

Public Abstract

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Title:IMPLICATIONS OF STRESS AND COPING MECHANISMS IN THE SUPERINTENDENCY

The purpose of this mixed method design study was to add to the body of knowledge about stress and coping mechanisms by examining perceptions of superintendents stress by comparing perceptions of frequency of stress and what, if any, coping mechanisms were engaged. Moreover, the study sought to identify any significant differences between the frequency of stressors by gender and coping mechanisms utilized by female and male leaders. This study focused on qualities of coping mechanisms and their effectiveness and what type of support was provided by the school district. Study findings revealed that there is a statistical difference between the types of coping mechanisms utilized and effectiveness between male and female superintendents. Qualitative findings established the school district personnel provided no known support to superintendents in developing stress management skills and coping strategies. Other themes that arose from the study included; barriers in the perception of stress as it relates to gender, inconsistencies in the leaders ability to take time off, while superintendents agreed the school board is the predominant influencing factor, and the need for professional development programs.