response is truly the superintendent for which the invitation to participate was intended.

Summary

In this chapter, the methodological approach was explained in depth. The research questions and design were addressed including specifics about the independent variables and dependent variables. Finally, the delimitation and limitations were discussed to provide opportunities for future research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the overall job satisfaction level among Iowa public school superintendents. This study was conducted using Seligman's (2011) positive psychology model to determine the level of satisfaction superintendents have in their current school district along with the collection of demographic and background information to use as independent variables.

This chapter provides the results of the data analysis and answers the four research questions that guided this study. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section describes the data screening procedures to ensure assumptions of data normality in order to conduct data analysis. The second section details the results of all descriptive statistics conducted on demographic variables and all independent and dependent variables. The third section reports the factor analysis that was conducted on all of the positive psychology questions and divided into categories. The fourth section reports the correlations between all independent and dependent variables for multiple regression analysis. The fifth and final section answers each of the research questions used in this study.

Data Screening and Assumptions of Normality

In advance of conducting descriptive and inferential analysis, all data were subjected to screening for outliers and missing values. Results of the data screening revealed no outliers or missing values for the independent or dependent variables. Additional screening was conducted to assess whether the variables met the assumptions of normality. Assumptions of normality are required precursors for tests of statistical significance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Vogt and Johnson (2011) describe normality of data as a statistical assumption that is essential for statistical tests. Normality of variables can be assessed using statistical and graphical methods (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Skewness depicts the symmetry of the distribution related to the mean value while kurtosis represents the peakedness of the distribution, commonly referred to as a bell shaped distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Skewness and kurtosis index scores and graphical views were used in this study to evaluate the independent and dependent variables.

Both skewness and kurtosis were evaluated for the independent and dependent variables used in this study. The assessment of normality for all variables showed no non-normal skewness or kurtosis values. Positive skew results from positive numerical data and graphically distributes values to the right or upward while negative output places values to the left or downward (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). Graphic and numeric displays of the data reveal kurtosis values greater than +1 (Vogt & Johnson, 2011) in six of the variables, but Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) claimed that in large samples it will not deviate enough from normality to negatively impact analysis. As a result, assumptions of normality were met. Results of the assessment of normality for the independent and dependent variables used in this study are report in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Assessment of Normality for Variables in the Model (n = 128)

Variables	Skew	SE of Skew	<i>Kurtosis</i>	<i>SE of Kurtosis</i>
Gender	2.295	.214	3.318	.425
Age	.144	.214	.218	.425

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Assessment of Normality for Variables in the Model (n = 128)

Variables	Skew	SE of Skew	<i>Kurtosis</i>	<i>SE of Kurtosis</i>
Highest Degree Earned	-.191	.214	-.765	.425
Total Years Served as Superintendent	.934	.214	.236	.425
Total Years Served as Superintendent in Current District	1.438	.214	2.157	.425
Total Number of Students Served 2016-2017	5.166	.214	33.193	.425
School Setting	2.237	.214	3.901	.425
Student Enrollment Trend	-.046	.214	-1.751	.425
2016-2017 Salary	.756	.214	2.715	.425
Relationship of Current Salary to Comparable School District	.000	.214	-.607	.425
Number of Years Planning to Stay in Current District	.794	.217	-.046	.431
Overall Job Satisfaction*	-.521	.214	1.141	.425

* Dependent Variable

Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Descriptive statistics were run for the demographic information related to the participants. The advantage of descriptive statistics according to Fraenkal and Wallen (2006) is

that the statistics permit researchers to describe information contained in many scores with just a few indices, such as mean and median. Table 4.2 reports the results of the descriptive analyses for demographic data. Table 4.3 reports the results of the descriptive analysis for the job satisfaction levels broke down into categories. Statistics include the range (minimum and maximum values), means, and standard deviation for each variable.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Data (n = 128)

Variables	Min	Max	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender ^a	1	2	1.13	.332
Age	35	78	53.16	7.75
Highest Degree Earned ^b	1	3	2.16	.67
Total Years Served as Superintendent	0	33	9.96	7.24
Total Years Served as Superintendent in Current District	0	29	6.01	5.488
Total Number of Students Served 2016-2017	80	33000	2056.51	3910.06
School Setting ^c	1	3	1.24	.56
Student Enrollment Trend ^d	1	3	2.02	.891
2016-2017 Salary	35000	280000	148510.9	33843.22
Relationship of Current Salary to Comparable School District ^e	1	3	2.00	.65
Number of Years Planning to Stay in Current District	0	20	5.20	4.38

Table 4.2 (Continued)

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Data (n = 128)

^aScale: 1 = Male, 2 = Female; ^bScale: 1 = Masters, 2 = Specialist, 3 = Doctorate; ^cScale: 1 = Rural, 2 = Suburban, 3 = Urban; ^dScale: 1 = Increased, 2 = Stayed the Same, 3 = Decreased; ^eScale: 1 = Increased, 2 = Stayed the Same, 3 = Decreased

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics for Job Satisfaction and Dependent Variable (n = 128)

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Positive Emotion ^a	1	5	3.68	.603
Engagement ^a	1	5	3.90	.629
Relationships ^b	1	5	3.74	.754
Meaning ^b	1	5	4.04	.658
Accomplishment ^a	1	5	3.72	.647
Health ^c	1	5	3.33	.976
Happiness ^a	1	5	4.06	.836
Overall Job Satisfaction *	1	5	3.78	.411

^aScale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Most of the Time, 5 = Always; ^bScale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Most of the Time, 5 = Completely; ^cScale: 1 = Terrible, 2 = Poor, 3 = Average, 4 = Good, 5 = Excellent; ^dScale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

* Dependent Variable

Factor Analysis

Each of the independent variables consists of constructs through the process of factor analysis. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), factor analysis is used to determine “which variables in the set form coherent subsets that are relatively independent of one another” (p. 607). The variables are then considered correlated and result in a new variable or factor. The goal of factor analysis is to combine a number of variables into fewer, more concise measures (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), which can in turn result in constructs (Green & Salkind, 2011). Constructs reflect when “a cluster of highly intercorrelated variables results in a factor” (Vogt & Johnson, 2011, p. 137), which can be used to describe the relationship between each of the individual measures under study.

Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used in the factor analysis, which allowed for the ability to “maximize the variance of factor loadings higher and low ones lower for each factor” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 620), thereby making it more evident whether each variable contributed to the newly developed subset. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) recommend interpreting variables only if they load at .320 or higher. As a conservative approach, only factors that loaded at the .440 level or greater were included in each construct, as “the higher the loading, the closer the association of the item with the group of items that make up the factor” (Vogt & Johnson, 2011, p.139). Kaiser’s measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) was evaluated on each construct. This measure reflects whether the correlations under analysis are sizeable enough to use for a factor analysis, with suggested values of at least .6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

A principle component with a varimax rotation approach was used for the factor analysis, which yielded six factors with eigenvalues greater than one and explained 67.53% of the sample

variation. Kaiser's measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) was .861 for this study. The following factor loadings were each measured for each of the items, using a 5-point likert scale.

Positive emotion. The variable of positive emotion was measured by asking participants to rate their level of emotion while at work. Each question was answered via a multi-point scale reflecting how often the respondent felt positive, sad, anxious, angry, and satisfied at work as a superintendent. The respondent had to match each feeling with the choice of: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) most of the time, and (5) always.

Factor Analysis for positive emotion. An exploratory factor analysis was run on the five positive emotion questions. From the original five questions, all five items aligned to represent one factor for 34.94% of the variance in positive emotion. The five variables loaded into the factored variable reflecting positive emotion had an eigenvalue of 8.04. The factor structure and loadings for the positive emotion is reported in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Factor Analysis for Positive Emotion

Item	Factor Loading
Positive Emotion Influence ($\alpha = .83$)	
How often you feel positive	.716
How often you feel angry	.654
How often you feel anxious	.654
How often you feel sad	.643
How often you feel satisfied	.634
All things considered, how happy are you with your work	.509

Engagement and Accomplishment. The variable of engagement and accomplishment was combined into a single factor through the analysis. The variable of engagement and accomplishment was measured by asking participants to rate their level of engagement while at work and how the respondent felt they have achieved their goals. Each question was answered via a multi-point scale reflecting how the respondent felt in regards to the purpose and importance of their work, how often they become absorbed in what they are doing, how well they handle work related responsibilities, how often they lose track of time while do something they enjoy, how often they achieve important goals they have set, and if they have made progress in accomplishing the goals they have set for oneself. The respondent had to match each feeling with the choice of: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) most of the time, and (5) always.

Factor Analysis for engagement and accomplishment. An exploratory factor analysis was run on the four engagement questions and two accomplishment questions. From the original six questions, all six items aligned to represent one factor for 10.26% of the variance in both engagement and accomplishment. The six variables loaded into the factored variable reflecting engagement and accomplishment had an eigenvalue of 2.36. The factor structure and loadings for the engagement and accomplishment is reported in Table 4.5

Table 4.5

Factor Analysis for Engagement and Accomplishment

Item	Factor Loading
Engagement and Accomplishment Influence ($\alpha = .72$)	
How often do you achieve work goals	.832

Table 4.5 (Continued)

Factor Analysis for Engagement and Accomplishment

How often do you feel you are making progress towards accomplishing work related goals	.728
Work is purposeful and meaningful	.641
Sense of direction at work	.581
Work is valuable and worthwhile	.565
How often are you able to hand work related responsibilities	.441

Health. The variable of health was measured by asking participants to rate their level of health using three questions. Each question was answered via a multi-point scale reflecting how satisfied the respondent is with their current health, how they would rate their current health, and compared to others of the same age and sex how they would rate their health. The respondent had to match each question with the choice of either: (1) terrible, (2) poor, (3) average, (4) good, and (5) excellent or (1) not at all, (2) slightly, (3) moderately, (4) very, and (5) extremely.

Factor Analysis for health. An exploratory factor analysis was run on the three health questions. From the original three questions, all three items aligned to represent one factor for 6.75% of the variance in positive emotion. The three variables loaded into the factored variable reflecting health had an eigenvalue of 1.55. The factor structure and loadings for the health is reported in Table 4.6

Table 4.6

Factor Analysis for Health

Item	Factor Loading
Health Influence ($\alpha = .91$)	
How satisfied are you with your current health	.788
How would you say your health is	.787
Compared to others, how is your health	.779

Meaning. The variable of meaning was measured by asking participants to rate their level excitement and enjoyment in their work. Each question was answered via a multi-point scale reflecting how often the respondent loses track of time while doing something they enjoy, how often they feel excited and interested in their work, overall how happy they are with their work. The respondent had to match each question with the choice of either: (1) not at all, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) most of the time, and (5) completely.

Factor Analysis for health. An exploratory factor analysis was run on the meaning questions. From the original three questions, all three items aligned to represent one factor for 5.77% of the variance in positive emotion. The three variables loaded into the factored variable reflecting health had an eigenvalue of 1.33. There was one additional variable that fit in the factor that were not part of the meaning questions. The factor structure and loadings for meaning is reported in Table 4.7

Table 4.7

Factor Analysis for Meaning

Item	Factor Loading
Meaning Influence ($\alpha = .78$)	
How often do you lose track of time while you do something you enjoy	.695
To what extent do you feel excited and interested in your work	.683
How happy are you with your work	.578
To what extent do you feel your work is valuable and worthwhile	.558

Happiness. The variable of happiness was measured by asking participants to rate their level overall level of job satisfaction in their current school district. Each question was answered via a multi-point scale reflecting how happy the respondent is with their work, if the respondent was extremely glad they chose their current district over others, and if their current district is the best possible one for them to work in. The respondent had to match each question with the choice of either: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) most of the time, and (5) always, or (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree.

Factor Analysis for happiness. An exploratory factor analysis was run on the happiness questions. From the original three questions, only two items aligned to represent one factor for 5.27% of the variance in happiness. The two variables loaded into the factored variable

reflecting health had an eigenvalue of 1.213. The factor structure and loadings for happiness is reported in Table 4.8

Table 4.8

Factor Analysis for Happiness

Item	Factor Loading
<hr/>	
Happiness Influence ($\alpha = .84$)	
I am extremely glad I chose my current school district over others	.857
This is the best of all possible school districts for which to work	.840

Relationships. The variable of relationships was measured by asking participants to rate their level working with others at work. Each question was answered via a multi-point scale reflecting how often the respondent asks for help from others, if the respondent is satisfied with their professional relationships, and if they feel lonely at work. The respondent had to match each question with the choice of either: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) most of the time, and (5) completely.

Factor Analysis for health. An exploratory factor analysis was run on the relationship questions. From the original three questions, all three items aligned to represent one factor for 4.544% of the variance in relationships. The three variables loaded into the factored variable reflecting health had an eigenvalue of 1.05. There was one additional variable that fit in the factor that were not part of the relationships. The factor structure and loadings for relationships is reported in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Factor Analysis for Relationships

Item	Factor Loading
Relationships Influence ($\alpha = .64$)	
To what extent do you receive help and support from coworkers when you need it	.808
How often do you become absorbed in what you are doing	.623
How satisfied are you with your professional relationships	.491
How lonely do you feel at work	.491

As a result of the factor analysis, a new variable was created for the study. The scores of each variable from the positive psychology questions were combined to create “JOBSAT”. This new variable represents the overall job satisfaction level for superintendents in the state of Iowa. The new variable was used for further analysis as the dependent variable.

Multiple Regression Analyses

Descriptive statistics provided information on background information, academic preparation, what work related responsibilities that could potentially cause an exit, school district location, age, gender, and salary for each of the respondents of the survey. It is important to examine the effects these variables have on a superintendent’s overall job satisfaction level, which can provide a better understanding about what leads to superintendent tenure in a specific

school district. A multiple regression was used to determine whether the independent variables were statistically significant predictors of the dependent variable.

Two separate regression analyses were conducted to answer three out of the five research questions. Based on the theoretical framework of Seligman (2011) the independent variables were grouped into two separate research questions based on similarity. For the first question, the independent variables include a superintendent's total years of experience, total number of experience as superintendent in their current school district, the superintendent's highest education level, and the superintendent's salary. For the next research questions, the researcher re-coded respondent answers to the question "what are important factors you might consider when deciding whether or not to leave your current school district?" The following sections report the results of the regression analyses on each of the dependent variables.

Superintendent Experience, Education Level, District Location, and Salary

A multiple regression was conducted on the dependent variable of superintendent overall job satisfaction. Table 4.10 provides information on the variables entered into the regression analysis, the unstandardized coefficients (b), the standard error for the unstandardized regression coefficient ($SE\ b$), standardized coefficients (β), and the variance (R^2).

Results for the regression analysis indicate that superintendents who work in suburban school districts ($\beta = .298$, $p < .05$) and superintendents who have obtained a doctorate ($\beta = .277$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors for higher levels of overall job satisfaction.

Table 4.10

Regression Coefficients for Superintendent Job Satisfaction (n = 128), R² = .152

Variables	b	SE β	β
Constant	3.861	.208	
Total years experience	-.003	.007	-.058
Total years in current district	.016	.009	.208
2016-2017 school year salary	-1.96	.001	-.161
Suburban school district	.190	.059	.298*
Urban school district	.189	.182	.112
Level of education			
Specialist	.031	.100	.037
Doctorate	.244	.111	.277*

Note¹. R² = .152

Note². * p < .05

Factors of Superintendent Experience

A multiple regression was conducted on the dependent variable of superintendent overall job satisfaction. Table 4.10 provides information on the variables entered into the regression analysis, the unstandardized coefficients (*b*), the standard error for the unstandardized regression coefficient (*SE b*), standardized coefficients (β), and the variance (*R*²).

Results for the regression analysis indicate that career advancement ($\beta = -.270$, $p < .05$), family stress ($\beta = -2.90$, $p < .05$), and school district size ($\beta = -2.44$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors for higher levels of overall job satisfaction.

Table 4.11

Regression Coefficients for Factors of Superintendent Job Satisfaction (n = 128), R² = .267

Variables	<i>b</i>	<i>SE β</i>	<i>β</i>
Constant	4.01	.071	
Diminishing resources	-.138	.082	-.158
Career advancement	-.228	.074	-.270*
Poor board relations	.014	.088	.016
Loss of community support	.015	.090	.018
Leave education entirely	-.077	.100	-.065
State politics	-.063	.085	-.075
Federal politics	-.004	.123	-.003
Declining student enrollment	.007	.094	.007
Family stress	-.276	.095	-2.90*
School district location	.032	.098	.330
School district size	-3.00	.123	-2.44*
Current facilities	-.154	.207	-.747

*Note*¹. $R^2 = .267$

*Note*². * $p < .05$

Qualitative Data

Removal of a Job Responsibility

Understanding that many factors impact superintendent job satisfaction, superintendents were asked to write in one job responsibility they would like to remove from their obligations to keep them in their position longer. Problems with the political role of the superintendency was the most frequent survey response. The political aspects include societal forces, community concerns, and superintendent-board of education relations (Alberanao, 2002). In a study of

superintendent turnover, Byrd, Drews, and Johnson (2007) found 76% of superintendents who changed districts ranked “increased politics” as the number one or two contributing factor to the instability in the profession. Of the varying facets of the superintendent’s job, the educational role appears to bring about such satisfaction, with areas such as building curriculum, developing new programs, helping students and teachers contributing to society being named as factors (Cooper et al., 2000; Glass et al., 2000; Kowalski, 2006; Glass & Franceschini, 2007). In order to understand the job responsibilities superintendents would like to remove from their professional plate, open-ended questions were included in the survey.

The answers were recorded as part of the study; however, the researcher was unable to quantify the results, but was able to categorize them from topics in the research. Since the answers could not be included in a regression or descriptive analysis, the most recorded answers to the question of what responsibilities Iowa superintendents would like to take away from their daily work is summarized here:

If Iowa superintendents could remove one responsibility from their plate:

- Politics
 - Legislative lobbying
 - Managing the school board
 - State reporting
- Management
 - Human resources
 - Communications, i.e. weekly and monthly newsletter, staff emails
 - Decisions for school during inclement weather
- Student Services

- Special education
- Other administrator responsibilities, i. e. building principal, athletic director, operations

Summary Answers to Research Questions

Each of the four research questions is answered in this section, using results from the data analyses presented in this chapter.

Research Question 1

What are the demographics and school settings of the superintendents who participated in this study?

The sample consisted of 128 participants, ranging in age from 35-78 years old ($M=53.16$, $SD = 7.75$), each of whom identified as male (87.5%) and female (12.5%). For overall experience as a superintendent, the average number of years for participants was 9.96 with a minimum of 0 (first year superintendents) and 33 years ($M= 9.96$, $SD = 7.24$). Participants in the survey reported an average of spending the last 6.01 years in their current district with a minimum of 0 (first year superintendent) and a maximum of 29 years. Superintendents who participated in the survey plan to spend, on average, 5.20 more years in their current district with a minimum of 0 years and a maximum of 20 years ($M = 5.20$, $SD= 4.357$). The minimum superintendent salary reported was \$35,000 and a maximum of \$280,000 ($M= 148,510.85$, $SD = 33,843.22$). The majority of participants identified having a specialist degree (51.1%) followed by a doctorate (31.2%) and a master degree (15.6%). The average number of students in a school district, according to the participants, was 2,056.51 with a minimum of 80 students and a maximum of 33,000 ($M= 2056.51$, $SD = 3910.06$).

Participants were asked to select if their school district was categorized as a rural, suburban or rural school district ($M = 1.24$, $SD = .56$). A majority of participants indicated coming from a rural school district (82%), suburban school district (11.7%), and urban school district (6.3%). Overall, participants reported their current school district decreased in student enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year (40.6%), increased in student enrollment (38.3%), and stayed the same (21.1%).

Research Question 2

What components of the PERMA Model contribute most strongly to superintendent job satisfaction?

Participants were asked to answer 23 questions based on the work of Seligman (2011) to determine overall job satisfaction levels. The researcher blocked the 23 questions into seven different blocks to match the original components of Seligman's work. The blocks were: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, health, and happiness. Initially, the factorability of all 23 items was examined using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation.

The factor analysis had a Cronbach's alpha of .90. The analysis yielded six factors explaining 67.53% of the variance for the entire set of variables. Overall, the factors were combined to match the original seven blocks created by the researcher, however, two blocks were combined into one as a result of the analysis.

Factor 1 was labeled positive emotion due to the high factor loadings of the questions associated with positive emotion at work. Factor 1 is responsible for 34.94% of the overall variance. The second factor combined the engagement and accomplishment block from the original questions. The second block is responsible for 10.26% of the overall variance. Factor 3

was labeled health as it contained all of the questions related to the participants answer towards their perception of their health. Factor 3 was responsible for 6.75% of the overall variance. Block 4 was meaning as it contained questions from participants answer towards how they feel their work has meaning. Factor 4 is responsible for 5.77% of the overall variance. Factor 5 represented questions from the original happiness block. Factor 5 is responsible for 5.27% of the overall variance. The last factor, factor 6, represented questions from the participant's perception of professional relationships. Factor 6 represented 4.54% of the overall variance.

Overall, the results of the factor analysis had each factor with an eigenvalue over +1. The results indicated that the blocks created by the researcher were consistent with the answers of the participants. The most influential block, according to the results, was the positive emotion a superintendent feels while at work.

Research Question 3

To what extent do number of total years of experience as a superintendent, total years of experience as superintendent in the current district, education level, and salary have on overall job satisfaction?

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which a superintendent's total years of experience, total years experience in their current district, location of the school district, the superintendent's highest education level, and salary have on overall job satisfaction. Results of the analysis revealed that the combination of independent variables significantly predicted superintendent job satisfaction, $F(7, 120) = 3.070, p < .005$, accounting for 15% ($R^2 = .152$) of the variance of job satisfaction. The variables of a superintendent who has a doctorate degree ($\beta = .277, p < .05$) and superintendents working in a suburban school district ($\beta = .298, p < .05$) were statistically significant variables for higher job satisfaction.

Research Question 4

To what extent do the various factors that superintendents indicate they might consider in deciding whether or not to leave their current position have on job satisfaction?

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent of various factors that superintendents experience have on job satisfaction. Results of the analysis revealed that the combination of independent variables significantly predicted superintendent job satisfaction, $F(115, 127) = 3.489, p < .001$, accounting for 27% ($R^2 = .267$) of the variance of job satisfaction. The variables of a career advancement ($\beta = -.270, p < .05$), family stress ($\beta = -2.90, p < .05$), and school district size ($\beta = -2.44, p < .05$) were statistically significant variables for higher job satisfaction. Each of the variables found to be statistically significant had a negative Beta value indicating the negative perception by the superintendent.

Research Question 5

To what extent does school setting, student enrollment, and student enrollment trend have on superintendent job satisfaction?

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent overall student enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year and if the school district is increasing, decreasing or staying the same in terms of students enrollment compared to the 2015-2016 school year have on job satisfaction. Results of the analysis revealed that the combination of independent variables did not significantly predicted superintendent job satisfaction, $F(125, 127) = .318, p = .728$, accounting for 5% ($R^2 = .005$) of the variance of job satisfaction. None of the variables were statistically significant variables for higher job satisfaction.

Summary

This chapter presented results for the data analyses. Data were analyzed and determined to meet assumptions of data normality. Frequencies and descriptive data were reported for background characteristics of the participants of the study. A factor analysis was conducted and concluded six important factor loadings in regards to the block of questions asked to superintendents to determine overall job satisfaction. Three individual multiple regressions were conducted and concluded five variables to be statistically significant predictors of overall superintendent job satisfaction. A discussion of the results and recommendations for practice and future research are presented in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, the results presented in chapter 4 are examined within the context Seligman's (2011) framework and superintendent job satisfaction and tenure literature. The chapter begins with a summary of the current study, followed by a summary of the results, implications, and recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with final thoughts on the study of Iowa superintendent job satisfaction.

Summary of the Study

Chapter 1 described the importance of the study in literature and provided each of the research questions guided by the theoretical framework. This study adds to existing literature because it identified the variables that influence the job satisfaction of acting superintendents in the state of Iowa. By understanding what leads to increased job satisfaction levels among Iowa superintendents, information can be shared with local school boards and state organizations to promote resources to help sustain superintendents in their current role. The Seligman (2011) PERMA model of positive psychology, which served as the theoretical framework for the investigation, was presented. The positive psychology framework was employed to examine the job satisfaction levels among Iowa public school superintendents.

Chapter 2 provided a historical and current perspective of the literature describing public school superintendent job satisfaction levels and tenure in the leadership position. Literature was also reviewed regarding other leadership positions and factors that lead to increased job satisfaction levels. Seligman's (2011) framework was detailed with information provided on each of the components of the PERMA model.

Chapter 3 described the methodology used in the study. A review of philosophical assumptions, research design, and research questions, participants, along with data collection methods and survey instruments were presented. Independent and dependent variables were described. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the plan for analyzing the data.

Chapter 4 provided the results of the analyses conducted. A review of data screening and assumptions of normality with frequencies and descriptive were described. The chapter concluded with descriptive and inferential statistics performed to answer each of the four research questions.

In the following sections of chapter 5, a discussion of the results is presented for each of the independent and dependent variables. The theoretical framework utilized in this study and current literature provides further inspiration for practical applications and recommendations for future research in the area of superintendent job satisfaction.

Summary of the Results

Results of the factor analysis indicate six factors that were important in regards to variables impact on superintendent job satisfaction. Overall, the results of the factor analysis had each factor with an eigenvalue over +1. The most influential block was the Positive Emotion a superintendent feels while at work. Following Positive Emotion, the other five factors, in order of importance to superintendent job satisfaction, were: engagement and accomplishment health, meaning, happiness, and relationships.

Results of the multiple regression analyses indicate five independent variables were statistically significant. Two variables were positive predictors of higher job satisfaction among superintendents: Superintendent Education Level and School Location. A doctorate degree and a suburban school placement were positive predictors of higher job satisfaction. Three more

independent variables were negative predictors of superintendent job satisfaction: Career Advancement, Family Stress, and School District Size. Even though school district size was determined to be a factor for superintendents to consider when deciding to stay or leave, student enrollment was not found to be statistically significant. Changes in student count for the 2016-2017 school year were not found to be statistically significant predictors of superintendent job satisfaction. This study adds to the knowledge base for better understanding how to improve public school superintendent job satisfaction levels by understanding the variables of education level, school district size and location, family stress, and career advancement.

Discussion of the Results

Drawing from recent advances in the field of positive psychology, this study determined positive psychology can be used to evaluate the wellbeing of superintendents in the state of Iowa. The traditional approach of measuring job satisfaction for any profession has ignored the positive end, but instead focused on a problem-based standpoint. A factor analysis revealed the expected PERMA components combining meaning and engagement. These components were then combined into a single variable for the study to represent overall job satisfaction for Iowa superintendents. This study was able to quantify the level of superintendent job satisfaction using positive psychology and Seligman's (2011) PERMA Model.

For decades job satisfaction has been a topic of intentional exploration for researchers. Defined as the "pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and job experience" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300), job satisfaction encompasses individual feelings about one's job and its related aspects. This study determined the positive emotional state of Iowa superintendents through the connection to positive psychology and the PERMA Model. Studies indicate that superintendents are usually satisfied in their jobs (Cooper et al., 2000;

Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000; Kowalski, 2006; Schoen, 2006; Glass & Francischini, 2007).

This study determined that the overall job satisfaction level, based on a five point scale, was 3.78. By focusing on the positive psychology aspect, instead of the problems, it has placed an emphasis on changing the environment around district leaders can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction.

According to Schneider and Snyder (1975), job satisfaction consists of intrinsic responses that individuals develop as a result of their understanding of the job. Using the results of the survey, superintendents can begin learning more about positive psychology and how it can shift their mindset to lead to more happiness. According to the PERMA Model: Your Scientific Theory of Happiness (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments), there are many ways to reach happiness, including training your mind for happiness, spending money on others to promote happiness, and following the code of well-being and happiness. People may have an idea of what happiness is, however, the PERMA Model has research to indicate what the actual elements are that promotes happiness within individuals (Seligman, 2011). After analyzing the data from the superintendent survey, it is clear that district leaders have varied levels of job satisfaction. As a result, superintendents could engage in learning around positive psychology as suggested by Dr. Seligman to better their own mindset. The first step to improvement is self-awareness followed by learning to improve the present situation.

The goal of this study was to examine superintendent job satisfaction in Iowa to determine what factors lead to more satisfaction and what keeps a superintendent in a district longer than the national average. Research shows that superintendents who spend longer than the national average have a better chance of creating lasting change that has a positive impact on

student achievement (Education Writer's Association, 2003). The results show two independent variables that were statistically significant and predict higher job satisfaction level and three independent variables that were factors that predicted a superintendent to leave their current position. In the sections below, each of these independent variables is examined in detail.

Overall Job Satisfaction

The focus of this study was superintendent job satisfaction and factors that predict a superintendent's decision to leave their current school district. This study did not consider specific leadership initiatives or determine the leadership style of each superintendent. This study aimed to build upon Seligman's (2011) PERMA model as an organizing framework for measuring superintendent job satisfaction levels. Positive and negative emotions are an aspect of everyday life, and a goal of this study was to understand how positive emotion can be used to understand job satisfaction levels of Iowa superintendents

Superintendent's Education Level

A superintendent's education level was a statistically significant positive predictor to overall job satisfaction level. Participants were asked to disclose what their highest level of education was for the 2016-2017 school year. Superintendents who have obtained their doctorate had higher levels of job satisfaction compared to other superintendent with a master's degree or their specialist degree. Overall, the higher the level of education a superintendent has, the higher level of job satisfaction they reported. This finding is consistent with a study by Bucheli, Melgat, Rossi and Smith (2010) who found that educational level is positively related to job satisfaction. Given the significant and positive impact of the years of education, this personal characteristic tends to hike job satisfaction by providing better tools and capabilities

(Buscheli et al., 2010). Natkin et al. (2002) also found that superintendents with more advanced degrees are less likely to turn over.

School District Location

The location of the school district which the superintendent leads was a statistically significant predictor of overall job satisfaction. Participants were asked to classify their current school district as a rural, suburban, or urban school district. Superintendents who lead a suburban school district in the state of Iowa had a higher level of job satisfaction compared to those who lead a rural or urban school district. Location of the school district may be a factor, as evidenced by case study findings that feelings of professional isolation can contribute to rural superintendent's decision to move (Tallerico & Burstyn, 1996). Connected to location is the difficulty and complexity of the superintendent's task environment, which might be greater in districts that are larger, more heterogeneous, more financially constrained, or more populated with disadvantaged students (Grissom, 2010).

Factors for Deciding to Leave

Participants were asked to select from a list of factors they would consider when deciding whether or not to stay or leave their current school district. Studies indicate that superintendents are usually satisfied in their jobs (Cooper et al., 2000; Glass et al., 2000; Kowalski, 2006; Schoen, 2006; Glass & Francischini, 2007). Of the 2,979 respondents to a national survey, 91% "agree strongly that my work in this district has given me real career satisfaction" (Cooper, et al. 2000). In American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Ten-Year Study of American School Superintendent, approximately 56% of the 2,252 respondents nationwide reported "considerable" self-fulfillment and 17% reported "moderate levels (Glass et al., 2000). The AASA Mid-Decade Study of the superintendency continued to report similar results, with

90% of the 1,338 superintendents who responded reporting “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their positions (Glass & Franceschini, 2007).

Participants were provided the opportunity to write in an answer, if they felt one of the choices did not provide an accurate description of their mindset. The option of retirement was not included in the list provided for participants. In the list that was generated as a result of the survey, the following answers were provided in the write-in option to describe why the superintendent would choose to leave their current school district:

- I have no desire to leave my current district
- Retirement. This answer was recorded 12 separate times.
- Inability to impact necessary improvements for all students
- Move closer to grandkids
- Personal stress
- Crazy board
- Lack of trust within district staff

Below are the three factors that were determined to be statistically significant indicators when a superintendent would consider to stay or leave their district. All three were found to be negative factors, which indicated that they were selected as factors contributing to superintendents’ decisions to leave their current school district.

Career Advancement. Career advancement was determined to be a statistically significant predictor for superintendents who intend to leave their current school district. The survey did not provide an explanation in terms of what is considered career advancement within the ranks for a superintendent or outside of education. Out of the three factors, career advancement was the most significant factor for a superintendent choosing to leave their current

school district. It is possible that superintendents aspire to move to suburban districts, which this study found to be more supportive of superintendent satisfaction, although this question was not asked of or provided by participants. Byrd et al (2006). found 62.5% of superintendents in their study of Texas superintendents reported leaving their districts to pursue better opportunities. This suggests that the influence of district characteristics should be considered from the side of the superintendents as well.

Family Stress. Family stress was determined to be a statistically significant factor for superintendents when determining to leave their current school district. Many factors contribute to superintendent turnover, such as personal and family issues as well as professional advancement (Byrd et al., 2006). Car (2003) labeled the superintendency the toughest job in America. The results of this study were consistent with a superintendent stress survey conducted by Robinson and Shakeshaft (2016). In the study conducted by Robinson and Shakeshaft (2016), superintendents responded that their current job that their work stress impacted their work-life balance at a moderate stress level. In the same study, superintendents were asked to reflect on the degree which stress affected their relationships, work, family life, and health. Participants in this study scored work stress had a negative impact with a spouse of significant other ($M = 2.8$) and a negative impact on the relationship with their children ($M=2.51$) based on a 1 to 5 scale. According to The School Superintendent Association (2010) two of the most commonly reported problems were job stress and the time commitment required for superintendents. One of the most commonly cited reasons for leaving a job was personal or family dynamics, among others (AASA, 2010).

School District Size. While changes in student enrollment (increase, decrease, or stay the same) for a school district were determined not be statistically significant predictors to overall

job satisfaction in this study, the size of school district was found to be a statistically significant reason for a superintendent to leave their current school district. Studies have shown that running a small, rural superintendency where the expectation of wearing many hats is perceived to be more stressful than leading a larger district which has more support systems, and is another reason why superintendents decide to leave (Czaja & Harman, 1997). With a small student enrollment, superintendents may have to make difficult budgetary decisions that impact staff, students, and the community. In comparison to the school district location variable, it was found that leading a suburban school district is a statistically significant predictor to higher job satisfaction. The results did not conclude the number of students which would lead to the most superintendent job satisfaction, however, rural and urban school districts were determined to not be statistically significant predictors.

Conclusion

This study sought to provide information that would help public school superintendents, local school boards, School Administrators of Iowa, and other organizations better understand what factors are related to district leadership job satisfaction levels. Superintendents responded to a survey during the 2016-2017 school year. The PERMA Model developed by Seligman (2011) was the instrument used to measure Iowa school superintendent job satisfaction levels. Job satisfaction is still a key factor in determining whether a superintendent chooses to stay or leave their current school district. The education level of the superintendent and school district location were determined to be statistically significant predictors of increased job satisfaction levels. Career advancement, family stress, and school district size were determined to be statistically significant factors of why superintendents choose to leave their current position.

Implications

This study is a small part of a more systemic issue with the goal of increasing superintendent job satisfaction on a national level. This is the first study to systematically and empirically apply the PERMA model to Iowa public school superintendents and to investigate associations with self reported work satisfaction with other demographic variables reported on the survey instrument. Using a positive psychology survey instrument was the first step to understanding the mindset of superintendents while at work. This focus on positive psychology must shift to a larger scale for positive change to occur for school superintendents. The need to understand the role of district level leadership is necessary to design and implement systems to improve education.

Understanding the role leadership plays in school improvement is critical to improving education. District level leadership in schools has recently received more attention by education researchers (Marzano & Waters, 2009). With constant changes to education at the state and national level, the need to understand the role of district level leadership is necessary to retain individuals to see through initiatives started to improve school districts to maximize performance by students and staff. It is important that school superintendents and other school administrators set clear goals that are aligned to the PERMA model and directly incorporate these goals to improve their job satisfaction. A more in-depth analysis needs to be completed by an external group or committee to understand what trainings are needed to support superintendents. The goal of this study was to understand the job satisfaction level from acting superintendents in the state of Iowa and determine what variables lead to an increased level of satisfaction. The results should not lead one to suggest that superintendent longevity in a district is not desirable, nor does it suggest that all superintendents in the study with a long tenure are effective leaders. Superintendent longevity is still an important issue in education because of the role leadership

plays in improving schools. Leadership is needed in schools for problems that do not have easy answers (Fullan, 2001). Turnover, however, in leadership positions presents an enormous problem because of the changes in direction and lack of follow through that come from frequent turnover in leadership (Fullan, 2001).

As politicians, policy makers, school board members and communities discuss education reform, it is important to study the impact district leadership has on our schools. Schools in Iowa, especially rural, are different from the past. The superintendency has evolved to be a more complicated and challenging leadership position within school districts. School boards and communities need to be aware that one way to bring stability to a school district is create the right climate and culture to increase superintendent job satisfaction, which in turn, will have a positive impact on student and staff educational experience. The goal of this study was not to examine the issue of of superintendent longevity. Instead, this study examined current superintendent job satisfaction. Overall, school boards need to be aware of the complexities of the superintendency and be open to work together to ensure the school district is moving forward.

Recommendation for Future Research

Additional research should be conducted using a similar design but with a longitudinal approach. This study used one year of data from current superintendents. Researching superintendent's job satisfaction by taking the same survey over a longer period of time might add to the existing research on the topic, which could lead to patterns and trends of the perceptions of superintendents. Another way to compare superintendent job satisfaction levels would be to identify districts that have shown improvement on the Iowa State Report Card over a period of time compared to districts that have not shown improvement on the same assessments.

After identifying such schools, compare the results of the superintendent job satisfaction survey to see the difference between the two different situations.

One factor that was not accounted for in this study was age. This study asked for the age of the superintendent, however, it was never used in the analysis. A future study could use job satisfaction levels and compare the results of the superintendent job satisfaction survey to see the difference between the generations of the individual (rationalist, baby boomer, generation x, millennial).

This study utilized a quantitative approach to determine job satisfaction levels among current Iowa public school superintendents. Future research on the topic of job satisfaction could potentially use a qualitative approach and ask questions such as:

- What do you as superintendent in a rural or urban school setting engage in as part of your professional responsibility that increases your overall job satisfaction level?
- What would prevent you as superintendent to only spending a few years in small rural district as compared to a longer tenure in a larger district?

Limitations

This study did not take into account leadership behaviors exhibited by superintendents as well as if teachers, community members, students, and school board members would define the acting superintendent as effective. Identifying districts that have had stability in the superintendent position and identifying the leadership characteristics that are exhibited and the relationship to job satisfaction would further enhance the topic.

This study was conducted in the state of Iowa where rural school districts are common with few urban school districts. Future research should use a similar design but include more school districts across numerous states to get a mixture of urban, suburban, and rural school

districts. By diversifying school districts, researchers can determine what leads to higher job satisfaction levels based on the type of school district the superintendent is working within.

One component of the survey that was not used during data analysis was the three questions asking superintendents to identify their personal health. No data analysis was examined to determine if health is a statistically significant indicator to overall job satisfaction. Health, however, was ranked the third highest factor out of the six blocks that were determined. A separate research study could focus solely on school district leadership and the role personal health plays in overall job satisfaction.

Final Thoughts

The role of the superintendent is complex and often misunderstood by the public (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Increasing awareness around superintendent job satisfaction can lead to a better understanding of the role of superintendents in public schools. Stability in leadership positions can provide benefits to a school organization. This study is the start of a survey, which can be used by local school boards, state organizations, and national organizations to define what leads to increased levels of job satisfaction for superintendents. While the results of the survey did not find a large number of the variables as statistically significant, it did uncover variables that can be controlled by the leader who can make decisions to put them in a situation to be successful. School educators, school boards, and policy makers should consider methods to improve education, and understanding what correlates to high levels of job satisfaction must be considered as a part of any reform initiative or effort.

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APPENDIX A

Q1 What is your gender?

Male (1)

Female (2)

Q2 What year were you born?

Q3 What is the highest level of education you have completed? If currently enrolled, mark highest degree previously received:

Masters (1)

Ed.S. (2)

Ed.D. (3)

Ph.D. (4)

Q4 How many total years have you served as superintendent (exclude assistant superintendent experience) as of July 1, 2016 (including your current position and all other superintendent positions you have held)?

Q5 How many years have you served as superintendent in your current school district as of July 1, 2016?

Q6 How many students attended your school district during the 2016-2017 school year?

Q7 Is your school located in a rural, suburban, or urban community?

Rural (1)

Suburban (2)

Urban (3)

Q8 According to your school district's 2016-2017 student enrollment, which word best describes the change in your school district's enrollment from the 2015-2016 school year?

Increased (1)

Stayed the Same (2)

Decreased (3)

Q9 Indicate your salary for the 2016-2017 school year. \$_____

Q10 In relationship to the compensation of superintendents from schools of comparable student count, which best describes your compensation?

Above Average (1)

Average (2)

Below Average (3)

Q11 If one responsibility could be removed from your professional plate to keep you in your current position longer, what would that be?

Q12 What are the important factors you might consider when deciding whether or not to leave your current school district? Mark all that apply.

- Diminishing Resources (1)
- Career Advancement (2)
- Poor Board Relations (3)
- Loss of Support within the Community (4)
- Leave Education Entirely (5)
- State Politics (6)
- Federal Politics (7)
- Declining Student Enrollment (8)
- Family Stress (9)
- School District Location (10)
- School District Size (11)
- Current Facilities (12)
- Other (13) _____

Q13 How many more years do you plan to remain in your current school district as superintendent?

Q14 At work, how often do you feel positive?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q15 At work, how often do you feel sad?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q16 At work, how often do you feel anxious?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q17 At work, how often do you feel angry?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q18 At work, how often do you feel contented (satisfied)?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q19 To what extent is your work purposeful and meaningful?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q20 At work, how often do you become absorbed in what you are doing?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q21 How often are you able to handle your work-related responsibilities?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q22 At work, how often do you lose track of time while doing something you enjoy?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q23 How satisfied are you with your professional relationships?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Completely (5)

Q24 To what extent do you receive help and support from coworkers when you need it?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Completely (5)

Q25 How lonely do you feel at work?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Completely (5)

Q26 To what extent do you generally feel that you have a sense of direction in your work?

- Not At All (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Completely (5)

Q27 In general, to what extent do you feel that what you do at work is valuable and worthwhile?

- Not At All (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Completely (5)

Q28 To what extent do you feel excited and interested in your work?

- Not At All (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Completely (5)

Q29 How often do you feel you are making progress towards accomplishing your work-related goals?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q30 How often do you achieve the important work goals you have set for yourself?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q31 In general, how would you say your health is?

- Terrible (1)
- Poor (2)
- Average (3)
- Good (4)
- Excellent (5)

Q32 How satisfied are you with your current physical health?

- Not at all (1)
- Slightly (2)
- Moderately (3)
- Very (4)
- Extremely (5)

Q33 Compared to others of your same age and sex, how is your health?

- Terrible (1)
- Poor (2)
- Average (3)
- Good (4)
- Excellent (5)

Q34 Taking all things together, how happy are you with your work?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- Always (5)

Q35 I am extremely glad I chose my current school district over others I was considering at the time I accepted the job

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Undecided (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

Q36 Overall, for me, this is the best of all possible school districts for which to work.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Undecided (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

APPENDIX B

Dear [name],

As the current North Polk High School principal and Drake doctoral student, I am conducting a study on the job satisfaction of superintendents in Iowa. You are invited to participate in this study as an individual who has knowledge and background in the desired field. This research is being conducted as a quantitative research study with intent of publication.

Participating in this study will require approximately 10 minutes of your time. The survey consists of 13 demographic information questions and 23 questions based on measuring positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement (PERMA Model). Participation will take place in the privacy of your office.

If interested, you will receive a copy of this study's findings by contacting the researcher. You may find the learning experience enjoyable and the information may be helpful to you in understanding job satisfaction in Iowa superintendents.

Any information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be stored in the researcher's password protected computer and will only be seen by the researcher during the study. All personally identifiable information will be removed from the study narrative and aliases will be used to protect your privacy.

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. You may call the researcher at any time, office phone, (515) 984-3400, or my dissertation chair, Dr. Catherine Gillespie, at (515) 271-4602.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researcher or Drake University, or in any way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By completing and submitting your survey responses, you have given your consent to participate in this research. You should keep this page for your records.

Your answers will be kept in strict confidence. I would appreciate you completing the survey within two weeks. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Survey link:

Sincerely,

Derrick Joel

3107 NW 22nd Street

Ankeny, IA 50023

Office: (515-984-3400

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: JOB SATISFACTION LEVELS AMONG IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOL
SUPERINTENDENTS

Investigators: Derrick Joel

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the importance of superintendent job satisfaction connected to length of time as a superintendent. The correlation research is designed to determine which factors increase superintendent job satisfaction and influence a superintendent to stay. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are currently an acting superintendent in the state of Iowa

Procedures

This quantitative study will measure public school superintendent job satisfaction in the state of Iowa. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey that consists of 13 demographic information questions and 24 questions based on measuring positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement. Participation will take place online, at the time and place of your choosing.

This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

Risks

I know you are very busy and I know that you receive many requests to fill out surveys. I am sure that you find these many requests annoying and a burden on your time. Other than the 10-15 time commitment and understandable annoyance, there are no undue foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study. If you are negatively impacted at any time during or after this study, please contact Derrick Joel derrick.joel@drake.edu or 308-379-6429 and Drake IRB at irb@drake.edu or 515-271-3472.

Benefits

If you decide to participate in this study there will not be a direct benefit to you, but there may be an indirect benefit. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by increasing knowledge around Iowa superintendent job satisfaction for professional organizations, potential superintendent candidates, acting superintendents, and members of school boards.

Participant Rights

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Confidentiality

Any information obtained in connection with this research study that can be identified with you will be disclosed only with your permission; your results will be kept confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only group data will be presented. However, federal government regulatory agencies auditing departments of Drake University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: Any information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be stored in the researcher's password protected computer and will only be seen by the researcher and his doctoral supervisor during the study. All personally identifiable information will be removed from the study narrative and aliases will be used to protect your privacy.

Contacts and Questions

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Derrick Joel derrick.joel@drake.edu or 308-379-6429 or Dr. Catherine Gillespie Catherine.gillespie@drake.edu or 515-271-4602.
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 271-3472, irb@drake.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records

Statement of Consent:

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You may keep a copy of this form for your records. Even after signing this form, please know that you may withdraw from the study at any time.

I consent to participate in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) _____