REFLECTIVE INSIGHTS FROM TODAY’S FIRE SERVICE LEADERS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY TO INFORM THE NEXT GENERATION’S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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This thesis is dedicated to the past, current, and future leaders in the fire service.
Abstract
The success of any organization is dependent, in part, on the quality of its leaders. The fire
department is no exception. In fact, one could argue that effective leadership in the fire
department has become more critical than ever in today’s world. This critical need for an
effective fire department dates back to the unprecedented terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001
(9/11; Barg, 2009). On that infamous day, the New York City Fire Department (NYFD) was on
the front lines, and over 300 firefighters died. Since then, other terrorist attacks have shattered
our quotidian lives: the anthrax threats that occurred shortly after 9/11 in the alter part of 2001,
and more recently, the Boston Marathon bombing in April 15, 2013; the Paris terrorist attacks on
November 14, 2015; followed close behind by the San Bernardino, CA, shootings on December
2, 2015. We now live in a world where the terrorist organizations of the Islamic State of Iraq and
the Levant (ISIS), Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab, and Boko Haram, to name a few, dominate our
headlines. Our troubled world has made critical the need for fire departments and emergency
responders that are ready to respond at every moment of the day or night. And yet, the only way
to ensure that the cadre of firefighters is maximally effective is via strong leadership.

To that end, evaluations on the performance of fire departments have been conducted to
ascertain how well fire departments have responded to these emergencies—specifically, what
steps were taken and by whom. Clearly, when firefighters are called upon, an error in judgment
or poor direction may lead to irretrievable damage to property, and far worse, the loss of human
life. In response to the increase in these violent attacks and catastrophic events, strong
leadership development programs in the fire service must continue to evolve.

Through interviews with past and current leaders in the fire department, this researcher
was able to identify leadership development characteristics specific to fire service leaders. This
narrative inquiry was supported by Agyris’ Learning Theory with secondary support through
Schon’s reflective practice theory (Schon, 1989), Kolb’s experiential learning cycle (Denton, 2011), and Yukl leadership development (2013) which focus was on the collective aspect of leadership roles, and he defined leadership development as “expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes” (Day, 2000, p. 582). Argyris (1993) identified five principles of effective leadership development, while Yukl (2013) emphasized the characteristics of effective leadership, both with respect to the leader, the individuals who report to the leader, and the situation itself. Yukl further contended that effective leadership must include formal training, developmental activities, and self-help.

The researcher interviewed 12 fire department leaders, active or recently retired, from four regions in the United States: northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest. Five common themes and strategies emerged, which included the qualities of good leadership, ways to improve leadership roles, and what most impacts these roles. These five themes are (a) principles for leadership development competencies, (b) creation of mentor relationships, (c) forms of leadership training, (d) exhibited leadership styles, and (e) evidence of the role of family. All five themes reinforced Argyris’s five principles of leadership development and Yukl’s competencies of leadership development. This study contributes to the fire service leadership development literature and will inform the next generation’s leaders.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Statement</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of Research</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Research Plan</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions/Delimiters/Limitations</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Assumptions</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Delimitations</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Limitations</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Summary</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Terms and Definitions</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Overview</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Development</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Development and Learning</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Development</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Learning</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship-Shaping Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyris’s Learning Theories</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyris’s Five Principles of Leadership Development</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schon’s Reflective Practice Theory</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Leadership</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Complete Transcripts Regarding Leadership Development ......................... 201
Appendix H: Complete Transcripts Regarding Leadership Styles...................................... 206
Appendix I: Complete Transcript Related to Role of the Family ........................................ 209
List of Figures

Figure 4.1 Rank Characteristics of the Participants .................................................................103
Figure 4.2 Participants by Years of Service ...........................................................................104
Figure 4.3 Participants’ Ages Group ......................................................................................105
Figure 4.4 Types of Fire Departments ....................................................................................106
Figure 4.5 Paramedic Certification .........................................................................................107
Figure 4.6 Education Levels of Participants ..........................................................................108
Figure 4.7 Population of Communities Served by Participants ..............................................109
Figure 4.8 Participants’ Departments Complement Size .........................................................110
Figure 4.9 Geographic Regions of Fire Departments ...............................................................111
Figure 4.10 Leadership Development Themes .......................................................................114
Figure 4.11 Principle of Leadership Development Competencies and Theoretical Application 133
Figure 4.12 Creation of Mentor Relationship and Theory Application ..................................134
Figure 4.13 Forms of Leadership Training and Theoretical Application .............................135
Figure 4.14 Exhibited Leadership Style and Theoretical Application ....................................136
Figure 4.15 Evidence of the Role of Family and Theoretical Application ............................137
List of Tables

Table 2.1 Model I: Single-Loop Model of Learning ................................................................. 39
Table 2.2 Model II: Double-Loop Model of Learning .............................................................. 40
Table 3.1 Alignment of Interview Questions and Research Question Categories................. 78
Table 3.2 Parallel Between Interview Questions and Conceptual Framework ...................... 81
Table 3.3 Participant Selection Criteria .................................................................................. 87
Table 3.4 Steps for Recruitment ............................................................................................. 88
Table 4.1 Characteristics of Participants ................................................................................ 98
Table 4.2 Interview Questions and Memorable Moments in Interviews ................................. 113
Table 4.3 Leadership Development Emerging Themes and Categories ............................... 115
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The success of any organization is dependent, in part, on the quality of its leaders. The fire department is no exception. In fact, one could argue that effective leadership in the fire department is more critical than ever in today’s world—beginning with the unprecedented terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (9/11; Barg, 2009). On that infamous day, the New York City Fire Department (NYFD) was on the front lines. Since then, other terrorist attacks have shattered our quotidian lives: the anthrax threats that occurred shortly after 9/11 in the latter part of 2001, and more recently, the Boston Marathon bombing in April 15, 2013, and the San Bernardino, CA, shootings on December 2, 2015. Moreover, social media allow for an almost instantaneous ability to send messages across the globe, and technology allows for access to information at one’s finger tips, including instructions for creating destructive devices. In short, we now live in a world where the terrorist organizations of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab, and Boko Haram, to name a few, dominate our headlines.

Another disturbing statistic is that the U.S. death rate associated with fires is one of the highest per capita in the world. In 2007, there were 1,557,500 fires reported in the United States, resulting in 3,430 civilian deaths, 17,675 civilian injuries, and $14.6 billion in property damage (Andrews & Brewer, 2010). Clearly, when firefighters are called upon, an error in judgment or poor direction may lead to irretrievable damage to property, and far worse, the loss of human life. Be it from the perspective of external threat or internal mishap, these emergencies underscore the need for competent leaders, as the only way to ensure that the cadre of firefighters is maximally effective is via strong leadership.
Fire departments and emergency responders must always be ready to respond at every moment of the day or night. And with respect to terrorist attacks, early detection is essential for ensuring a prompt response (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). The complexities of the 21st century continue to add to the challenges that have always been associated with first responders. An individual who wishes to become a leader in disaster management must be aware of the unique challenges that are part of this demanding occupation. The leaders in these organizations must understand issues of disaster management as well as be able to perform the essential tasks of their everyday operations (Viscuso, 2013).

In addition, these leaders must ensure consistency in protocol, as well as appropriate and strategic responses to emergencies that may require innovative performance (Yukl, 2013). The challenges of effective leadership in the fire service and among other first responders escalate during times of change and when highly visible problems present. In addition to professional development activities, formal and informal training exercises, and the opportunities to review past practices, leadership practices are also constantly evolving, through lessons learned while on duty—from failures and successes alike (Viscuso, 2013). Although there are various techniques that demonstrate methods for dealing with emergency situations, experience in handling these challenges is essential for leadership development.

Evaluations on the performance of fire departments have long been in place to ascertain how well fire departments have responded to emergencies—specifically, what steps were taken, by whom, and to what effect (Tracy, 2004). In addition, fire service leaders must document and explain their performance. Not surprising, much of their insight comes from their own experience and effective management practices that they have honed over the course of their careers.
Through their expertise and acquired knowledge, today’s experienced fire service leaders will play a crucial role in the development of future leaders. However, in grooming leaders of the future, one must bear in mind that these new leaders will be drawn from Generation Y (specifically, those born in the 1980s and early 1990s, also known as the Millenial generation), and this generation is characterized as being technologically savvy but also being increasingly isolation and lacking in empathy (Black, 2010). Thus, to meet the needs of this new generation of leaders, old techniques need to be reviewed to determine whether they should be preserved, refined, or possibly eliminated, while new techniques need to be explored within the context of emergency service leadership roles (Yukl, 2013). For their part, the next generation of leaders must develop their leadership skills to assume their roles competently and effectively (Black, 2010; Yukl, 2013).

Current leaders understand the importance of leadership training and development. These leaders also recognize that leadership development is always evolving, the requirements ever-changing, as the organization continues to evolve and change (Tracy, 2004). In response to the increase in the violent attacks and catastrophic events, emergency services leaders, both inside and outside of fire departments, are putting into place new policies and procedures that will allow them to respond as quickly and effectively as possible to emergency situations that occur, whether caused by nature or malevolent acts. Over time, these fire service leaders identify the benefits and limitations of different methods of leadership training and development and recognize organizational conditions that encourage and facilitate the development of next generation’s leaders.
For decades, scholars have studied leadership development as a means of promoting organizational success (Yukl, 2013). This current research study was guided through a number of theoretical frameworks; most notably, Argyris’s double-loop learning theory and his five principles of leadership development (Argyris, 1993). In addition, Schon’s reflective practice theory (1989) and Kolb’s experiential learning cycle theory (2001) were used to guide the research and the data analysis. (Wieringa, 2011)

This researcher interviewed 12 current or recently retired leaders in the fire service about what they had learned from their experience, both with respect to successes and failures. Learning what works and what does not work is essential to increasing our understanding of leadership in these important fields, as well as identifying strategies for optimally responding to emergency situations. This researcher’s hope is that this information will contribute to the preparation and leadership development of future emergency services leaders.

**Statement of the Problem**

The 9/11 attacks brought a new appreciation for first responders and the critical role they play before, during, and after emergency situations. Moreover, as Barg (2009) also noted, the increased threat of attacks since 9/11—and more recently, the Ebola virus scare, the ISIS threat, the Boston Marathon bombing, and the terrorist attack in San Bernadino, California—have increased public demand for preparedness.

There has always been a need for strong leadership in the emergency services. Fire service leaders must make critical life-and-death decisions (Gasaway, 2007). These leaders need to be able to effectively and efficiently lead their departments to ensure optimal performance and readiness to respond to any emergency that may arise—be it a house fire, a plane crash, or a larger-scale emergency; an accident, an act of violence, or natural phenomenon. Thus, they must be willing to constantly evaluate how best to lead the department in the face of a constantly
changing world. Further, they must be able to facilitate collaboration among other agencies and entities that are also at the scene, as well as interact with the people they are helping (Barg, 2009).

Experiences that are stressful and emotionally demanding are inherent in the field of emergency services (Scott & Myers, 2005). Yet the difficult circumstances that surround these experiences must be analyzed and explored to identify the most effective ways to deal with them. In short, leadership practices among emergency workers must be well understood in order to ensure optimal preparation and leadership development of future emergency services leaders.

Fire service leadership demands critical leadership skills. Leaders in the fire service are present both at the fires and emergencies themselves and at training exercises (Sargent, 2006). Preparation for handling life-threatening situations takes forethought, planning skills, preparations, realistic training, and a commitment to respond (Pandola, 2015). A fire service leader must have an understanding of the organization’s structure, the staff of firefighters. These leaders must be willing to be innovative in all areas of fire service operations and be willing to implement new processes, programs, and policies to support future leaders.

Yet, research and theoretical application in fire service leadership development is limited. In the past, military models of leadership were applied to the fire service. Both fields face the challenges of needing to respond quickly to emergency situations (Pandola, 2015). However, there is no simple leadership model that fits the fire service. Clearly, more research is indicated to better understand the optimal leadership model for fire service leaders. This researcher hopes that this study will begin to address this need.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this doctoral thesis is to uncover the ways experienced fire service leaders learned to develop key leadership competencies. This study explored the leadership
development experiences of 12 fire service leaders stationed around the United States in order to understand how they learned to become competent leaders, and to identify their perceptions of the key competencies future leaders need to learn.

It will explore what current leaders’ believe are the attributes to ensure successful leadership in the fire service and their views on leadership development today—both what works and what doesn’t in order to inform the next generation of leadership development training. Twelve current and recently retired fire service leaders were interviewed about their experience and how these experiences defined each of them as a leader. The interviews were also aimed at discovering the traits, education, training, and on-the-job experiences that have played a crucial role in their leadership development. The knowledge and insights gained from today’s experienced leaders will help to prepare the next generation’s leaders to assume their roles competently and efficiently (Tracy, 2004). More broadly, this study adds to the research on leadership development, adult learning, and qualities of successful leaders in the fire service.

Research Questions

One overarching research questions guided the interviews and goal of this study:

RQ1: How do experienced fire service leaders learn to develop key leadership competencies?

RQ2: What are the developmental experiences identified by experienced fire service leaders that future fire service leaders need to learn to acquire key leadership competencies?

To that end, the researcher focused on collecting data in four areas: (a) leadership development, (b) adult development and the learning process, (c) insight into the fire service, and (d) the next generation of leaders.
Significance of Research

This doctoral thesis provides a comprehensive understanding of the leadership development process that will inform and guide future fire service leaders. This information was acquired from the narratives of current or recently retired fire service leaders who reflected on their leadership development journeys: what they faced, how they responded, what they learned, and how their experiences molded them into their leadership position. The current and recently retired leaders’ narratives were centered on important past experiences, on-the-job training, the roles played by mentors and family, professional development opportunities, their leadership styles, and their training and educational experiences. These reflections provide the basis for informing leadership development for the future leaders. To that end, this study provides valuable leadership development information in ways to best identify, educate, train, and support future leaders in the field of the fire services.

As asserted by Argyris, Schon, and Kolb, among other theorists on learning and leadership development, leaders learn through their experiences and their reflections on their experiences. There can be no other field in which effective leadership is more critical than the fire service and other emergency services. These leaders must be quick to learn from their mistakes, sure in their leadership commands, and over a long career, their experience and knowledge becomes invaluable as a primer for leadership development. Through these interviews, 12 participants reflected on their long careers as fire service leaders, and their stories and narratives bring to light their deep-seeded knowledge about their job and the many responsibilities it requires, as well as how they have been able to be effective in their roles.

Five themes or strategies were identified in their stories to guide future leadership development in this field. In addition, this researcher investigated the unique character traits of tomorrow’s leaders, Generation Y, which will further inform leadership development to ensure
the next generation of leaders will be prepared to lead, based on the shared wisdom and knowledge of their predecessors and the unique qualities of their generation.

**Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework is imperative to research, whether qualitative or quantitative (Creswell, 2012), as it provides a context for the study and explains its focus (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The goal of this doctoral thesis was to inform the leadership development of the next generation of fire service leaders to prepare them to assume their roles competently and efficiently. This goal was accomplished through interviews with fire service leaders who were asked to reflect upon their experiences, as these experiences informed their decision making, both within the context of day-to-day operations and in responding to emergency situations. Moreover, this study of fire service leaders provides reflection on organizational experience generally, and their reflection on their professional practices and how to improve those practices will inform future leaders.

The underlying hypothesis of this dissertation is that reflection upon one’s actions provides insight that will both inform future changes that need to be made within the fire department, as well as bring clarity to what works and what doesn’t work in leading a complement of firefighters. Thus, the conceptual framework guiding this doctoral thesis consisted of learning theories that incorporated the element of reflection as an essential tool for leadership. These theories include Argyris’s double-loop theory, Schon’s reflective practice theory, and Kolb’s experiential learning cycle. In addition, Argyris’s five principles of leadership development informed the attributes of what future leaders need to possess in order to become effective fire service leaders.

Argyris’s learning theory explores the learning process that links directly to leadership development and principles. Argyris identified two learning models: single-loop and double-
loop. In single-loop theory, the leader endeavors to take action to correct a problem. Double-loop theory adds a reflective additional dimension to single-loop theory: The leader reflects upon the problem in an attempt to identify the underlying causes of the problem, which will then inform his or her actions to correct the problem. Thus, this theory is best applied to solving complex problems. Paul (2003) contended that the double-loop learning model is best suited for exploring the leadership practices of fire department leaders because of the added component of reflection upon their actions and intended outcomes. With respect to emergency services, solutions to these complex problems may reduce or prevent future injury to people and property.

Moreover, double-loop theory is well suited for the challenges of producing effective leadership, which include learning from less-than-optimal responses to emergencies, implementing constructive change, and ensuring employee commitment with issues and situations that are nonroutine or even threatening (e.g., terrorist attack). In short, the double-loop theory is the most appropriate theory to utilize when considering leadership development within the fire service.

A second theoretical model used in this research was Schon’s reflective practice theory. Schon identified three distinct types of reflection: knowing in action, reflection in action, and reflective conservation with the situation. Notably, Schon and Argyris co-authored a number of journal articles that supported the research. Like Argyris, Schon also recognized that much of practitioners’ knowledge was acquired through experience. Schon’s work is rooted in the work of a number of theorists, including Locke, Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget, who all integrated reflection and theory of practice (Imel, 1992). Wieringa (2011) submitted that the best way to solve real-world problems, along with the application of knowledge to those problems and processes, was through the application of Schon’s reflective practice theory.
The third theorist who provides a conceptual framework for this study is Kolb (2007). Kolb’s experiential learning cycle theory maintained that every experience is a learning process. Kolb asserted that learning takes place in a four-stage cyclical process: concrete experiences, reflective observations with stimulates, abstract conceptualization that reveals the ideas, and active experimentation. The foundation of Kolb’s work is also based on Dewey’s work (Denton, 2011).

Finally, also incorporated into this conceptual framework is Argyris’s five principles of leadership development: (a) Learning should be based on the use of real-life problems, (b) implementation or action should be directly connected to the participant’s competency and skill level, (c) problems must have participants taking action, (d) problem solving requires innovative thinking, and (e) a leader’s actions should be used to solve future problems (1999).

These theories are presented in greater detail in the first section of Chapter 2 on leadership development. All three theories and Argyris’s five principles inform the interpretation of the interviews: how fire service leaders reflected on their experiences and how their reflection informed their future practices: the choices they made and how they chose to run their respective fire stations. In addition, these theories, and particularly Argyris’s five principles of leadership development, informed the attributes of what future leaders need to possess in order to be effective as fire service leaders.

**Overview of Research Plan**

The goal of this doctoral thesis was to inform the leadership development of the next generation of fire service leaders to prepare them to assume their roles competently and efficiently. This goal was accomplished through interviews with fire service leaders. The researcher conducted open-ended interviews with 12 fire service leaders, asking them to reflect on their experiences: what lessons were learned and how their experiences informed their
leadership and leadership development. In addition, the researcher asked them to identify the character traits or qualities necessary to become a successful leader in emergency services.

The method for conducting this research was qualitative using a narrative research design. As noted by Creswell (2012), “Qualitative research is best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables” (p. 16), and further exploration is needed in order to identify the primary variables for the subject under investigation. In the current study, the specific variables that would best inform future fire service leaders were unknown; specifically, how leaders make decisions and what are those decisions are based on.

Qualitative research is designed to enhance our understanding of human behavior and what contributes to that behavior (Creswell, 2013). This type of research method is employed in many academic settings. Qualitative research can be likened to a “big tent” that covers an area of inquiry, and within this tent, explanatory or positivistic approaches are utilized for gaining a better understanding of the social world (Adams & White, 1994).

One reason this researcher chose to conduct a qualitative study is that of the literature on leadership development that exists, it is not often qualitative in nature or based on the experience of seasoned veterans in the field (Yukl, 2010). The qualitative approach is often achieved through conducting open-ended or semi-structured interviews. The transcripts from these interviews indicate the participants’ generalized knowledge and their understanding of their own experiences (Orosz, 1997).

The decision to use a narrative research design provided the second overarching design choice for this study. The narrative approach is embedded in the philosophy of John Dewey (Creswell, 2012). John Dewey believed that an individual’s experiences were central to understanding that person (Creswell, 2012). Dewey held that one experience flows into the next
experience, stating, “Narrative researchers focus on understanding individuals’ history or past experiences and how it contributes to present and future experiences” (as cited in Creswell, 2012, p. 508). Over the past decade, narrative research has become one of the most important resources for retrieving both professional and personal knowledge (Caduri, 2013).

Narrative research is qualitative in nature, and allows researchers to focus on the experiences of one or more individuals and to explore those experiences (Creswell, 2012). As such, this type of research permits the researcher to collect stories on the lives of individuals by allowing them to tell stories about their individual lives, and the researcher then writes about their stories in a narrative format (Creswell, 2012).

In this instance, fire service leaders reflected on their lives and careers—the obstacles and challenges they had faced—to provide insight into their leadership roles. In the interviews, these leaders shared their personal reflections about their experiences as fire service leaders—what worked and what didn’t, where they were successful and where they learned from mistakes made—based on their years of leadership development. The fire service leaders also reflected upon why specific actions were explored and what impact they had on the organization. These explorations allow fire service leaders to learn from their experiences, which will then help them to identify better ways to respond to similar situations in the future. These interview provided additional insight into the future development of leaders in the field of emergency management.

Research Design

This researcher recruited 12 seasoned fire service leaders from four general regions within the US: northwest, northeast, southwest, southeast. Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted in a variety of public places with current and recently retired fire service leaders. Using an in-depth and semi-structured interview format, the participants were asked to reflect on
their professional experience and share their leadership development stories. The researcher prompted the dialogue with 13 semi-structured and open-ended questions. The researcher also gathered demographic information on the interviewee to provide a personal, historical, and cultural context. In addition, the researcher took an active role in the framework of the story to ensure that each interviewee played an active role (Creswell, 2012).

Each of the interviews was recorded with a digital recorder and professionally transcribed by the agency Rev.com. The researcher also kept a research journal to make notes during and after the interview. The electronic copies of the interviews as well as the complete transcripts and the research journal were all stored in secure locations that were password-protected and/or locked in cabinets. After the transcripts had been completed, the researcher contacted each participant to review the transcript of the interview with them in the event that there were any disparities that needed to be clarified.

An analysis of the transcripts was then conducted incorporating the notes and reflective journal entries. Both deductive and inductive approaches were used in the analysis process. NVIVO 10 for Windows computer software (2014) was used to inductively analyze the narratives. The researcher was able to code relevant sentences and terms in order to identify and define categories. Finally, the narrative methods created a link between the program evaluation findings and program development needs, as described by McClintock (2003). These links emerged when systematic data were collected in the interview process.

Assumptions/Delimiters/Limitations

Research is a personal journey embarked upon by the researcher(s) (Creswell, 2012). All research involves both challenges that must be confronted and obstacles that must be overcome, although the initial reaction may be to attempt to avoid them. Especially when conducting a qualitative study, all research subjects must be treated with respect and compassion. Even when
one may personally disagree with their opinions, the researcher must always thrive to understand their perspectives.

**Research Assumptions**

The following two assumptions were made with respect to this study:

1. An understanding of current leaders’ experiences—and the knowledge and wisdom acquired from these experiences—will provide insight for leadership development and help prepare future leaders.

2. The leader participants interviewed for this study will be open and honest about their experiences.

**Research Delimitations**

The researcher identified three research delimitations:

1. This study was conducted within the United States; therefore, it is not generalizable to other countries or regions in the world.

2. A narrative approach was used to collect the data.

3. The participants interviewed were currently employed or recently retired, and they were recruited from career or combination fire departments; no participants were recruited from volunteer fire departments.

**Research Limitations**

Two important research limitations should be noted:

1. Although the focus of the study was on emergency services personnel, participants were recruited only from fire departments.

2. Research bias may exist for the following reasons:
a. This researcher has worked for years with many individuals in the field of emergency services.

b. The researcher’s son is a career firefighter, and the researcher’s husband is a volunteer firefighter.

c. The researcher is the Dean of the Center of Social Sciences & Business Information Sciences, and this center has a Fire Protection Technology Program and oversees programs and coursework in the areas of emergency services.

Chapter 1 Summary

The goal of this doctoral thesis was to inform the leadership development of the next generation of fire service leaders to prepare them to assume their roles competently and efficiently. This goal was accomplished by interviewing 12 emergency services leaders from fire departments throughout the four regions of the US. In these interviews, the participants were asked to reflect on their experiences over the course of their careers: what they had learned from successes and failure, as well as the qualities they believed to be essential for future leaders in the fire service. The researcher employed the leadership theories of Argyris (1999), Schon’s reflective practice theory (Schon, 1989; Wieringa, 2011), Kolb’s experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1974), and Argyris’s five principles of leadership development (Argyris, 1993).

The research questions were:

RQ1: How do experienced fire service leaders learn to develop key leadership competencies?

RQ2: What are the developmental experiences identified by experienced fire service leaders that future fire service leaders need to learn to acquire key leadership competencies?

The themes that emerged from the reflective narratives provided the basis for informing the next generation’s leadership development. The limitations of this study are that it is
qualitative and the data collected were based on 12 interviews of fire service leaders in the US. In addition, this researcher recognizes the possibility of bias as she has family members who are firefighters and is dean of a school that maintains a program in fire protection technology.

This chapter provided an overview of the study, statement of the problem, purpose statement, research question, and significance of the research. The conceptual framework was presented and the research plan explained. Finally, the rationale of methodology and research limitations were noted. The next chapter presents a review of the primary and secondary theoretical perspectives. The areas covered include leadership development and leadership succession; leadership history, scholarship, and styles; fire service history and culture; and characteristics of the next generation of fire service leaders.

Key Terms and Definitions

To clarify the terminology used in this study, the following definitions of key terms are provided below.

Argyris’s learning theory: Argyris identified two learning models: single-loop and double-loop. In single-loop theory, the leader endeavors to take action to correct a problem. Double-loop theory adds a reflective additional dimension to single-loop theory: The leader reflects upon the problem in an attempt to identify the underlying causes of the problem, which will then inform his or her actions to correct the problem (Argyris, 1993).

Argyris’s five principles of learning development theory: Argyris identified five principles of leadership development: (a) Learning should be based on the use of real-life problems, (b) implementation or action should be directly connected to the participant’s competency and skill level, (c) problems must have participants taking action, (d) problem solving requires innovative thinking, and (e) a leader’s actions should be used to solve future problems (1993).
Career fire departments: The complement of firefighters of these fire departments are paid (vs. volunteer; National Fire Protection Association [NFPA], 2011).

Combination fire department: The complement of firefighters at these fire departments is a combination of paid firefighters and volunteer firefighters (NFPA, 2015a).

Complement: Complement refers to the usual number or quantity that completes or fills. With respect of fire departments, complement refers to the number of firefighters needed for a fully functioning fire station (NFPD, 2015a).

Emergency management: Emergency management encompasses the organized analysis, planning, decision making, and assignment of available resources to mitigate (lessen the effect of or prevent), prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of all hazards (Federal Emergency Management Association [FEMA], 2010).

Emergency services: Emergency services include all emergency offices within U.S. jurisdiction. They include police, fire, and ambulance (FEMA, 2010).

Fire agencies: Fire agencies include all career and combination fire departments (New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency & Competitiveness, n.d).

Kolb’s experiential learning cycle theory: Kolb’s experiential learning cycle theory states that every experience is a learning process. Kolb asserted that learning takes place in a four-stage cyclical process: concrete experiences, reflective observations with stimulates, abstract conceptualization that reveals the ideas, and active experimentation (Denton, 2011).

Narrative research: Narrative research is conducted via stories or interviews that are solicited and analyzed by the researcher (Creswell, 2012).

Schon’s reflective practice theory: Schon’s reflective practice theory postulates that real-world problems are solved through the practitioner’s know-how; that is, knowledge and the
ability to solve problems are gained through experience and reflection on one’s experiences (Schon, 1989).

**Semi-structured interviews:** This interview technique includes both predetermined and spontaneous interview questions (Creswell, 2012).

**Volunteer fire department:** The complement of firefighters of these fire departments are not paid (NFPA, 2012).
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter Overview

The purpose of a literature review is to introduce all prior theoretical research on a topic of study, and as articulated by Machi and McEvoy (2012, p. 3), “A literature review is a written argument that promotes a thesis position by building a case from credible evidence based on previous research.” With this in mind, this current literature review provides an overview of the literature to support the research questions of this study:

RQ1: How do experienced fire service leaders learn to develop key leadership competencies?

RQ2: What are the developmental experiences identified by experienced fire service leaders that future fire service leaders need to learn to acquire key leadership competencies?

This literature review explores four areas relevant to this research project on service leadership that will guide future leaders. These areas are: (a) leadership development and adult learning; (b) scholarship-shaping conceptual framework (c) leadership history, succession, and leadership styles; (d) emergency services: history, fire service operations and leaders, and (d) future leaders.

The first section on leadership development begins by first providing a background on adult development and learning as a precursor to a discussion on leadership development. The second section provides an in-depth discussion of the scholarship-shaping conceptual framework, namely, theory and practice with respect to leadership and learning. This section will begin with a discussion of the theoretical framework of Argyris’s learning theory (1993), Argyris’s five principles of learning experiences (1993) and Schon’s reflective practice theory (1989). Both Argyris and Schon have worked closely developing and exploring learning, and it
is therefore appropriate to draw insight from both of them. Kolb’s experiential learning cycle (1984) is presented next as it further supplements Argyris’s and Schon’s learning theories.

The third section is focused on leadership, including history, succession, and theoretical leadership styles. There are three primary styles that have been used by fire service leaders: follower-centered (Kelley, 1982, 1992), transformational (Burns, 1918, as cited in Washington, 2007), and servant (Greenleaf, 1977). The fourth section presents a brief overview of the history and culture of emergency services and the fire service. The fourth section concludes with a discussion on the characteristics of Generation Y—those born in the 1980s and early 1990s (also known as the Millenial generation), and how the unique characteristics of this generation will influence their leadership styles. These unique characteristics must be considered when formulating the best ways to bring this generation into leadership roles.

This literature review provides a necessary backdrop for the analysis of the interviews conducted in this study. The 12 fire service leaders were asked to reflect upon their careers, including the training they had received, their education, professional development opportunities they had been provided, and then finally, to reflect upon the traits they considered to be essential for leaders in the fire service. Based on these interviews and the literature, innovative leadership skills and successful leadership development opportunities were recognized and identified.

As stated earlier, this literature was drawn from both educational and professional sources and publications. Both areas are essential for addressing leadership development in this field, as leadership development is a product of both formal educational attainment and on-the-job training and experience. In addition, both professional and educational sources were required to explore the field of fire service. The areas reviewed in the literature included leadership development theories, reflective practices of practitioners in the field, the field of emergency
services with an emphasis on the fire services, and characteristics of Generation Y. This chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

**Leadership Development**

Historically, leadership development did not have a scholarly base until the early 2000s. Traditionally and in most organizations, future leaders have learned and/or have been mentored by their superiors. The fire service is no exception. Effective leadership is essential to the smooth operation of any organization, including the basic functioning of the organization, as well as its ability to cope with change. As such, leaders have both the ability to ensure that an organization excels to its fullest potential as well as the ability to destroy it (Glamuzina, 2015). Not surprisingly, there is a positive relationship between managerial effectiveness and leaders who have been carefully developed, mentored, and groomed (Armstrong, 2011).

Effective leadership development will enhance the new leader’s effectiveness, ensuring that he or she will have the necessary skills to build relationships, coordinate actions, and strengthen social networks (Roberts, 2015). First and foremost, a leader who has been prepared for his or her role will recognize that the people in the organization are the foundation of the organization. To that end, leadership development opportunities made available for qualified staff who express interest. When this leadership development is achieved on a larger scale, the organization’s capacity for learning opportunities and for successfully facing changes will occur over time (Roberts, 2015). In short, Roberts (2015) underlined the importance of the expansion of the organization’s capacity for learning and change.

Leadership development is a long-term investment by the organization, and with respect to future leaders, their training must begin early in their career (Murphy & Johnson, 2011). Moreover, leadership development is a large and economically important industry in the United
States. It is estimated that, on average, U.S. organizations invest between $16 and $45 billion annually on leadership development programs (Yukl, 2013).

Notably, there are two distinct types of leader development: the traditional approach to build an individual’s capabilities, and more recently, an approach that focuses on development of the social structures and their processes within an organization (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). With respect to the more traditional approach, building an individual’s capacity, the focus is on enhancing a person’s capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes, which then facilitates direction-setting (Van Velsor & McCauley, 2004). This approach creates a continuity and an alignment with the organization’s goals, and it also ensures maintaining commitment in the work group.

The second type of leadership development focuses on the social structure, which encompasses team-building and organizational development. This approach to leadership development includes individual self-awareness, building effective work groups, maintaining relationships, thinking and acting strategically creatively, and fostering the ability to initiate and implement change. This approach is used by many organizations today. Both approaches are important and complement one another.

Regardless of style, new leaders must possess the ability to balance conflicts, maintain and build relationships, think strategically, build work groups, and communicate well. In addition, they must have self-management capabilities and self-awareness. All of these skills unfold over time, and experiences, both on the job and in one’s personal life, are needed to support this growth. Notably, much of the evolution of leadership development is seen in a military setting because the military recognizes it as a crucial trait (Day, 2011).
There are two recognized approaches in leadership development. The first approach is *training and education*. Training and education includes management development and formal training or managerial education. This training includes formal education and professional development. The second approach is the relationship between the leaders and the followers, with a focus on developing an authentic relationship. Luthans’ and Avolio’s authentic leadership development model (2003) as cited in Caza in Jackson (2011) demonstrates that leaders “own” their experiences and share them with followers. These shared relationships must be based on both self-awareness and self-regulation of the leader.

Day and Harrison (2007) developed the concept of multilevel leader identity to describe leadership development. This approach incorporates the organizational levels and the levels of personal development. Specifically, it relates to an individual leader moving up the organizational hierarchy, looking at both a collective leader identity and engaging leadership development or greater leadership role responsibilities, which are fostered in the individual (Day, 2011).

Day and Harrison’s concept melded well with this study as this researcher explored the participants’ lifespan, with the added conviction that leadership development is a lifelong journey and occurs naturally in the adult development process. Over the course of a career, leaders build upon their own experiences, including working within unique settings, using various resources, and assessing the effectiveness of the their response and leadership in to challenging and novel situations.

With the increasing rate of change in both the external and internal environments of organizations, as well as the many increasing challenges that are facing leaders today, Yukl (2013) has contended that a higher level of skill and new competencies will be needed to meet
these changes. These competencies can be developed in numerous ways that include formal training, developmental activities, self-help or personal growth, mentoring, executive coaching, and simulations (Yukl, 2013), all of which support the development of an effective, successful, and dynamic leader.

Finally, learning opportunities in multilevel organizations should not be overlooked and underscore the importance of on-the-job training (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000). This is particularly relevant to emergency services, as a leader is often required to act quickly, problem solve under pressure, and be responsive and decisive in novel situations. In the field of emergency service training, it is the ongoing learning process or experiential-based learning that is constantly evolving.

**Adult Development and Learning**

An important component of preparing future leaders in the fire service is adult development and learning. Adult development theories have been constructed from many perspectives, including biological, cognitive, psychological, and sociological (Mahler, 2008). For the purposes of this current research, sociological perspectives are the most relevant; specifically, as they relate to social structure (the fire departments), social interaction (the firefighters and leaders), and the factors (leadership development opportunities) that determine changes in the social structure and the social interaction (Curry et al., 2012). For the purpose of this study, adult learners are defined as adults who participate or engage in activities that generally promote change in thinking, values, or behavior (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Adult learning can be considered self-directed and is often self-initiated.

**Adult Development**

Adult development using a sociological lens is referred to as socialization process (Curry et al., 2012). Throughout one’s lifetime, one learns the skills, knowledge, norms, and values of
the groups in which one is a member, all of which support the development of one’s social identity (Curry et al., 2012). Generally, adult development theories focus on linear stages of adult development and/or life transitions (Mahler, 2008); these stages are childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age, and death and dying (Curry et al., 2012). This study will consider the first three stages as the latter two are not relevant to this subject.

As a child, the first stage of development in the life course, the family is the primary socialization agent. The family guides and assists in the development of moral character, formal learning (pedagogical approaches), and cultural and gender identity. Relevant to this study, how a child is raised in its family of origin may determine whether that individual has leadership qualities, with significant factors often including birth order, family size, and parental influence (Bass, 1999).

**Adult Learning**

Adult learning takes on many forms and ranges from functional skill-building to emancipatory forms of education to support social processes (Mahler, 2008). In the 1970s, Malcolm Knowles introduced the theoretical concept that children and adults learn differently (Knowles et al. 2005). Viewed from the sociological perspective, adulthood generally becomes a time for one’s learning to be put into practice and applied, as well as other expectations, such as developing new relationships, succeeding at various egoistic accomplishments, and succeeding or making advancements in one’s career (Curry et al., 2012).

The culmination of this period must include a unique strategy for adult learning. This may include andragogy, which refers to studying and/or learning everything needed that for one’s current position in life and career (Knowles et al., 2005). Knowles et al. tried to identify how adult learners learn and how to involve them in the learning process. This is different from
pedagogy because it is not based on the concept that the lecturer or teacher possesses all the knowledge; but rather, that the students’ experiences support the learning process.

Andragogy is based on six learning principles.

1. The learner must understand why learning is important; that is, how this material will benefit the student—through the why, what, and how it will relate to the learner.

2. Andragogy addresses the self-concept of the learner: Is the learner confident and comfortable in the learning environment? Is the learner self-directed in the learning process?

3. Andragogy considers the experience of the learner and the role that the learner’s experience plays in the learning process. All learners have experience that has been obtained over their lifetime, and it needs to be applied in the learning process.

4. Students need to be ready to learn. What stage in life are they in, both developmentally and in life experiences?

5. Andragogy considers the learner’s orientation to learning. Is the orientation to learning making the learner feel comfortable with the setting?

6. The final principle of andragogy states that adults can be motivated by both internal and external factors. These factors may occur inside and outside of the job. In the fire service, one motivating factor may be the possibility of a promotion (Knowles et. al 2005).

This approach allows the adult learner to be part of the learning process and to maintain a self-directed approach to their learning. It is important to note that this theory presupposes that the learner wants to learn. Argyris’s learning theories provide the theoretical foundation for this study and will be explored in the next section.

**Scholarship-Shaping Conceptual Framework**

The underlying hypothesis of this dissertation is that reflection upon one’s actions provides insight that will both inform future changes that need to be made within the fire
department, as well as bring clarity to what works and what doesn’t work in leading a complement of firefighters. Thus, the conceptual framework guiding this doctoral thesis consisted of learning theories that incorporated the element of reflection as an essential tool for leadership. These theories include Argyris’s double-loop theory, Schon’s reflective practice theory, and Kolb’s experiential learning cycle. In addition, Argyris’s five principles of leadership development informed the attributes of what future leaders need to possess in order to become effective fire service leaders. These theories are described in detail below.

All three theories and Argyris’s five principles inform the interpretation of the interviews: how fire service leaders reflected on their experiences and how their reflection informed their future practices: the choices they made and how they chose to run their respective fire stations. In addition, these theories, and particularly Argyris’s five principles of leadership development, informed the attributes of what future leaders need to possess in order to be effective as fire service leaders.

Argyris’s Learning Theories

The primary theoretical framework for this study is Argyris’s (1993) learning theory, which is linked to leadership development and principles. This researcher explored the foundation of Argyris’s work in conjunction with Schon’s theories to establish the importance of reflecting on one’s own actions as a means of learning and acquiring knowledge (Argyris, 2000). Argyris addressed the issues that face today’s leaders; namely, that Generation Y, or the Millenium Generation, who will be the leaders of tomorrow, will need to be taught, mentored, and treated differently because of their unique characteristics (most notably influenced by the prevalence and extent of technology and social media), and today’s leaders need to bear this in mind as they also prepare to pass the leadership baton to the next generation.
In Argyris’s (1999) pioneering work, he explored single-loop and double-loop models of learning (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2). Application of these learning theories assists in leadership development and adult learning and commitment to values and better strategies.

The single-loop theoretical framework, illustrated in Table 2.1, is rooted in making inferences about the stakeholders in an organization without clarifying whether or not the assumptions are correct (Argyris, 1990). The leader attempts to have complete control of the organization and attempts to protect him- or herself and others in the organization. The end result is that of defensive behavior to protect members of the organization. Table 2.1 demonstrates the components of the single-loop theory. The single-loop model demonstrates how learning affects human actions.

The double-loop model, illustrated in Table 2.2, bases decisions on data collection, which can support decision making. This double-loop model works well when leadership is shared by members of the organization as it emphasizes common goals by members of the organization (Argyris, 2000).

The goal of the double-loop learning model is to both solve the problem and re-evaluate and reframe the goals. The double-loop learning model informs why we do what we do. It assists practitioners and organizations in making informed decisions (Argyris, 2000). This model further provides the opportunity to explore various experiences that occur in the organization. Argyris’s five principles of leadership development are presented in the next section.
### Table 2.1

**Model I: Single-Loop Model of Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Variables</th>
<th>Action Strategies</th>
<th>Consequences for the Behavioral World</th>
<th>Consequences for Learning</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define goals and objectives and try to accomplish them</td>
<td>Design and manage the environment (be persuasive, appeal to larger organization goals)</td>
<td>Stakeholders seen as defensive, inconsistent, incongruent, competitive</td>
<td>Self-fulfilling</td>
<td>Decreased effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Win, don’t lose</td>
<td>Own and control the task to be accomplished</td>
<td>Stakeholders are defensive interpersonal</td>
<td>Single-loop learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimize the expression of negative feelings</td>
<td>Protect yourself from others</td>
<td>Defensive in actions towards others</td>
<td>Little testing of theories publicly, much testing of theories privately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be rational</td>
<td>Deny stakeholders information</td>
<td>Minimal freedom of choice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2

Model II: Double-Loop Model of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Variables</th>
<th>Action Strategies</th>
<th>Consequences for the Behavioral World</th>
<th>Consequences for Learning</th>
<th>Consequences for Quality of Life</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid data information</td>
<td>Design situations or environments where participants can provide origins</td>
<td>Stakeholders are minimally defensive</td>
<td>Unconfirmed processes</td>
<td>Quality of life for participants will be more positive than negative</td>
<td>Increase effectiveness over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed choice</td>
<td>Collaboration in tasks</td>
<td>Minimally defensive interpersonal relations and group dynamics</td>
<td>Double-loop learning</td>
<td>Effectiveness of problem solving especially for difficult problems or situations</td>
<td>Increase effectiveness over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to the choice and monitoring of its implementation</td>
<td>Protection of self is a joint enterprise and oriented toward growth</td>
<td>Team learning oriented</td>
<td>Organizational testing of theories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Team learning oriented</td>
<td>Organizational testing of theories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Argyris’s Five Principles of Leadership Development

Argyris expanded the field of leadership development, not only with his single- and double-loop theories, but also with his five principles of leadership development (1993). An important component of Argyris’s theory is that in order to be effective leaders, future leaders need to engage in learning. Argyris’s five principles of leadership development are presented below, all of which work well within the emergency services environment.
1. Learning should be based on the use of real-life problems that include a quick response.

2. The effective implementation or action should be directly connected to the participants’ competency and skill level, as well as consideration for the group of colleagues they work with.

3. Problems must have participants taking action or determining how they achieve approval.

4. Problems need to be difficult enough to require innovative thinking for a resolution.

5. The action used as a leader should be used to solve future problems.

Each one of these principles correlates with the practitioner’s own learning experiences. That is, the process of leadership development is learned through practical experience or experiential learning, as well as through formal training, developmental activities, and self-help (Yukl, 2013).

Especially with emergency services, essential skills require leaders to be prepared to act in times of acute crises. Extreme action teams are classic examples of this type of leadership and are an integral part of leadership success (Klein, Ziegert, Knight, & Xiao 2006). Klein et al. studied how extreme action teams are led. Extreme action teams are “teams whose highly skilled members cooperate to perform urgent, unpredictable, interdependent, and highly consequential tasks while simultaneously coping with frequent changes in team composition and training their novice members” (Klein et al., 2006, p. 590). Emergency services, including the fire service, could certainly be defined as extreme action teams. Similar to the above definition of action teams, members of the fire service need to be highly skilled, and their skills are needed at a
minute’s notice. The tasks in the field of emergency services are unpredictable, uncertain, complex, and urgent in nature.

The findings of the study by Klein et al. (2006) suggest that dynamic delegation enhances an extreme action team’s abilities to perform reliably while also ensuring that novice members are able to gain experience to build upon their skills. This mode of leadership stresses the importance of delegation by senior leaders. For example, senior leaders need to be willing to, at times, withdraw from the leadership role and let novice team members step into the leadership role so that they can take charge in unpredictable and extreme situations. Because of the current political climate, emergency management is an increasingly important area of focus. Clearly, developing capable leaders in this field is of utmost import and priority.

Two additional theories, discussed below, further support the theoretical framework of this study: Schon’s reflective practice theory (Schon, 1989) and Kolb’s experiential learning cycle (Denton, 2011). Both theories stress the importance of reflection on one’s actions and previous experiences (e.g., learning from experience), and support Argyris’s theories in action.

**Schon’s Reflective Practice Theory**

Schon’s work (1989) is rooted in traditional theorists such as Locke, Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget, who have all integrated reflection and theory of practice (Imel, 1992). The strong foundation comes from both Locke and Dewey. Locke’s philosophical application of reflection in empirical philosophy can support and interpret how one understands the manner and perceptions of their actions (Kompf & Bond, 1995). Locke’s research can be seen in John Dewey’s work in the early 1900s (Kompf & Bond, 1995). Dewey believed that reflective thinking is a better way to think. He put forth a study that included looking at subjects over time using a serious and consecutive consideration of their role in the work place. It is the
consequences of reflective thought that will affect the outcome of the next event, and the events refer to the predecessor or flow of thought (Kompf & Bond, 1995).

Schon’s (1976) reflective practice recognizes the importance of practitioners’ know-how. It also addresses the question of how to solve real-world problems and the application of knowledge to those problems and processes (Wieringa, 2011). However, these problems or life experiences do not present themselves in well-formed structures, and we must act on them at the time of occurrence (Bauer, 1991). As we reflect, we view the situation in a different construct. Reflective thought can be considered a commonplace process, such as how a fish relates to water (Kompf & Bond, 1995). Reflection is further reinforced through examination of a past practice.

Schon (1976) demonstrates three distinct types of reflection. The three distinct types are knowing in action, reflection in action, and reflective conversation with the situation. These types of reflection provide a complete view of the leader and his or her role in the organization (Schon 1976; Shapiro, 2010).

The first type, knowing in action, refers to Dewey’s assertion that we live in a world in which we must act or react to situations (Bauer, 1991). These actions are imperative and inescapable, but the knowledge is dependent on the practitioner. Thus, the consequence of this action will be permanent, and this action will be defined as informed with or without knowledge (Bauer, 1991).

The second type, reflection in action, is a form of meta-thinking. A practitioner, while working on a project or problem, responds by thinking about or assessing what they are doing as they do it, or by conducting an action experiment on the spot (Balk, 2005). Reflective practitioners believe that the knowledge is available within the situation in which they are involved. Reflection on one’s actions and practices requires the practitioner to be open to
surprise, ambiguity, and puzzlement (Balk, 2005). Reflection on one’s practice is constant and provides for the practitioner to be defined as a student, as they are always learning (Farrell, 2012). Schon states that reflection in action is an extraordinary occurrence, but not rare, and is generally accepted by professional practitioners or the core of practice (Bauer, 1991). Consideration is also given to reflection on action where there is no pressure to take immediate action. Under these circumstances the analysis of the situation can be conducted without the stress of the moment impacting the analysis (Tannebaum, Hall, & Deaton, 2013). The practitioner is not the product of the research. The practitioner looks at the ways of thinking they bring to practice and the practitioner draws on reflective research as an aid to their own reflection in action (Schon, 1989).

The reflective theory supports the review of professional practices and improving and/or utilizing these practices for future leaders’ development. It also addresses the question of how to solve real-world problems and the application of knowledge to those problems and processes (Wieringa, 2011). It links the action of the leaders in emergency services with the reflection of professional practices and improving and/or utilizing these practices in future leaders’ development. Ultimately, it will reflect on practices to develop the ability to articulate the tacit knowledge and reveal and enhance professional leadership skills (Imel, 1992). Recognizing the importance for emergency response agencies to be fully prepared to respond to an emergency, this research additionally examined best practices of leaders who were not under the immediate pressure of commanding during an emergency situation. A notion of an embodied mode of reflection, this approach was appropriate for this research as Schon’s theory brings a reflective process in professional life (Kinsella, 2007). The next section will discuss Kolb’s experiential learning cycle.
Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle

The reflection process includes both the experience and meaning and the importance of their connection (Denton, 2011). Kolb believed that experience is a part of the learning process (Kolb, 1974). This process includes knowledge being created through experiences (Denton, 2011). Kolb extended the research of Dewey and other theorists by stating that learning takes place in a four-stage cyclical process. The stages of this process are (a) concrete experiences, (b) reflective observations with stimulates, (c) abstract conceptualization that reveals the ideas, and (d) active experimentation. All of these parts are integrated and promote learning in a holistic and interactive approach. Kolb also proposed that these stages are ongoing and integrated in the knowing and doing of the participant (Denton, 2011). The next section will discuss leadership, the history of leadership and leadership styles.

Leadership

According to Alan Keith, “Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen” (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 3). Everyone in an organization has the potential to flourish with the right leadership. Leaders have the ability to bring out the best in an organization. Most leadership research shows that there is a direct effect on leaders’ performance and the organization’s performance (Glamuzina, 2015). Many experts in the field of management define leadership as one of the most important factors in organizational success (Yukl, 2013). In the fire service, when one decides to become an officer in a leadership role they need to accept the challenges and conditions (Shoebridge, 2013). There are many parallels in both organizations in general and the fire service. It is the determination of what is needed for the organization’s optimal performance to meet the demands of the population it serves. Shoebridge states that to be a leader in the fire service, one must have a drive and commitment to achieve the vision of the department as well as the skills to make it happen. He
continues to say that leaders must continue to keep up with the changes in the fire service and those they serve (Shoebridge, 2013). Avolio (2007) has concluded that leadership theory and research has reached a level of integration between the followers and leaders. Dynamic interplay exists and if progress in leadership is to be made then further research needs to include both the leader and followers.

**History of Leadership**

The review of leadership history is necessary to provide a foundation for understanding leadership effectiveness. In leadership development, history is also important. History matters when the role of leaders is important, specifically in that of succession planning (Hollenbeck, DeRue & Nahrgang, 2015).

Classical leadership. Leadership development has evolved throughout history. The first accounts of texts on leadership studies date back to the Sun Tzu dynasty (400-320 BC) in China (Grint, 2011). These leadership development tips were generally written to guide military leaders and could later be seen in government systems. Plato and Aristotle (429-322 BC) furthered leadership studies in Greek culture. Plato reviewed the thoughts of recognizing the skills and expertise of a leader. Aristotle is recognized for his book on rhetoric which identifies the importance of public speaking and the ability to persuade others (Grint, 2011).

Renaissance Leadership. In the 1500s, Machiavelli’s *The Prince* was the guiding force of leadership. Leaders need to do what is necessary for the greater good of all (Grint, 2011). The difficulty is in asking who will define the greater good. Generally, leaders were to be feared and at times were ruthless to ensure a thriving society. However, in times of problem-solving, collaboration with experts is necessary for successful leadership (Grint, 2011).
**Modern leadership studies.** Modern leadership studies parallel the rise of industrialization. Leadership was tied to the relationship between production and the control of production. In the 1920s when economic depression descended on this country, the Hawthorne experiments and Taylorist experiments explored working conditions and attempts made at objective measurement of work productivity (Grint, 2011). This all led to the human relations approach to leadership in the 1930-1940s. Work was normative, not rationally organized, during this era (Grint, 2011). By the end of World War II, there was a shift back to rational analyses of the situation, or a hierarchy of needs (Grint, 2011); by the 1960s there was an emphasis on the superhuman traits or charismatic leadership traits. The 1980s moved to the introduction of transformational leadership and a cultural approach to leadership. In the 1990s there was a move towards the scientific approach. This approach demonstrates what happens to a new public management when they take over (Grint, 2011). Public management methods included all levels of management being involved in the leadership process. Most recently in the twenty-first century there exist the theories of distributive, followership and mission command (Grint, 2011).

If previous leadership theories seem flawed, we can still learn from them and apply these revised traits to our current cultural mores (Grint, 2011). These flaws are part of the learning experience, and although the perfect leader may not exist, the previous leadership systems can still assist in the development of future leaders. Thus, the use of leadership theoretical formats will support the leadership development process.

Understanding and conducting research on leadership development includes the use of qualitative research. According to Antonakis et al. (2004), to better understand the context and complexities of leadership, a qualitative approach will be necessary. This study interviewed
current practitioners, leaders in the field, in an attempt to develop effective leadership development practices in the future.

**Leadership Succession**

Organizations need to think about aligning their leadership needs with the organization’s and community’s future needs. Leadership succession planning will aid in aligning those needs. “Succession planning is a process of developing talent to meet the needs of the organization now and in the future” (Rothwell, 2005, p.331). The development of future leaders is critical to all organizations. Succession planning and leadership development is on the agenda of many organizations (Rothwell, 2005). Many organizations understand the importance of succession planning because (1) they are facing the effects of an aging workforce and are at the risk of losing their most experienced leaders, (2) they are concerned about the increase of terrorist threats, and (3) they are concerned about the numerous instances of cost-cutting (downsizing) of organizations (Rothwell, 2005). Thus, the result is to “grow their own talent” in the internal positions that require extensive and unique knowledge (Rothwell, 2005).

The fire service is a structured organization. Future leaders in the fire service are necessary. Fire departments generally promote from within since their work is specialized and a promotion process is embedded in the culture. Therefore, succession planning for future leaders is necessary. Succession planning focuses on leaders at the peak of organizational hierarchies because of the top-down control, which heavily depends on the knowledge and skill of those leaders (Rothwell, 2005). Reports from fire service leaders of an increase in the difficulty of identifying firefighters who are both qualified and have the desire to be tomorrow’s leaders is evident (Langan & Feuquay, 2010). Challenges include funding, staffing levels, generational differences, and expectations from the public (Langan & Feuquay, 2010). These challenges need
to be considered in the succession process. Leadership succession will need to focus its attention on leadership and increase the saliency of the virtues of the former leader to inspire the new leader (Ballinger, Lehman, & Schorman, 2010). Research on best practices in leadership succession are limited. Hollenbeck, DeRue, & Nahrhang (2015) attempted to create a formal theory of leadership succession that addresses both process and content of the organizational dynamics that will occur with the change of leadership. These researchers examined how the past leaders’ practices shape their perceptions and goals for future leaders. Hollenbeck, DeRue, & Nahrhang (2015) concluded that much more conceptual and empirical research is necessary, and they did see the importance of discovering how followers react to leaders who display various leadership styles and flexibility in leading as well as the role of a hierarchical style of decision-making. This research needs to be grounded in the leaders’ past practices to understand the role of leaders when reviewing succession.

Rothwell (2005) detailed characteristics of effective succession programs that contribute to effectiveness in a business model. However, this model can be applied to the fire service. The characteristics that Rothwell (2005) presented should be considered when identifying future fire leaders and when conducting succession planning in the fire service. The following section will review leadership styles that were demonstrated by the participants.

**Leadership Styles**

There are various studies that have addressed the relationship between leadership style and its relationship to organizational commitment, performance, and culture (Gokce, 2014). Deputy Chief Frank Viscuso (2013) stated that a smart firefighter will concentrate on developing leadership qualities and traits that will be necessary to be successful. A discussion of three leadership styles that will be applied to this study follow.
Follower-centered leadership. Follower-centered leadership grows from a foundation of the theory to its application in organizations. Leaders have always been the cornerstone of any organization, and we have seen numerous examples of leaders that have encouraged excellent innovative ideas that flourish into great endeavors. We have also seen leaders whose ideas have caused havoc. Leadership theories usually have a general focus on the leader and what effect they have on the follower (Baker, Mathis, & Stites-Doe, 2011). Follower-centered leadership is unique in the sense that it focuses on the development and growth of the follower. In fact, some do not even consider the leader as the performer (Baker et al., 2011). This leadership style understands that we must invest in our followers as if they are the most valuable component of the organization. “It is a tribute to the rising interest in followers that there are now pervasive reminders in both academic and business publications that the essence of leadership is followership and without followers there would be no leaders” (Bligh, Kohles, & Billai, 2011, p. 425). When defining a follower, it is determined that they have a participative role in which they are willing to support the views of the leader (Baker et al., 2011). The follower-leader are interdependent on one another. An organization must include active followers and leaders where they both have defined roles and they share a common purpose (Baker et al., 2011). It also must include trust. “The exchange denotes a high-quality relationship, and issues of care and consideration in the relationship are central (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002, p. 616). This exchange necessitates that all parties reciprocate.

According to Bligh, the theory can be traced back as early as the 1920s to the works of Mary Parker Follett and again to the words of Gandhi in 1940: “Let no one say that he is a follower of Gandhi. It is enough that I should be my own follower. I know what an inadequate follower I am of myself, for I cannot live up to the conviction I stand for. You are not followers
but fellow students, fellow pilgrims, fellow seekers, fellow workers” (Bligh et al., 2011, p. 425). Mary Parker Follett’s contribution was that leadership is a partnership. Her beliefs did not have too much of an impact until the late twentieth century (Bligh et al., 2011). During this time, significant discussion and research began to be conducted. Another recognized theorist that contributed to this approach is James Meindl. Meindl and his colleagues established the influence of the “Romanization of Leadership.” Romanization of Leadership identifies that organizational change can be controlled by the leaders, but the followers must be involved in this process. Without the followers being involved, change will not occur (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Durrenich, 1985). Follower-centered leadership continued to flourish throughout the 1980s with Kelley’s work in his article that emphasized the importance of recognizing the followers. Kelley’s (1988, 1992) work offered “one of the first explicit theories of followership” (Bligh et al., 2011, p. 427). Kelly proposed five types of followers: the sheep, the yes people, the alienated, the pragmatics, and the star followers (Bligh et al., 2011). This theory expanded into the nineties. Both leadership and followers represent active roles, given the reality that organizational functions require them at every level and position (Smith & Foti, 1998). This approach became widely recognized and supported by many organizations. The thoughts that leaders are active and followers are passive is a thing of the past for those that believe in the follower-centered leadership model. Leadership began to be defined as a process, not a person (Smith & Foti, 1998).

In 2004 there was an article written by the U.S. Military that emphasized the importance of this model by asking whether an armed services member was a leader or a follower. The reality is that military personnel fulfill both roles simultaneously when entering the Armed Forces (Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007). There is a strong relationship in a military setting that
establishes an environment for followers to become future leaders. Better followers set the stage for better future leaders (Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007). They conclude in theorizing that it sets the stage for a competencies-based professional development for both the leaders and the followers (Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007). This is a very interesting approach as it seems that a strong hierarchical military would not be where this approach would be suggested.

Over the last decade, there has been steady research on this model. In 2010, a qualitative study concluded that there is no specific definition of what a follower-centered model should be defined as, since many organizations have modified it to fit their institutional needs. Further, it was concluded that the definition is subjective in nature, and some still consider that the follower should be passive (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010). These findings note that further research and clarification need to be provided for those that express a true interest in employing a follower-centered approach (Carsten et al., 2010). “Leadership involves team work, and the quality of a leader depends on the success of the leader’s relationship with the team” (Carsten et al., 2010, p. 542).

The field of leadership is ever-changing, and a number of lenses must be looked through to have a clear understanding of the follower-centered approach (Gardner, Lowe, Moss, Mahoney, & Cogliser, 2010). Follower-centered leadership has had a significant impact on the importance of leadership processes and what motivates and also on the perceptions and characteristics the followers hold (Bligh et al., 2011). The follower-centered approach to leadership strives to develop the followers.

**Transformational leadership.** Transformational leadership plainly means that a leader can transform others to follow. This leader is a role model. This leader is defined as energetic, enthusiastic, inspirational, sincere, passionate and humble. They inspire others to follow and,
through a clear vision, expectations, and motivation, to believe in the goals that have been established. This leadership style was introduced in 1918 by James MacGregor Burns. Burns held a Doctorate in Political Science from Harvard University and served as a distinguished leadership scholar at the Academy of Leadership at the university. He focused on how leaders approach their power and the needs and values of their followers. According to Burns, transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality in situations that arise (Washington, 2007). Another distinguished theorist that reviewed and expanded the research in the area of transformational leadership was Dr. Bernard Bass. Dr. Bass was involved in higher education and leadership training for over fifty years and he was the author of numerous articles and texts. He is best known for the *Handbook of Leadership* and *Transformational Leadership*. He led the way on authentic and inauthentic transformational leadership and the measurement of its effectiveness. One of his most important contributions was the development of a measure of pseudo-transformational leadership and true transformational leadership. All these traits define the perfect leader, and who would not want to be a follower of this kind of leader? This person will inspire others to excel as they support their followers to grow into future leaders (Washington, 2007).

In the article *Extraordinary Leaders in Education: Understanding Transformational Leadership* (1992), Kirby, Paradise, and King explored the characteristics and actions of those leaders who have had “amazing and astonishing success.” Kirby et al. wrote: “Transformational leadership is development-oriented for the purpose of change. The leader’s focus on the individual development of subordinates enhances their performance, which in turn leads to
organizational growth” (p. 303). The underlying question they asked is: “Are there extraordinary leaders in education, and, if so, what do they do?” (p. 309).

In their quantitative research, Kirby et al. (1992) identified what factors and behaviors exemplify these extraordinary leaders using Bass’s Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The researchers noted that extraordinary leadership can be found in many organizational settings, although within the field of education, these leaders are more often in higher education than in primary and secondary educational institutions. The authors also found that many group members prefer leaders who engage in transformational leadership roles, and they also appreciate leaders who are intellectual and teachable. These findings refute “the leaders are born, not made adage, suggesting that skills in educating and challenging followers should be major considerations in leadership training” (Kirby et al., 1992, p. 310).

Another quality of the transformational leader is that he or she focuses on the follower. These leaders thrive to inspire and build a shared vision with their followers, and as such, they generally support investment in the growth of their followers (Barbuto, Fritz, Matkin, & Marx, 2007). This relationship between leader and follower results in a true partnership that engages and re-engages the followers in the goals of the organization (Butcher, Bessina, & Moran, 2011). Transformational leaders are aware of the rewards reaped when resources are devoted to professional development as this development transforms the followers, and in due course, transforms the organization as well.

In this participative approach, both followers and their leaders provide input and expertise, such that the leaders do not generally make a decision until they have received input from all followers. Followers are encouraged to participate in this process—are recognized as the experts—and generally appreciate being involved (Hwang et al., 2013). In short,
transformational leaders inspire their follower; they impart to them a clear vision, expectations, and motivation to believe in the goals that have been established.

**Servant leadership.** The servant leadership theory was developed by Robert Greenleaf (1977), who believed that a great leader is a servant first. Within this vein, the leader’s highest priority is to ensure that others’ needs are being served (Greenleaf, 1977). These leaders thrive on the success of their followers (Fry, Matherly, Whittington, & Winston, 2007). Followers are involved in the decision-making process and are respected as partners. And in some situations, the leaders will step back into the role of a follower (Fry et al., 2007). Fry et al. noted that “although servant leaders focus on the followers, there is a focus on performance, but it is follower-driven rather than leader-driven” (p. 7). Finally, the leader considers the values that both leaders and followers bring to the organizational structure.

**Emergency Services**

For the purpose of this thesis, today’s emergency services leaders have been defined as current or recently retired leaders employed in fire departments throughout the United States. They embody the most critical elements of emergency service leadership. These leaders serve as an ideal population for this research.

**History of Emergency Services**

Emergency preparedness techniques were first introduced during the Cold War in the aftermath of World War II in response to threats of surprise nuclear attacks by the Soviet Union (Lakoff, 2008). All levels of government entities became involved in this preparedness (from the national to the local level). This preparedness training encompassed responding to disasters or attacks, with plans in place to mobilize the entire country if necessary to preserve life and property, either real or anticipated. Perry and Lindell (2003) defined emergency preparedness as:
The readiness of a political jurisdiction to react constructively to threats from the environment in a way that minimizes the negative consequences of impact for the health and safety of individuals and the integrity and functioning of physical structures and systems. (p. 337)

Waugh and Streib (2006, p. 131) noted that “the field and profession of emergency management have been evolving into a more collaborative enterprise since the 1940s and 1950s.” In the 1990s, a shift occurred from focusing primarily on civil defense directors to the inclusion and collaboration of all levels of government (Waugh & Streib, 2006). Emergencies preparedness has now become a field of academic study and training. Many of the current leaders in the field are practitioners with years of experience. However, although their experience is invaluable, it does not take into account professional development opportunities that await them to become successful leaders.

Preparing these leaders for future emergencies is still a priority in the public sector. Emergencies are wide-ranging: They encompass criminal activity; natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes; terrorist attacks that may include chemical warfare; and any number of other disasters that may be local in nature of widespread. Being prepared is at the forefront of effectively dealing with these disasters—on all levels: local, state, and national security. Moreover, when preparing at a local level, this also enhances the sense of community preparedness.

Preparedness is achieved through the education and training of leaders in emergency management, as the ultimate responsibility is left in the hands of leaders in the emergency services. The leaders in emergency services are there to direct and coordinate a rapid emergency response, and in the aftermath of the emergency, to return communities to normal conditions. Moreover, training and professional development are ongoing endeavors to prevent or minimize fatal casualites. In addition, before and after emergencies emergency leaders must, in essence, be
the face of the emergency services and promote training and educational opportunities coordinated with community members. These leaders are also given the task of raising public awareness of the services they provide and promote a sense of well-being and security for members of the community.

Current leaders in emergency services have demonstrated over and over again their competency in dealing with many emergency situations, such as those highlighted in the introduction of this thesis. Most had years of practical experience before becoming leaders. There are a number of qualifications for those who wish to become a leader in the field of emergency services. First, the individual must be an active member of the fire or police department in which they seek promotion. In addition, they generally will be required to complete a civil service test and may have be required to have formal training or possess an advanced degree. The organizational hierarchy of emergency services utilizes a military model, as an authoritarian-based approach works best during emergency situations.

A perspective leader in emergency services must also bear in mind that emergency workers are exposed to demanding situations that may be emotionally charged, as well as, at times, dangerous. Within such situations, they must be able to stay calm, think clearly, and lead in the most challenging of situations. All of this must be carefully considered when seeking employment in the field (Scott & Myers, 2005).

The context of this study was based on the importance of ensuring that there are capable leaders in emergency services. As the number of emergency incidents continue to threaten and increase, the field of emergency services will continue to expanding. Being prepared for these emergencies takes capable leaders with the expertise, education, and training as well as the desire to serve in these professions. In order to ensure that we have the capable leaders that we need,
qualified and interested individuals must first be located and then educated and trained through professional development and educational opportunities. As one leader stated:

Since the attacks at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, my work has included the development of educational processes to facilitate greater multiagency collaboration when responding to complex emergencies. This is because it became apparent that many first-response communities were unprepared to respond to such large-scale emergencies. In addition, there was poor communication and collaboration among multiagency groups at that incident. (Barg, 2009, p. 116)

Current leaders understand the importance and need for grooming competent future leaders (Traut, Larsen, & Feimer, 2000). Fortunately, many young workers are willing to work and be challenged—as long as they are appreciated and valued by their employers (Macleod, 2008).

Fire Service

History. Fire services can be traced back to the Roman Empire (Blackstone, 1957). In the US, the first firefighting brigade was established by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia in 1736. Franklin was the fire chief. Thereafter, the fire service can be tracked from the formation of the National Fire Service into the professionalization of organized urban fire services (Blackstone, 1957). Similar to Great Britain, the US fire service was also influenced by war, formal structures, and expansion of unions. Communities created voluntary fire departments to protect private property (Vault, 2015). In the mid-19th century, fire departments with paid personnel and standardized equipment emerged. Then, throughout the 20th century, the field of fire science and firefighting progressed from being a relatively low skilled occupation to a highly specialized, technical profession. Emergency services also expanded to include emergency care by trained emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics. Other areas of expertise in the fire service include building codes, hazard materials, technical rescues, and incident response. Today the fire service entails much more than simply putting out fires; with the
creation of the thin purple line, the fire service has been joined with law enforcement to react to a variety of incident responses (Willette, 2015).

**Model of Department Historical Perspective: New York City Fire Department**

Much of the history of the U.S. fire service remains within each fire department. The best historical example is the New York City Fire Department, which has kept impressive documentation since its inception in 1648. This researcher was able to obtain historical information for this study. The original goal of the New York City Fire Department was to provide safety in New Amsterdam (the original name of New York; New York City Fire Department, 2014). Today, the New York City Fire Department has a complement of over 11,000 firefighters, with a clear chain of command that includes a ranking system for the fire officers, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and firefighters (New York City Fire Department, 2014).

**Overview of Operations in the Fire Service**

The fire service maintains three types of fire departments: career, combination, and volunteer departments. They all have the same responsibility: to serve their communities. The fire service is primarily divided into two divisions: paid career firefighters and volunteer firefighters. Recently, combination departments have been created to include paid career firefighters covering the day shift and volunteers covering a night shift. This is a cost-savings effort for departments (NPFA, 2015a-d). Large cities across the United States may employ several thousand firefighters, while small towns may have only a few volunteer firefighters (Vault, 2015).

The hierarchy within the fire department has four tiers:
1. *Fire chiefs* are responsible for the administrative and technical work of planning, organizing, and directing the municipality’s firefighting and fire-prevention activities, staffing and budgeting (NFPA, 2015b).

2. *Assistant and deputy fire chiefs* are responsible for the department’s administrative and supervisory duties, including organizing firefighters’ roles and scheduling shifts, dealing with departmental discipline, and filling in for chiefs during absences.

3. *Battalion chiefs* are responsible for commanding the personnel, equipment, and apparatus of one or more fire stations. At an emergency scene, the battalion chiefs take command and instruct the firefighters.

4. *Fire captains or lieutenants* command the various shifts during the work schedule (Vault, 2015).

The fire service also continues to evolve and expand to include many aspects of basic fire services, emergency medical services, and a structured hierarchy. All of these roles point to the importance of leadership—as do the statistics. In 2014, 1,298,000 fires were reported in the United States. These fires caused 3,275 civilian deaths, 15,775 civilian injuries, and $11.6 billion in property damage (NFPA, 2015c). These statistics further break down as follows:

- 494,000 were structure fires, causing 2,860 civilian fire deaths, 13,425 civilian fire injuries, and $9.8 billion in property damage.
- 193,500 were vehicle fires, causing 345 civilian fire deaths, 1,450 civilian fire injuries, and $1.5 billion in property damage.

610,500 of the fires were neither structural nor vehicular; some were occurred outside, causing 70 civilian fire deaths, 900 civilian fire injuries, and $237 million in property damage (NFPA, 2015d). As of January 2012, there were 26,482 fire departments registered with the
census. In 2013, 1,140,750 firefighters were engaged to protect the United States and its territories. Of those 1+ million firefighters, 354,600 (31%) were career firefighters and 786,150 (69%) were volunteer firefighters (Firefightercareer.net, 2015).

The success of the fire department and the fire department leaders is dependent on a number of factors. These include the leaders’ understanding of the culture of the field of emergency services, as well as the relationship between fire service personnel and the municipalities that they serve. Another important component is the concerted efforts of the leaders and followers in emergency services to work together.

As noted earlier—and after a review of many fire service organizations—this researcher found that fire service departments tend to follow a formal hierarchical structure based on a military model. Within this model, career advancement generally occurs through a steady progression from one leadership position to the next. This is an example of a reward system. There are four distinct patterns to career advancement: linear, expert, spiral, and transitory (Brousseau, Driver, Eneroth, & Larsson, 1996). Notably, none of these patterns of career advancement oblige the leader to make a long-term or lifetime commitment to the organization. If one wishes to be promoted, one must remain in the fire service department. Optimally, no external environmental influences complicate these intradepartment promotions. Promotion are only accepted outside of the department when the civil services exam are state-wide or accepted across agencies. This system is limited in generally followed within the fields of law enforcement and fire service due to the hierarchical structure of the departments (FEMA, 2010). It is important to note, however, that this promotion framework does not take into account leader readiness or strategic leadership abilities. Brousseau et al. (1996) suggested that “organizations and the workforce as a whole might benefit more from a pluralistic approach that combines
varied amounts and types of organizational structure with an array of quite different career experience opportunities” (p. 55).

**Current Leaders in the Fire Service**

Leaders in the emergency services fully appreciate the need for a competent and committed workforce (Traut, Larsen, & Feimer, 2000), and as such, are concerned with maintaining proficient and dedicated workforces. Other concerns include safety, physical well-being, stress management, emergency preparedness, maintaining career satisfaction, and finally, decreased staffing due to budget restraints. One nonprofit organization, the International Public Safety Leadership & Ethics Institute (IPSLEI), is devoted to providing leadership guidance and lifelong learning to leaders in the public safety sector. Its mission and vision statement is as follows:

The vision of the International Public Safety Leadership and Ethics Institute is exceptional leadership in service to public safety. Our mission is to develop individuals, through innovative leadership and ethics education, who exercise leadership effectively and ethically in service to public safety. To achieve this mission we will:

- Assist students in developing a Personal Philosophy of Leadership and Ethics.
- Guide students in developing skills for Leading Others Ethically.
- Prepare students to act on opportunities for Ethical Organizational Leadership.
- Guide students through an in-depth exploration of Ethics and the Challenge of Leadership. (IPSLEI, 2015)

This program has developed into a formal organization with an academic foundation that was established in 2006. Its founders are members of the California Community College Chancellor’s Office. In 2000, the Chancellor’s Office applied for and received Perkins funding to develop a program for public safety leadership. In addition, the program has blossomed into an international organization that has partnered with Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. The end result is a scholar-practitioner approach that blends academics with professionals in emergency services. The organization is committed to constantly updating
curriculum for currency to promote productive leadership in emergency services (IPSLEI, 2015).

IPSLEI also has the following values and beliefs to guide the organization:

Leadership is action, not position, and, in the context of community, is shared among all members.
Leaders must be able to make thoughtful, critical, and informed decisions.
Leaders inspire a shared vision.
Leaders have a broad responsibility to enhance the quality of life in society.
Communication and trust are cornerstones of effective, ethical leadership.
Leaders must truly know themselves before they can effectively and ethically lead others.
Leaders value diversity and believe that diversity fosters learning and creativity.
Leaders are anchored to positive values and ethical decision making.
Leaders are committed to life-long learning.
Leaders are committed to service. (IPSLEI, 2015)

This outstanding institute supports leaders in emergency services. Many consider the emergency services as representative of a productive organization that promotes its leaders and ensures that they are completely prepared. Kupietz (2010) noted that emergency services could be defined as 200 years of tradition unimpeded by progress (Kupietz, 2010).

Countering this perception is the promotion process, which is generally linked to a civil service procedure. That is, members of the fire service are promoted through the civil service process; yet, they may not have education or professional development opportunities to prepare for these promotions (Kupietz, 2010). However, with educational and professional development opportunities, this process could be enriched, and it could also support current leaders who are committed to sustaining a valuable workforce. Another source that can support this initiative is the International Fire Service Journal of Leadership and Management (IFSJLM). This journal publishes peer-reviewed articles related to fire leadership and management under the direction of Oklahoma State University.

In addition, consideration is given to providing unique opportunities that are offered outside of peak hours, both on and off the work site. Finally, in higher education there are
specific opportunities that support leaders in the field of the fire service, such as offering a
degree in Fire Administration. This degree is offered at numerous institutions and includes
coursework in organizational structures and leadership development theories and principles.
These programs combine theories and principles as they relate to fire science. This is an
excellent model for the fire service.

The Next Generation of Leaders

Barford and Hester (2011) contended that if we wish to groom new leaders, we must first
understand them better. We must find out what motivates them, what distinguishes them from
previous generations, and finally, what constitutes happiness for them. The next generation of
leaders will be primarily from the Y Generation; specifically, those who were born between the

Most notable about this generation is that they grew up with technology; Black (2010)
referred to them as “digital natives.” Thus, their comfort with and understanding of technology is
far advanced than previous generations. They participate in social networking and are willing to
communicate fact, and sometimes fiction, about themselves through this mode of
communication. However, they do not consider technology as the most important tool, even as
they review the social and educational implications of the technology. Nonetheless, this
generation has become increasingly isolated, in part because they do depend on and use
technology (e.g., in lieu of getting together with people face to face as opposed to via text
message or cell phone or Facebook). Black also found this generation to lack empathy and
guidance skills (Black, 2010).

As is true in all generations, many in Generation Y strive to be successful. Maclead
(2008) commented on the time factor needed to advance in one’s career, writing, “Developing
new skills is not going to get you promoted tomorrow but will go towards building a strong


portfolio, which, combined with experience and qualifications, will stand individuals in good stead to achieving their ambitions” (Macleod, 2008, p. 82).

Another distinct characteristic of Generation Y is that they have been rewarded and commended for most of their endeavors, regardless of degree of skill or exertion. Black characterized this generation as having been told that they are the best at all they do and can generally do no wrong. Society often regards them as the “everyone gets a trophy (or an A)” generation (Black, 2010). Some feel that this compliments and promotes their performance in the workplace, evidenced by Macleod (2008), who wrote, “The figures show that today’s younger managers are driven by ethics and a sense of purpose” (p. 81).

All generations are unique and have characteristics that were formed by the previous generation in their formative years. What major historical and cultural events have shaped Generation Y? Through educational settings and informal conversations, this generation is familiar with the challenges faced by their parents and grandparents. They witnessed a major recession and numerous world disasters. Most notably, this generation were in school on September 11, 2001, when the United States was attacked (NFPA, 2011), and they then witnessed this country’s involvement in the Iraq/Afghanistan wars. Some have friends or classmates who enlisted, who were injured, or who lost their lives in these wars. Because of technology and social media, this generation has watched events firsthand. They have also been witnessed attacks on local schools where many students and teachers perished, and they have observed mass killing sprees. They have also witnessed the impeachment of a American President and the election of the first African American President. They have witnessed all of these events via telecommunications either simultaneously as they were occurring or in the minutes after these events occurred. However, many of them cannot use a pay phone or copy
machine, machines that were commonplace in previous generations. For all their advantages, they have been advised that they will be likely responsible for their own retirement. They have also been advised that they are responsible for the environment and sustainability and for maintaining the environment for themselves and the communities in which they live (Black, 2010).

All of these characteristics must be considered when developing methods to provide professional development opportunities and ensure leadership success in the field of emergency services. As noted by Smola and Sutton (2002), “The modern worker’s job requires decision making, problem-solving, trouble-shooting, and managing” (p. 364). The fire service field is constantly changing, and so must its leaders to remain prepared to handle and respond to emergency events. Understanding Generation Y will assist older cohorts in adapting to their unique characteristics and successfully enlisting their talents to emerge in leadership development.

Generation Y has faced many world events that were key moments in history, from the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, to wars, domestic and foreign terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and the rapid spread of technology. Bearing in mind that this generation grew up with these events will allow us to better understand who they are, and consequently, we will be able to identify methods for preparing them to become leaders based on who they are, their experiences, and their abilities rather than our own experiences and abilities. As noted by Dinh et al. (2014), research on leadership development for members of the new millennium must be ongoing. To prepare members of this generation to become successful leaders, current leaders need to provide opportunities and learning experiences for them. Members of these organizations need to understand the dynamics of how to excel and remain engaged in the organization. “In the best
case, organizations and individuals will both play a role in career management and will share important information about opportunities and links to be pursued for the benefit of both” (Baruch & Peiperl, 2000, p. 347). As both the individual and the organization benefit, both will grow to support future employees.

All emergency situations, be they natural or manmade, large or small, cause risk and threat to people’s safety. Yet it is the leaders in the fire service who must go into the dangerous area and take care of the situation or crisis. These leaders must be able to meet the crisis management demands and to coordinate members of the response teams in a rapid and timely manner. This often includes not only working with firefighters in their department but other firefighters in other departments and other emergency workers in the community. Emergency situations have situational demands and need proficient and talented leaders.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter was divided into four areas: (a) leadership development and adult learning; (b) scholarship-shaping conceptual framework (c) leadership history, succession, and leadership styles; (d) emergency services: history, fire service operations and leaders, and (d) future leaders. A review of the literature in leadership development, leadership succession, leadership styles, reflection theory, fire service culture, and characteristics of the next generation provided a broad theoretical framework for this study. This theoretical framework was established to focus research that can inform the next generation of fire service leaders to prepare them to assume their roles competently and efficiently as they face many new challenges. The next chapter will present the research methodology used in this study.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a detailed account of the study’s research methodology and design exploring the research questions: How do experienced fire service leaders learn to develop key leadership competencies? and, What are the developmental experiences identified by experienced fire service leaders that future fire service leaders need to learn to acquire key leadership competencies? This chapter begins with a discussion of the overall research plan—offering the researcher’s rationale for choosing a qualitative study using narrative methodology. The rationale for the interview method is also discussed here.

The author then revisits the research questions, describes the data collection and analysis phases, including recruitment of the participants. The next section is on validity, reliability, and generalizability. Here the researcher discusses her potential bias and assumptions based on her own experiences, profession, and proximity to firefighters, and discussed strategies used to overcome these biases and assumptions to ensure trustworthiness and validity of the results. In the final section of this chapter, a description is provided of each of the 12 participants recruited from the four regions: southwest, southeast, northeast, and northwest.

This study identified how current and recently retired leaders describe their leadership development strategies, experiences, and/or traits. The narratives explored the social, structural, professional, and contextual influences that both promoted and stifled the participants’ development as leaders in emergency services. The purpose of this doctoral thesis was to uncover the ways experienced fire service leaders developed key leadership competencies and their perceptions of the key competencies future leaders need. This data was collected through conducting in-depth interviews with 12 fire service leaders stationed around the United States.
Overall Research Plan

A qualitative research methodology was used in this study to explore leadership development to better prepare future leaders. When an emergency services leader is immersed in the culture of fire service, the practitioner is continually learning the methods to be a productive member of an organization. This information needs to be identified so that it can be shared with future leaders.

The steps for this research procedure included formulating the research questions, determining the best method for the research (namely, narrative approach with semi-structured interviews), using adequate recording devices, designing an interview protocol, refining the interview questions and procedures, recruiting the participants, determining the locations for the interviews, obtaining consent from interviewees and/or participating organizations, and following appropriate interview formats as outlined by Creswell (2012).

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

When studying leadership, the contextual and complex nature of it must be considered. (Antonakis et al., 2004) Qualitative research provided the format to capture both the contextual and complex nature of the current leaders in the fire service, which can also be defined through social constructivism, since the examination of the leaders’ experiences is being explored. Social constructivism seeks to understand the world in which one lives or works (Creswell, 2012).

Qualitative inquiry, which is rooted in a social constructivist view, recognizes that groups construct knowledge collaboratively by creating their own internal culture of shared artifacts that have a shared meaning (Creswell, 2012). In this way, the individual seeks to understand the world in which he or she lives and works. A subjective meaning of their experiences is reviewed. The researcher relied on the view of the participants: 12 fire service leaders, which were obtained through questions that were designed in a broad and general format so that the
leaders could construct the meaning of a situation (Creswell, 2013). The social constructivist approach addresses the process of each participant’s interaction in both an historical and a cultural context. As conveyed by Creswell (2013), the researcher’s then interpreted the participants’ characterizations of the world.

The participants expressed different viewpoints on the optimal leadership traits/strategies, and the researcher categorized those traits. These categories helped to organize their experiences into common experiences or strategies among the participants. A qualitative research design’s goal is to gather an in-depth understanding of the human behavior of leaders in the field, looking at the why and how of decision making (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research was suited for this study because the variables are comprised of the human behavior of current or recent leaders in the fire service, along with the exploration and identification of information that will be valuable to future leadership development. One of the significant qualitative methods is narrative research design. A discussion of the use of this method follows.

**Rationale for Narrative Analysis Research Design**

The narrative analysis employed in this research is one of several options for analyzing qualitative data. A narrative study uses interviews to collect the stories of the participants’ experiences as they relate to the research questions and then common themes are identified from these interviews that demonstrate a close collaboration in the narrative study between the participants and the researcher (Creswell, 2012).

Narrative researchers collect stories from individuals about their experiences (Creswell, 2012). The narrative research design was used in this study to capture the experiences of fire service leaders with respect to their leadership development and how they construct meaning of their leadership experiences (Creswell, 2012). The purpose of this narrative study was to
identify the optimal leadership practices of leaders in the field of emergency services.
Consideration included leadership styles, types of agencies, years of experience and expertise,
demographics of the agency, hours of professional development, and years of education. The
choice of the narrative design was appropriate for this study.

This narrative analysis for obtaining personal and professional oral histories in leadership
development in the fire service was the basis for this research involving 12 fire service leaders. A
semi-structured interview procedure was employed to explore leadership development
perspectives from the study’s 12 participants. As noted by Creswell (2013), “An oral history
consists of gathering personal reflections on events and their causes and effects for one
individual or several individuals” (p. 72).

The use of oral histories as a data-gathering tool has evolved from its many years of use
by sociologists and anthropologists. Researchers from these different fields have recognized and
advocated the use of the narrative approach to explore the characteristics of human nature.
Moreover, the sociological symbolic interactionist perspective includes individuals creating their
own social world through social interaction (Curry, Jiobu, & Schwirian, 2012). This perspective
further stresses the importance of how we define a situation and the expectations and behaviors
in these situations. This narrative method is both appropriate and applicable in this study as it
ties the individual leader with the connection to the larger setting. Leaders in emergency
services are placed within their organizations and the larger social landscape of the field.

Using the narrative approach, data analyzed in various forms. An oral history was best
suited for this research because it allows for the gathering of personal reflections of events and
their causes and effects (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the participants’ stories and personal
narratives about their organization are guided by an interpretive framework (Creswell, 2013).
Thus, the participant’s own voice provides the valued reflections and decisions they have made as leaders throughout their careers.

The narrative analysis approach also allows for a holistic and categorical format that is seen in both cognitive and affective perspectives (Smith & Osborn, 2004). This narrative analysis approach was developed by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zibler (1998) to establish some consistency to the narrative approach. This approach adds clarity based on the entire content. This approach has two dimensions for analysis: holistic or categorical and content or form. First, the data are broken down into holistic or categorical units. These units are then broken down into two further units: content or form (Mahler, 2008). This approach provides the researcher with the opportunity to focus on either content or form (Mahler, 2008). The categorical format focuses on specific content themes that evolve from the narrative (Lieblich et al., 1998). Both of these dimensions work well with the traditional content analysis. The holistic dimension ties in with the plots or structural aspects of the narrative as a whole, and the categorical dimension concentrates on the specific forms of linguistics used in specific sections of the narrative (Lieblich et al., 1998). The data were then further differentiated between paradigmatic and narrative knowledge (Bruner, Goodnow, & Austin 1986).

Narrative research is also beneficial as it examines leaders’ development throughout their careers—both holistically (i.e., taken as a whole) and specifically (looking at aspects of their careers). This examination enables members of an organization to make sense of their career progression (Cohen & Mallon, 2001). The researcher’s challenge then is to collect extensive information about the participant in order to obtain a clear understanding of the participant’s life and professional experiences (Creswell, 2013).
All of these components of narrative therapy dovetail perfectly with this study’s goal of identifying optimal leadership traits and/or strategies. Through narrative research, participants discover themselves, while at the same time, revealing themselves to others through their stories. This narrative process captures participants’ evolution as they construct, in a subjective manner, their own personal stories of the events and challenges they have faced in their life experiences. In this way, the narrative approach provides a retrospective dimension to the participants’ identities, and from this evolves sequential personal, social, and professional events over their career (Cohen & Mallon, 2001).

The narrative research also situated this study within the larger social and cultural context of the organization, since the field of fire service is a unique organization that has a strict hierarchical structure. The stories that unfolded throughout the interview were not only personal in nature, but also had a social and historical content (Creswell, 2012), and it is important to understand this social and historical context because it is within these contexts that the participants’ personal stories become relevant to and informative for future leaders. These contexts also provided a foundation of the “who, what, when, why, and how” to better understand the motivational evidence behind an individual’s beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors (Dhunpath, 2000).

This research approach provided participants with the opportunity to tell their stories on their leadership development journey; in other words, to write narratives about their own experiences (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, the narrative approach helped confirm the participants’ interpretive behavior or ideas about their experiences. The interview process used to collect these stories is further discussed below.
Rationale for Interview Method

This study incorporated phenomenological-based interviewing, which combines life and work history interviews (Seidman, 2012). The study focused on the experiences of participants and the meaning they gave to those experiences—specifically, the story of their professional journey in the fire service. The interviews were semi-structured, and the interview questions were in-depth and open-ended. Using this interview method, the participants are able to build upon their previous responses (Seidman, 2012), and they are also encouraged to explore spontaneous comments (Merriam, 2009). The ultimate goal was to have the leaders reconstruct their experiences in the fire service that would support future leadership development.

The interview questions were based on the reflective theory and the experiential learning cycle, and the format was based on the Multidimensional Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which the researcher used as a guide in developing the questionnaire for the interviews. The MLQ was introduced by R. Kelley in 1992 and is often used for measuring leadership development. This measure consists of a 12-item scale ranking leadership skills. Kelley’s goal was for the followers to critically evaluate themselves, their organizations, and their leaders (Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010), and the questionnaire includes questions about the follower’s contributions to the leader, as well as the leadership skills that have been demonstrated (Levine et al., 2010). All questions on the MLQ were vetted by a sociologist and research methods specialist.

The MLQ and the conceptual framework Argyris’s learning theory, Schon’s reflective theory, and Kolb’s experiential learning cycle) provided insight into forming questions for the process of interviewing these leaders. These tools operationalized leadership skills and highlighted the problem between practice and theory (i.e., putting theory into practice).
Moreover, the three leadership styles: transformational, follower-centered, and servant theories, provided a full range of those leadership traits and were employed to uncover the traits that a leader needs in the field of fire service. These leadership traits also helped the researcher to identify the traits that are most vital for the field now and in the future.

**Interview Method**

As noted above, the interviews were conducted using a semi-structured, open-ended interview format. In preparation for the interviews with the 12 fire service leader participants, the researcher first conducted two pilot interviews with fire service leaders who were not involved in the research study. These interviews followed the method employed by Sampson (2004). These pilots interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to refine and develop interview processes. The researcher conducted these interviews over the phone, kept detailed notes, and audiotape the interviews. The interviews were conducted on the phone as this was most convenient for the pilot participants. However, after employing Sampson’s (2004) techniques, the researcher concluded that the phone interview method was unsuccessful because the researcher was unable to see informal communication (e.g., facial expressions). Creswell (2012) stressed that the inability to see paralinguistic features of communication, or body language, and the inability to have eye contact with interviewees provided a poor setting for the interviews. In fact, this was proved many times during the pilot interviews. For example, at times the participant was not answering the questions related to the research. For these reasons, the researcher concluded the face-to-face format was much preferable to phone interviews.

All interviews were formal, private, and one-on-one with only the researcher and one participant present. The duration was from 50 to 100 minutes. The interviews were held in quiet, nondisruptive, public locations with no distractions agreed upon in advance by the participant
and interviewer. During the interviews and directly following, the researcher maintained a journal of notes on the participants’ statements, as well as body language, voice emphasis, and emotional state. All participants were articulate, not hesitant to speak, and were comfortable sharing their ideas (Creswell, 2012). The interviews were audiorecorded with a digital recorder and professionally transcribed by Rev.com.

To protect the participants’ identities, they were provided with pseudonyms, and a cross-reference was kept in a locked file cabinet in a separate location. All paper and electronic copies of the interviews and the interview transcripts were stored in secure locations. The electronic copies were password-protected, and the paper copies were stored in locked cabinets.

All participants were asked questions to inform the researcher about their background (Appendix A). Background information included questions regarding family background, rationale for working in the fire service, progression through the fire service, and opportunities for formal and informal training. Demographic information was also collected. This information included educational levels, including paramedic status, rank (current or when retired), size of department in which they served, their geographic region, population of the community they served, and number of years of service (Appendix A). The researcher also asked each participant to identify their age within 15-year spans; specific age was not requested as it might jeopardize the anonymity of the participant.
Table 3.1

Alignment of Interview Question and Research Questions Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Research Interview Question Category and Alignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tell me about your family background and did your family influence you in becoming a member of the fire service?</td>
<td>Holistic-Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When did you hold your first leadership role?</td>
<td>Categorical-Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are the competencies you hold as a leader?</td>
<td>Holistic-Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are the most significant leadership training opportunities you were exposed to?</td>
<td>Categorical-Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In that role did you learn memorable moments from your subordinates or supervisors? What?</td>
<td>Holistic-Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What leadership lessons have you learned over your career?</td>
<td>Holistic-Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Are there various leadership practices you have employed to promote your development as a leader?</td>
<td>Holistic-Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are there any memorable moments or critical incidents that have affected your leadership development?</td>
<td>Holistic-Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Are there any leadership training or educational experiences that you participated in during your career? Were they department-supported?</td>
<td>Categorical-Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How else would you identify the evolution of your leadership?</td>
<td>Holistic-Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Who were your significant mentors over the years?</td>
<td>Categorical-Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What is the reality of being a leader in emergency services?</td>
<td>Holistic-Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What advice do you have for an aspiring firefighter?</td>
<td>Categorical-Content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above shows the categorical and holistic alignment of the interview questions. This alignment assisted in the clarification and further breakdown of categorical units in the content analysis of the narratives, which further assisted the researcher in correlating between the interview questions and the content of the narratives.

**Interview Process**

The researcher adhered to Creswell’s (2013) principles in conducting face-to-face interviews with the participants. The interviews were held at a time and place that were mutably agreed upon by the researcher and the participant, while bearing no cost to the participant. Interviews were in a number of settings, including an empty classroom, the public library, the participant’s office, and a restaurant, all of which were quiet and ensured few distractions. These interviews were conducted over a 6-week period. All interviews were recorded using a Sony digital recorder, and field notes were maintained to supplement and highlight each interview. The interviews were uploaded and translated by Rev.com and saved in the researcher’s password-protected document server. The data were inductively analyzed using the software program NVIVO 10 for Windows (2014) for qualitative studies. Deductive manual analysis was used by the researcher to code and create themes.

The researcher identified five themes that emerged from the narrative analysis: (a) principles for leadership development competencies, (b) creation of mentor relationships, (c) form of leadership training, (d) exhibited leadership styles, and (e) evidence of the role of the family (Table 4.2 in the next chapter outlines these key themes). These findings align with Argyris’s principles of leadership development and provide deeper insight into the subjective nature of the interview process. As noted by Kvale (1988, p. 102):

The interview is an intersubjective enterprise of two persons talking about common themes of interest. The interviewer does not merely collect statements like gathering
small stones on a beach. The questions of the interviewer lead up to the dimensions of a theme the interviewee will address, and the interviewer’s active listening and his following-up of the answers codetermine the course of conversation.

This narrative study further applies Leiblich et al.’s (1998) approach of holistic and categorical content in the data analysis. Further, the transcripts were analyzed to identify leadership styles using a deductive approach; all three leadership style emerged: transformational, servant, and follower-centered. Next, an inductive interpretation of the data was completed to allow additional themes or categories to emerge during the analysis of the data, including the relationship between the participant and leadership development.

**Central Research Questions**

The research questions for this study were:

RQ1: How do experienced fire service leaders learn to develop key leadership competencies?

RQ2: What are the developmental experiences identified by experienced fire service leaders that future fire service leaders need to learn to acquire key leadership competencies?
Table 3.2

Parallel Between Interview Questions and Conceptual Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Conceptual Framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tell me about your family background. Did your family influence you in becoming a member of the fire service?</td>
<td>Schon’s reflective theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When did you hold your first leadership role?</td>
<td>Argyris’s five principles of leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schon’s reflective theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What are the competencies you hold as a leader?</td>
<td>Argyris’s learning theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schon’s reflective theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are the most significant leadership training opportunities you were exposed to?</td>
<td>Kolb’s experiential learning cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In that role, did you learn from memorable moments from your subordinates or supervisors? How?</td>
<td>Argyris’s learning theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schon’s reflective theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What leadership lessons have you learned over your career?</td>
<td>Argyris’s learning theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kolb’s experiential learning cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Are there various leadership practices you have employed to promote your development as a leader?</td>
<td>Argyris’s leadership theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argyris’s five principles of leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are there any memorable moments or critical incidents that have affected your leadership development?</td>
<td>Argyris’s leadership theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argyris’s five principles of leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Are there any leadership training or educational experiences that you participated in during your career? Were they department supported?</td>
<td>Argyris’s leadership theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argyris’s five principles of leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How else would you identify the evolution of your leadership?</td>
<td>Argyris’s leadership theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argyris’s five principles of leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Who were your significant mentors over the years?</td>
<td>Argyris’s leadership theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argyris’s five principles of leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What is the reality of being a leader in emergency services?</td>
<td>Argyris’s leadership theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argyris’s five principles of leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kolb’s experiential learning cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What advice do you have for an aspiring firefighter?</td>
<td>Argyris’s leadership theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argyris’s five principles of leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schon’s reflective theory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviewing is a form of qualitative research. The goal was to identify the trends of fire service leaders in the United States. Interviews were selected because they are concrete and a
simple means to collect key data from emergency services leaders in a controlled and effective manner (Butin, 2010). In the next section data collection and analysis will be discussed.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

Data collection using a qualitative—and specifically narrative—process includes many steps. Those steps include (a) gaining permissions from the participants, (b) conducting an effective qualitative sampling strategy, (c) developing the means to record the data both digitally and on paper, (d) storing the data, and (e) anticipating and addressing ethical issues to may occur (Creswell, 2013). These steps are divided into three distinct phrases below:

Phase 1: Identification, Recruitment and Contact of Participants
   a. Identify and recruit participants
   b. Send researcher introduction letter (Appendix B), request for interviews to potential research participants
   c. Send consent form (Appendix C), await return, review and return consent form
   d. Set interview dates
   e. Review respondents for diverse population

Phase 2: Collect Data
   a. Collect consent forms
   b. Conduct interviews
   c. Transcribe interviews
   d. Determine validity and accuracy with interviewees

Phase 3: Coding and Data Analysis
   a. Store data
   b. Code answers in systematic format
c. Cross analysis of data and create themes

After the researcher had identified potential participants, she conducted a pre-interview of potential participants in which she introduced the study, reviewing the introductory letter and executive summary (Appendix B) and the parameters of the study. The researcher provided a brief overview of the study’s goals and ensured that the participants had a clear understanding of their role in the study. Generally, the introductory letter was e-mailed to each prospective participant and a follow-up phone call or face-to-face meeting was scheduled to review the documents for clarity.

The participants then reviewed and signed the informed consent forms (Appendix C), asked any questions about the research process, selected their pseudonym, provided demographics and background information, and reviewed a timeline of their role and the research study. At this time the interview time, place, and location were confirmed. The interviews were then conducted (50 to 100 minutes in length) and digitally recorded, and the digital tapes were professionally transcribed, member checked, and stored as noted in the next section in preparation for the data analysis phase.

**Data Storage**

How data is stored is based on the type of information collected, as detailed by Creswell (2012). For this study in which personal accounts of the participants’ lives were recorded, participants were assured that the information would be stored in a secure location and would remain confidential. The interviews were recorded with a voice-activated VCL video player on a laptop, and a digital voice recorder was used as a backup.

The following steps were used for this qualitative research:

a. Backups were developed on a password-protected computer.
b. High quality DVDs were used, and the format for the transcripts was discussed with transcriber (Rev Works) to ensure that the transcriber used a compatible format for the data analysis.

c. A master list of the data collected was created.

d. The anonymity of the participants was ensured through name-masking.

e. A data collection matrix was developed for locating and identifying information (Creswell, 2012).

All of the steps above ensured the optimal recording and storing of data. Once research was complete, all paper documents were destroyed.

Data Analysis

The data analysis incorporated the transcripts, the researcher’s notes, and reflection journal entries. The transcribed interviews totaled approximately 500 pages, and the researcher’s notes totaled approximately 100 pages. The researcher must ensure that the thoughts expressed by the interviewees are coherent, as well as their stories, which are structured and put in context by the researcher (Cohen & Mallon, 2001). These themes evolved through the cross-case analysis of interviews and comparative analysis of the data. The transcription results were analyzed first using a deductive approach with the assistance of NVivo-10, followed by an inductive approach to emphasize the common themes among the leaders in fire service.

The comprehensive process included a number of steps. First, the researcher individually reviewed each transcript to identify key concepts. The process then involved the researcher listening and relistening to the audio, reading and rereading the transcripts, and reexamining the field and journal notes. These journal notes from the interviews and transcripts were compared to the interviews. Next, the researcher developed preliminary codes based on the key concepts.
These preliminary codes were examined to determine whether they should be grouped into categories and/or common themes. This step was completed using NVivo-10. Finally, the transcripts were revisited from the NVivo-10 data, and inductive research was completed to further identify the themes. The emerging themes were (a) principles of leadership development competencies, (b) creation of mentor relationships, (c) forms of leadership training, (d) exhibited leadership style, and (e) evidence of the role of the family.

**Rationale for deductive and inductive analysis.** The wheel of science is circular because it has no beginning and end. A theory is the explanation of relationships between phenomena (Wallace, 1972). The concern over the problems in society and the attempt to understand them is a process of deductive and inductive analysis (Wallace, 1972). This study uses both approaches as the analysis incorporates both general and specific theory to the data and the researcher’s observations.

Both deductive and inductive approaches were used in the analysis. Deductive content analysis is generally used when the structure of analysis is operationalized on the basis of previous knowledge, which fits well when the researcher wishes to retest existing data in a new context (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The deductive approach was also appropriate as the data included the participants’ personal experiences in the fire service. The deductive analysis process was used to understand the participants’ experiences. The transcripts of the interviews and the field notes that had been collected during the interviews were analyzed. Through this process, themes and codes emerged through constant comparison of the data. The coding of the participants’ narratives facilitated the identification of the themes. As the researcher had hypothesized, five common themes emerged from analysis of the narratives. The themes were (a) leadership development competencies, (b) mentorship, (c) leadership training, (d) leadership styles, and (e)
role of family. These themes were based on Argyris’s five principals of leadership, Yukl’s establishment of leadership competencies, and refined themes that evolved from the interviews.

Inductive content analysis was also employed, as the subject of leadership development is fragmented. Elo and Kyngäs (2008) acknowledged the use of inductive content when the subject is fragmented or in instances when no previous studies on the subject exist. The inductive analysis took place with the emergence of themes that evolved during the interviews and was used to define the categories within each common theme. Both themes and codes that were created during the analysis process emerged throughout the data collection process.

The computer software NVIVO 10 for Windows (2014) enabled the researcher to code relevant sentences and terms in order to define these categories. The resulting categories (noted as codes in the software program) were then used for a cross-analysis. Through this cross-analysis, the researcher found commonalities between the participants’ experiences. These commonalities provided the specific categories underlying the five common themes and also served to demonstrate their alignment with Argyris’s learning theory, Yukl’s principles of leadership development, and Argyris’s five principles of leadership development.

**Selection and Recruitment Process**

The researcher’s goal was to obtain an adequate research size (Creswell, 2012) to establish validate. As shown in Table 3.3 below, the selection criteria included (a) that the participant have a rank of lieutenant or above; (b) that the participant has a minimum of 8 years of experience; (c) that the size of the fire service leader’s complement is 120 firefighters or more; (d) that the participant is either an active member of the fire service department or retired within the past 5 years; (e) that the participant works in either a career or combination fire department (fire service leaders in volunteer fire departments were excluded from the study); and (f) that the
participant lives and works in the United States. The basis for the leaders’ participation in this study was completely voluntary. Twelve fire service leaders volunteered to participate in the study. The researcher determined that they were representative of groups of individuals who have progressed through the fire service to their current rank.

Table 3.3

Participant Selection Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position/Rank</th>
<th>Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Director, Battalion Chief, Captain, Lieutenant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>8 years minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of Complement</td>
<td>120 firefighters or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Active member of department or retired within the past 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Types</td>
<td>Career and combination fire departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other consideration were that the researcher needed to find individuals who were accessible and willing to provide information, specifically on leadership development in the fire service (Creswell, 2013). The overall goal was to gain insight from fire service leaders to prepare future leaders. The steps for recruitment are shown in Table 3.4.
Table 3.4

Steps for Recruitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Identify prospective participant agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Identify gatekeeper and contact this individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Identify participants and contact them via e-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Conduct follow-up phone calls and send consent forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Schedule interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall objective of this study was to collect information. Therefore, in accordance with Maxwell’s (2005) principle and in order to ensure information could be collected from these participants, attention was paid to the participants’ locations, events, and the organizations of which they were a member. The United States was chosen as it provides an excellent target population within various-sized departments that are faced with many challenges in the fire service field. Moreover, fire service leaders face situations that are unique to their profession.

In Phase 1 (identification, recruitment, and contact of participants), the target organizations were first identified. Recruitment strategies were directed towards various agencies in the field of emergency services that could suggest voluntary participants. The researcher then used a snowball sampling strategy to ask those who know people within the field to help the researcher identify potential participants (Creswell, 2013). To that end, outreach efforts were directed toward the Mid-Atlantic Center for Law and Public Safety, New York State Career Fire Chiefs, National Fire Academy, New York State University Public Safety, New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control, and New York State Homeland Security, National Fire Academy. The researcher considered a diverse pool of leaders. For the purposes of this study,
the term diverse was defined as leaders from various ranks, located throughout the United States, with varying years of service, who were based in departments with a wide range of sizes. The researcher determined that the above-named organizations were sufficiently diverse and had numerous leaders in the field who would be eligible for this study.

Although gender was not a consideration in this study, historically, firefighting has been a male-dominated profession, and women only make up about 5% of the firefighter workforce (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Age was also not considered in selection either. Notably, firefighters have a different retirement formula than most professions. Generally, they can consider retirement after 20 years of service due to the intensity of their jobs, and for this reason, there was no minimum or maximum age consideration.

A letter of introduction was designed to identify the potential gatekeeper of the organization. The gatekeeper was the key to finding leaders who would be willing to participate, and the gatekeeper also provided the researcher with initial access to that participant. This letter was provided to all potential gatekeepers. From this phase, potential participants were identified, and they were provided with the introductory letter (Appendix B) and executive summary that explained the study and its goal. After the gatekeeper had responded and contacts were made with the prospective participants, the researcher followed up with phone calls to the prospective participants. The first contact was made either via e-mail, on the phone, or in person. Six of the participants were contacted via e-mail expressing their interest in study. The researcher then made a follow-up phone call to set up an interview time that was convenient for the participants. The six other participants were contacted in person at a national conference prior to scheduling the interviews.
Recruitment was voluntary, which was needed to achieve the goal of this research, and based on self-selection of individuals who responded and accepted the invitation to participate after reviewing the research criteria. In the follow-up contact with the potential participants, the researcher ensured that the participants met all the requirements to participate in the study and described in detail the procedures for participating in the study. The researcher stressed the measures to protect confidentiality and that the findings of this study would assist future leaders in the fire service. The next step was to confirm and update all contact information. This was completed electronically or in person prior to the interviews. Participants were also provided with consent forms (Appendix C) to review either electronically or in person. The researcher also reviewed the consent forms with them to ensure they understood what they were signing. The researcher followed up with all participants in the event they had any additional questions. Finally, the researcher scheduled the interviews with the participants and received approval to conduct research from Northeastern University’s Institutional Review Board. Below is an overview of the participants of this study.

**Validity, Reliability, and Generalizability**

Issues of validity, reliability, and generalizability must always be considered in any academic or scientific study. Validity refers to the larger picture and the choice of instruments, and reliability is the measure of consistency (Creswell, 2012). Generalizability refers to the extent to which the results can be assumed to be applicable with a larger population. In this current study, the main concern was that the data were collected from self-reported responses to questions about leadership behaviors. Therefore, the researcher needed to consider the measurement issues most common in similarly designed qualitative studies, as outlined by Creswell (2012). These measurement issues, addressed below, include trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability, and generalizability.
Trustworthiness

Criteria for establishing trustworthiness were guided by Lincoln and Guba (1985), who established a four-tier approach to ensure trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. In this qualitative research, the researcher was especially concerned with validity and trustworthiness to ensure that the findings would be optimal (Porter, 2007). However, as this was a narrative study, the truthfulness of the participants’ accounts could not confirmed due to the subjectivity of the participants’ experiences.

Credibility. Credibility can be established by adhering to six guidelines: (a) choosing a viable and established research method, (b) ensuring that the researcher has a solid understanding of the culture of participants, (c) using random sampling, (d) using prolonged engagement, (e) using triangulation, and finally, (f) employing peer scrutiny of the research and member checks (Shenton, 2004). This researcher employed five of these criteria for establishing the credibility of the research.

First, this researcher used a narrative inquiry, which is a viable and established research method for understanding participants’ life experiences. Second, the researcher has a solid understanding of the participants’ culture in that she has worked with members of the fire service for over 20 years. Third, subjects were chosen using random sampling. Fire service leaders were randomly recruited from fire departments throughout the United States, and all participants who were invited to participate in the study accepted the invitation. Fourth, peer scrutiny was used, as is recommended in narrative research to remove the potential biases of the researcher. Finally, triangulation occurred through the comparison and review of interview tapes. Member checks were established when the participants reviewed the researchers’ interpretation of the data collection after it had been transcribed.
**Transferability.** Transferability was determined at the conclusion of the study by utilizing participants’ selection, delimitations and limitations, study findings and interpretations, descriptive data, description of work, context, and dependability methods as noted by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The researcher provided descriptive data to make the transfer of data possible. Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to this as the thick description. This affords the next researcher the ability to determine if making a transfer is possible. The researcher in this study included the following: (a) criteria of selected participants, (b) descriptive data on participants, (c) participants’ backgrounds, and (d) leadership strategies they employed in their role as a leader.

**Dependability.** To ensure dependability, the study findings must be reliable, include valid data, and be free from the researcher’s bias. The researcher enlisted the help of two peer reviewers who met with the researcher on a regular basis to identify consistency of categories and themes. Each peer reviewer held a doctorate, and they had had minimal connection to the field of emergency services. Also, the researcher reviewed comments with interviewees at the conclusion of each interview to ensure that the researcher had accurately captured their thoughts and meanings of their stories.

**Conformability.** The criteria for the study’s conformability required that the findings could be independently verified as products of the respondents. This reduced the presence of any biases or motive on the part of the researcher. This was accomplished through an audit of the transcripts and the researcher’s reflective comments. These comments were incorporated into a reflective journal. The seven steps below were followed with all participants as the researcher completed the following in line with Shenton’s (2004) principles:

1. maintained an interview protocol
2. maintained pilot interview notes
3. maintained interview recordings
4. maintained interview notes
5. maintained any documents provided by participants
6. maintained a reflective journal
7. maintained coding information

All of these techniques were essential to support the trustworthiness of the study.

**Generalizability**

Although the sample population was small, the researcher recruited these fire service leaders from four regions within the United States.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

Ethical issues often arise and must be considered throughout the whole of any research process (Creswell, 2012). The main goals in this study were to ensure that no participant experienced any harm and that the researcher remained compliant with the regulations and ethical principles of the Institutional Review Board. The researcher has participated in and has become certified in this area and did follow these standards. Data collection was conducted in a safe environment that did not subject the participants to any physical or psychological harm. All data were coded and pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants. Only the researcher is aware of the identity of the participants.

**Identified Research Bias**

Narrative analysis sets the stage for the researcher to review stories of the participants, and the researcher must exhibit genuine respect for the participants and their roles. The researcher has a number of potential research biases that are listed here. First, the researcher is an academic dean who has worked with many members of the fire service. Through these professional relationships, the researcher has a clear understanding of fire service leaders’ and
the complements’ unwavering commitment to the success of their departments. This researcher also wishes for the success for all in the field. Second, the researcher has established many personal relationships over time with members of the fire service, and they have accepted the researcher as “one of them,” often including the researcher in their events both of celebration and despair. Third, the researcher has a profound interest in leadership development and the optimal leadership to ensure the success of all followers and the organization. Fourth, the researcher well understands the risks involved in the fire service field, as well as the essential role of a strong leaders, without whom members of the organization may be injured or even perish when responding to emergency situations. Fifth, the researcher has a family member in the career fire service, which only further demonstrates her commitment to and interest in the well-being of all fire service members.

**Informed Consent**

As noted by Creswell (2012), researchers must always obtain informed consent from their participant pool. All participants in this study signed a consent form to document their consent to be participate as human subjects in the research. A letter of introduction was sent to all participants and their agencies in advance for review so that the researcher could obtain the participants’ consent.

**Confidentiality**

The subjects’ participation was confidential and voluntary. The signed confidentiality agreement also stated that individual responses would not be revealed or identified. While there is no perfect formula to judge validity or rigor, criteria were developed by Pawson, Boaz, Grayson, Long, and Barns (2003). Their TAPUPAS criteria (first initials of all criteria: transparency, accuracy, purposivity, utility, propriety, accessibility, and specificity) described
below assist practitioners in assessing whether or not a participant’s knowledge claim is accurate.

The application of these criteria further ensures rigor and validity of the research:

• Transparency: Is the process of knowledge generation open to outside scrutiny?
• Accuracy: Are the claims made based on relevant and appropriate information?
• Purposivity: Are the methods used fit for the purpose?
• Utility: Are the knowledge claims appropriate to the needs of the practitioner?
• Propriety: Has the research been conducted ethically and legally?
• Accessibility: Is the research presented in a style that is accessible to a practitioner?
• Specificity: Is the research specific to the needs of the practitioner? (Pawson et al., 2003).

Chapter Summary

This chapter on research methodology provided an overview of the research design, including the rationale for using qualitative and narrative methods. In addition, the interviewing method was discussed in detail. The two central research questions were reiterated, followed by a discussion of data collection, analysis, and storage. The selection and recruitment of participants was reviewed. Central concerns in all studies with respect to validity, reliability, generalizability, protection of human subjects, confidentiality, and researcher bias were also discussed. Chapter 4 presents the detailed results of the analysis of the study’s findings.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the narrative research findings. This researcher interviewed 12 fire service leaders about their careers in the fire service with respect to leadership development. Five themes emerged: (a) principles for leadership development competencies, (b) creation of mentor relationships, (c) form of leadership training, (d) exhibited leadership styles, and (e) evidence of the role of the family. All of these themes evolved through the models of Argyris’s five principles of leadership development, Schon’s reflective theory, and Kolb’s experiential learning cycle theory. These themes evolved from the analysis of the study’s two research questions:

RQ1: How do experienced fire service leaders learn to develop key leadership competencies?

RQ2: What are the developmental experiences identified by experienced fire service leaders that future fire service leaders need to learn to acquire key leadership competencies?

The use of narrative research in the data collection process was guided by Schon’s reflective practice and Kolb’s experiential learning cycle. In this study, the semi-structured interviews with 12 participants, active and recently retired fire service leaders, were conducted addressed the participants’ personal reflections of leadership development and what each participant identified to be leadership development essentials, experiences, and practices. Each narrative was obtained from a face-to-face interview wherein the participants told their stories of their leadership roles and how those roles evolved. Within these narratives and stories, the participants spoke about family influence, personal and professional accomplishments, and training, experience, and mentor relationships.
The Participants

A total of 12 fire service leaders (one lieutenant, four battalion chiefs, one assistant director at the rank of battalion chief, and five chiefs) participated in this study. Eleven participants were from career departments; one was from a combination fire department. The complements ranged from 120 to 14,400 firefighters. Eleven participants were from career departments; one was from a combination career/volunteer department with a complement of 900 firefighters. Six of the participants were recently retired within the past 5 years; six were still active in their leadership positions. Finally, 10 participants were male and 2 participants were female. This profile of the participants will be discussed in detail below. They were diverse in age, rank, length of service, geographic region, paramedic certification, and education.

To protect anonymity, any personally identifiable information was removed from the interview excerpts used in this dissertation, and the participants’ biographical profiles were only partially revealed. Fictitious names and age ranges were used to further protect participants’ anonymity. Table 3.5 summarizes the participants’ characteristics. These characteristics include rank, years served in the fire service, age range, complement size, geographic region, population of area served, department type, paramedic certification, and highest level of education attained. A biographical profile for each participant follows, arranged by their geographic region.
Table 4.1

Characteristics of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Department Size</th>
<th>Geographic Region</th>
<th>Population served</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Paramedic Certification</th>
<th>Department Type</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Training Chief</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40-54</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>SW</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>H.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl</td>
<td>Assistant Director (Retired)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>55+</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>435,000</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40-54</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrah</td>
<td>Lieut.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25-39</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>564,000</td>
<td>Career/ Volunteer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>Battalion Chief</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40-54</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>1.32 million</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>Senior Battalion Chief (Retired)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55+</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hank</td>
<td>Battalion Chief (Retired)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55+</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bert</td>
<td>Battalion Chief (Retired)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55+</td>
<td>14,400</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>8 million</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene</td>
<td>Battalion Chief (Retired)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40-54</td>
<td>14,400</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>8 million</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55+</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>H.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>Chief (Retired)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55+</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>144,000</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>A.A.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55+</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Southwest Region

David. David retired at the rank of training chief in the military fire department. He has 29 years of experience in the fire service and is in the 40-54 age range. His role is unique because in the military fire service, a person serves in both the military and the fire service. He progressed through the fire service from firefighter to captain to assistant chief prior to his promotion to chief. As fire captain, David was deployed twice overseas. As chief, his role consisted of rescue and administrative duties. He was a member of a career department with a complement of 160 firefighters. The population of the city served by his department is 180,000 residents and is located in the Southwest region of the United States. David has paramedic certification. He has a high school diploma. He currently is retired from the armed services and serves as the program manager for the emergency service programs at a local community college.

Southeast Region

Adam. Adam retired at the rank of senior battalion chief. Prior to his role as senior battalion chief, he proceeded up the ranks from firefighter to lieutenant to captain. He retired with 40 years of service and is in the 55+ age range. He was a member of a career department with a complement of 421 firefighters. The population of the city served by his department is over 200,000 residents and is located in the Southeast region of the United States. Adam does not have paramedic certification. He has a high school diploma and has completed some college coursework.

Carl. Carl’s current rank is assistant director. He has 36 years of experience in the fire service and is in 55+ age range. Carl proceeded up the ranks from firefighter to paramedic to director. As director, his responsibilities include managing firefighters in the department. Carl
is responsible for administrative duties in his current role. He is a member of a career department with a complement of 980 firefighters. The population of the city served by his department is 384,000 residents and is located in the Southeast region of the United States. Carl does not have paramedic certification. He has earned both an associate’s degree in Fire Science and a master’s degree.

**Edward.** Edward’s current rank is director chief. He has 30 years of experience in the fire service and is in the 40-55 age range. He started his career as a firefighter after college and moved up the ranks, including paramedic certification and director chief. As director chief, he is responsible for overseeing all facets of the department. He is a member of a career department with a complement of 1,300 firefighters. The department serves a population of 658,000 and is located in the Southeast region of the United States. He has a master’s degree.

**Farah.** Farah currently holds the rank of lieutenant-company officer. She has also held the rank of firefighter and fire marshal. She has 8 years of experience in the fire service and is in the 25-39 age range. Her department serves a population of 564,000 and is located in the Southeast region of the United States. Her department is a combination department with 900 career members. She has paramedic certification and a master’s degree.

**Greg.** Greg currently holds the rank of battalion chief. He is a military veteran. Greg also serves as training director and is the director of the Fire Protection Program at a local community college. He has 22 years of experience in the fire service and is in the 40-54 age range. His department has 1,020 career firefighters and 250 reserve responders, serving a population of 1.32 million residents located in the Southeast region of the United States. Greg does not have paramedic certification. He has a master’s degree and is pursuing his doctorate.
Northeast

**Bert.** Bert retired at the rank of battalion chief. Prior to his role as battalion chief, Bert, who is a military veteran, worked in the private sector. He also served as a firefighter, lieutenant, and captain. He retired with 30 years of service. Bert falls within the age range of 55 and older. He was a member of a career department with a complement of 14,000 firefighters. The department he served is located in the Northeast region of the United States. The population of the city served by his department is over 8 million residents. Bert does not have paramedic certification; he has a bachelor’s degree.

**Irene.** Irene retired at the rank of battalion chief with 29 years’ experience in the fire service. She is in the 40-54 age range. She progressed through the ranks as a firefighter, lieutenant, captain, and battalion chief. Her responsibilities included leading and managing administrative and fire operations. Her department has 14,000 career firefighters and serves a population of over 8 million residents in the Northeast region of the United States. She does not have paramedic certification; Irene has a bachelor’s degree.

**James.** James currently holds the rank of chief. He is a military veteran and progressed through the ranks from firefighter to chief. He has served 40 years in the fire service and is in the 55+ age range. His career department has a complement of 160 career firefighters who serve a population of 65,000 in the Northeast region of the United States. He does not have paramedic certification. James has a high school degree and has completed 95% his coursework for an associate’s degree in Fire Science.

**Kyle.** Kyle retired at the rank of chief. He has 30 years’ experience in the fire service and is in the 55+ age range. He progressed through the ranks as a firefighter, lieutenant, training officer, captain, and chief. The career department’s complement is 450, and it serves a
population of 144,000 in the Northeast region of the United States. He does not have paramedic certification but has an associate’s degree.

**Larry.** Larry’s current rank is chief. He has 39 years of fire service and is in the 55 age range. He progressed through the ranks from firefighter to chief. He oversees a career fire department with a complement of 150 career firefighters. The resident population of the department he serves is 85,000 and located in the Northeast region of the United States. Larry is not a paramedic; he has a bachelor’s degree.

**Northwest**

**Hank.** Hank retired at the rank of battalion chief. He had 32 years of fire service experience and is in the 55+ age range. He progressed through the ranks from firefighter, lieutenant, captain, and battalion chief. He currently remains active in the promotion and development of higher education initiatives nationwide. Hank has served two departments in the Northwest region of the United States. The department that he retired from had a complement of over 600 firefighters and served a population of 600,000 residents. Hank has paramedic certification and a master’s degree.
This figure provides the rank of all the participants, ranging from the level of lieutenant to chief. Each one of these roles encompasses leadership capabilities. The participants were from six ranks within the fire service. As discussed in Chapter 2, all of these individuals are leading and directing others in the fire service.
The participants’ years of service range from 8 to 40 years. There were no participants who had 11 to 20 years of service. The majority of the participants (6) fall within the 31-40 years of experience range of 21 to 30 years of experience. One participant (1) falls within the range of 0 to 10 years’ experience.
The participants were asked to give their age within a 15-year range to protect their anonymity. The youngest participant fell within the 25-39 range; the oldest and the majority of participants (7) were in the 55+ age range. The second largest age group (4) was 40-54 years of age.
All but one of the participants came from career fire departments (11). One participant was a member of a combination fire department. Members of volunteer departments were excluded from the study.
Five of the participants had paramedic certification; seven did not have the certification. Participants included this information in their background data during the interview stage. Paramedic certification is one aspect of leadership development that was considered in this study because it was identified by the participants as an important aspect of their development.
The level of education of the participants ranged from high school diploma to a master’s degree. Notably, one participant was working on his doctorate at the time of the interview. The largest group (5) of participants held a master’s degree. The next largest group (3) of participants had a high school diploma. Two participants had a bachelor’s degree, and one participant had an associate’s degree.
Figure 4.7

*Population of Communities Served by Participants*

The populations of the communities served by the participants’ departments were divided into three broad groups: less than 99,999; 100,000-999,999, and over 1 million. Two departments served populations less than 99,999; seven departments served populations of 100,000-999,999, and three departments served populations of 1 million and above.
The above figure compares the complement size of the departments in which the participants serve. The complement size was divided into three ranges: 0-899, 900-9,999, and 10,000 and above. The largest group (7) falls within the 0-899 range; the second largest group (3) falls within the 900-9,999 range; and the third largest group (2) falls within the largest complement size of 10,000 and above.
This figure illustrates the geographic regions in which the participants’ fire departments are located. The Southeast and Northeast quadrants were equivalent with 41% of the departments located in those regions. The Southwest quadrant is represented by 10% of the departments, and the Northwest is represented by 8% of the departments. Notably, there were no fire departments located in the Midwest as the snowball sampling did not produce any possible participants from this region.

These figures provided visual representation of the demographics of the participants and their departments. They included the rank characteristics of the participants (3.1), the participants’ years of service (3.2), comparison of participants by age group (3.3), fire department by type (3.4), paramedic certification (3.5), education levels of the participants (3.6), population of
communities served by participants (3.7), comparison of complement size of department (3.8), and comparison of participants’ fire departments by geographic region (3.9).
Descriptive Insights

In the table below (Table 4.1), the researcher highlighted memorable moments that occurred during the interviews, many of which reccured. These highlights were based on the researcher’s journal notes The researcher also checked with the participants.

Table 4.2

*Interview Questions and Memorable Moments in Interviews*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Memorable Moments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tell me about your family background, and did your family influence you in becoming a member of the fire service?</td>
<td>Catholic faith, good families, strong work ethic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>When did you hold your first leadership role?</td>
<td>As a firefighter in the military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What are the competencies you hold as a leader?</td>
<td>Mentor to others in the fire service, being prepared, endless hours of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What are the most significant leadership training opportunities you were exposed to?</td>
<td>National Fire Academy, educational coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In that role, did you experience memorable moments from your subordinates or supervisors? What?</td>
<td>Learning from my subordinates and supervisors as they provide different perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>What leadership lessons have you learned over your career?</td>
<td>Every day is a learning experience and brings new challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Are there various leadership practices you have employed to promote your development as a leader?</td>
<td>Respondents stated that transformational and servant leadership styles were very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Are there any memorable moments or critical incidents that have affected your leadership development?</td>
<td>Varied events from promotions to catastrophic events that occur in the fire service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Are there any leadership training or educational experiences that you participated in during your career? Were they department-supported?</td>
<td>Fire Academy training, in service training, education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>How else would you identify the evolution of your leadership?</td>
<td>Started with the firefighter role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>What is the reality of being a leader in emergency services?</td>
<td>You are always the face of fire service and in a bubble; you must be ready to expect the unexpected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>What advice do you have for an aspiring firefighter?</td>
<td>Education is the key progression in the fire service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Themes

Overview of the Findings

Five themes emerged on leadership development based on the research questions and the analysis of the narratives:

RQ1: How do experienced fire service leaders learn to develop key leadership competencies?

RQ2: What are the developmental experiences identified by experienced fire service leaders that future fire service leaders need to learn to acquire key leadership competencies?

These themes are illustrated in Figure 4.1, and the emerging themes and categories within each theme are illustrated in Table 4.x.

Figure 4.10

Leadership Development Themes
Table 4.3

*Leadership Development Emerging Themes and Categories*

| Principles for Leadership Development Competencies | • Education  
• Professional development opportunities  
• Experience  
• Critical thinking  
• Effective communication |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creation of Mentor Relationships</td>
<td>• Importance of mentors with personal and professional leadership development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Form of Leadership Training | • Formal training  
• Informal training |
| Exhibited Leadership Styles | • Servant  
• Transformational  
• Follower-Centered |
| Evidence of the Role of the Family | • Family history in the fire service  
• Strong work ethic  
• Support and guidance  
• Religious influence |

Four of the five themes were actionable, as the fifth theme, evidence of the role of family, did not provide a specific conclusion and cannot be operational in an actionable format. Four of the themes have a direct correlation to leadership development and are operational for the leadership development of future fire service leaders. Notably, principles for leadership
development competencies was the most significant theme and was highly recommended by all participants. The second theme, creation of mentor relationships, also was significant and played a crucial role in personal and professional leadership development. Early in the analysis of the data, formal and informal leadership development were identified as two separate themes, but with further analysis, they were combined as one common theme: forms of leadership training. It was also noted that most of the training in this area was self-initiated. The leadership style theme was based on traits that the interviewees exhibited in their responses. The conclusions of this study are organized by the common themes that were discovered. The following section provides an overview of each theme, interpretations, and conclusions within each of the themes.

**Principles for Leadership Development Competencies**

All participants demonstrated leadership development competencies, and all participants offered advice for future leaders. This information provided insight into the best practices they considered to be most important to groom future leaders.

Kyle included personal accounts of his leadership development:

> Chiefs are trying to lead people who will follow you anywhere. Basically, firemen will follow the leader anywhere if you’re a good leader.

Kyle’s advice to aspiring firefighters is to understand the job of being a leader in the fire service and to know who the stakeholders are:

> You can’t sell yourself. You have to stick to your principles. Don’t let someone convince you that the organization is more important than the people who make it up. The fire department is always first. Bottom line of fire department the fire trucks don’t put the fires out. The Mayor doesn’t put the [the fires out]…. The firefighter put the fire out. If you don’t get that, if you don’t get who does the work, you’re really not a leader. (Kyle)

**Education**

The participants had a number of things to say when asked: What advice do you have for aspiring firefighters?
Two things. One is pursue a degree, preferably in Fire Science... Get outside of the fire station. Work in the training, fire prevention, and logistics. Move around the department and get a full view of the department. (David)

Hank identified experience and education as the two components to being a successful leader:

It’s experience and education. By experience, it’s don’t get locked into doing nothing but working in a fire station. Obviously, the other experience part of it too is on incidents, like particularly in a place like ________ where you have large scale incidents all up and down the state—was to again get out on those incidents as much as possible and to try to do so in positions other than suppression. (Hank)

Next, Hank and James both stressed the importance of education:

The second part of it, obviously, is education. I use words of caution with the men and women about their education, and that is number one, I emphasize strongly that it’s through regionally accredited institutions. (Hank)

My advice would be to obviously acquire as much knowledge as possible, in training and education. To be self-motivated and never, ever, go off-duty without having learned something. (James)

Larry reconfirmed the importance of his education:

My education paid off. Having the college degree gave me the tools to know how.... I needed college—it’s what really got me where I am. (Larry)

Professional Development Opportunities

Our message doesn’t change a whole lot. What changes is how we deliver it to people: how we change that behavior, how we get across to children, teenagers, the 20-, 30-year-olds, the elderly, is the trick—how we can get them to buy into that. (Adam)

Adam discussed the approach they use to deliver the message. Notably, the message must change with the generation that the presenter is addressing:

Edward does training now and expressed areas of concern:

I tell this story when I teach sometimes, because I teach about leadership now. I talk about the five levels of leadership when I teach, the kind of leading from where you are and all that kind of stuff, but I can really, really, truly remember when, as a captain on the tiller truck, being in charge of all those individuals that were older than me. ... It is what it is. I always try to be true to myself.... Basically I guess at the end of the day what
I’m saying, I had a title, and I had a position, and it was recognized, but it was not followed. I think a lot of that has to do with relationships, myself. That’s what I think.  

(Edward)

Edward also addressed the importance of outside influence on personal and professional development:

I’m very fortunate in meeting and building relationships with a lot of top people in the profession that will actually allow me more opportunity. I’ve been very fortunate in that aspect, and none of that would have happened if I’d stayed back there. They say, “How do you know these people?” I said, “Well, if I go to this conference, just talk to them.”  

(Edward)

Hank identified an international-level program, The International Public Safety Leadership and Ethics Institute, which provides leadership opportunities in the area of public safety. The Institute’s mission is to develop individuals through innovative leadership and ethics education to become effective leaders who are guided by ethical standards in the field of public safety.

Well, hypothetically, or in an ideal world, you actually begin that process of developing leadership for your organization through your recruitment processes. As the training chief, you get what HR sends you. (Hank)

Experience

Bert addressed the importance of being a positive role model as well as ensuring that the others in the complement were prepared:

Give them all the support you can. Give them all the knowledge and tools they need to become good at what they do. Make sure that they learn the skills, the physical skills to do the job. To just elaborate on that, how could I teach forcible entry from a book? It says, “Put the tool in the door like this.” You know what? If I don’t know how to do it myself, to hold the tool and show them—In other words, I had to develop those skills in order to become the teacher. (Bert)

David had quite a lot to say concerning advice and best practices for future leaders:

The advice that I would have for somebody else that wants to come up in the fire service—here’s my advice to that: Find the place where you are happy in life, whether
that is a firefighter, an engineer, a fire chief. If you are happy with your place in life, don’t strive to become the next level if you truly don’t want to be it. (David)

Irene discussed the importance of experience:

_I was a lieutenant, I was the typical lieutenant. I did take an assignment to truck company because I didn’t have any truck experience._ (Irene)

_I got injured. I had a herniated disc in my neck. I had to have surgery—and this was just suggesting surgery—and I went to the chief medical officer, and she said, [Irene], you have the surgery, you’re not going back to the field. I said, “Okay, then we’ll do everything else.” I’ve never experienced that feeling. When I saw [the medical officer], I said, “You were right, but the stress didn’t leave until I left the job”. (Irene)_

_It’s to be prepared._ (Irene)

Critical Thinking

Carl and James addressed this theme:

_These days, it’s going to be personnel. Our society has changed. We have a different group of folks being hired. Their vision is more job-related. It’s not “What I can do for the community—we spent $549,000 for a piece of equipment, a truck. They just wrecked the truck, just an example. No one reported the damage, brand new truck. Definitely not like that years ago. Everybody makes a mistake. Now it’s like trying to get away with something, and it’s really hard for me to comprehend and understand that. Losing things, you don’t know where it’s at. The accountability is out._ (Carl)

James also commented on the fact that when you are the leader, you need to be prepared to handle both good and bad situations:

_The reality of being a leader is that the buck stops here._ (James)

_The city of ______, we’ve had alarms of fire that we’ve had multiple fatalities. I’ve been at fires where there have been up to 10 firefighters trapped in an upper floor with fire below it and no way out. There’s been a number of critical emergencies.... It’s like a discernment._ (James)

Effective Communication

The participants had the following to say about effective communication:
I think a lot of it as far as from a leadership standpoint, is direction: “Where are we going?” (Bert)

...trying to deal with them because that’s where we have most of our fires. (Larry)

Our message doesn’t change a whole lot. What changes is how we deliver it to people. How we change that behavior, how we get across to children, teenagers, the 20-, 30-year-olds, the elderly, is the trick. How we can get them to buy into that. (Adam)

Adam discussed the best approach for delivering the message, noting that the message must change from one generation to the next; you need to consider who your audience. Edward added information on all areas of the fire service that a leader may encounter:

I think each time that you go to any type of training or education, whether it’s dealing with leadership or any other type of topic, that the more people that you talk to from outside your little world, the broader perspective it gives you for when you go home to try to implement or sell new ideas. (Edward)

Farah is the youngest leader that was interviewed and discussed the importance of being a good listener:

People. People are very important. People and listening, and they kind of go hand in hand, but I think the majority of the fire service is bred to train and dictate and show. (Farah)

Greg addressed the number of leadership roles that he grew into over time. He noted that he was clear in what he expected of the firefighters whom he led:

I was the liaison between the captain and the firefighters. I made sure that when the firefighters came in, they knew what the captain expected. They were prepared, did their jobs, helped me check out the engine, and knew where everything was. That was my responsibility. As I progressed in the service, I picked up different leadership roles. (Greg)

Hank discussed the importance of critical thinkers and that they are crucial to the fire service:

I think the other thing in developing leaders for the future in the fire service is not only do we have to teach them to be ... critical thinkers and to think critically, we have to teach them the concept that the fire service is an element of the community, not the element of the community. (Hank)
James suggested that great leaders need to be negotiators; the fire service leader must work with various leaders in the community and must be flexible.

*Obviously, I’ve learned that being a great firefighter doesn’t necessarily mean that one is going to be a great leader.* (James)

Kyle discussed the importance of determining the best traits that will be suited for a leader:

*You’re exposed to a lot of different leaders. You get to pick and choose all the good traits. There’s no lack of being exposed to good traits. Unfortunately, there’s no lack of being exposed to bad traits either.* (Kyle)

**Creation of Mentor Relationships**

Eleven of the 12 participants identified the importance of mentorship. Another common theme among all the participants was the importance of mentors in their leadership development. They all identified the importance of mentors in their careers. Participants identified multiple mentors who had provided guidance or assisted with their personal development as a leader. The mentors were all males. Some were family members that continued to support them along in their careers.

**Importance of mentors in personal and professional leadership development.** Adam talked about mentors from the time he was a volunteer and how everyone in the fire service looked out for him, but he talked about his chief specifically:

*The fire chief was the most influential because...he had that air about him that you knew he was the one you wanted to follow, you respected him. He was always looking out for the public and instilled that in us. He led us and we were cutting edge, he brought in new ideas.* (Adam)

Bert recalled a chief who took the time to talk to him during their shift:

*We had a chief in Quarters, the ___ Battalion, and there’s this old-time Irish chief. He never went to bed. He always stayed up late at night doing paperwork.... I would go in and just talk with him, sit down and talk.* (Bert)
Greg stressed the importance of knowing the people whom one works with and taking care of them:

"I’ve had a couple mentors. The one that sticks out in my fire department was Chief ___. He was a training instructor, but he was battalion chief, but he was a training instructor, did a lot of the academies for firefighters. One of the things that struck me about him is, I didn’t even work on a shift. He’d only met me a couple of times, but I was in Lowe’s one day with my dad, when my dad was still alive, and we were walking through the aisles. He walked up to me, and he shook my hand, he shook my dad’s hand and said, “This ___, he’s going to be a good guy.” (Greg)

Hank has similar thoughts when referring to fire service mentors. He also addressed his family’s influence that David had addressed. Hank discussed his dad and other professional mentors who have had a lasting impact on him:

"A mentor would always be my father. And then another very profound friend and mentor was a gentleman by the name of Tom… He was a motivational speaker. (Hank)

Larry’s interview took place in his office, and throughout the interview, he kept referring to photos of previous chiefs on the wall who had mentored him throughout the years. Each one provided significant guidance to him. He also referred to a police chief who provided mentorship to him. In fact, he elaborated on the importance of working with the police department and networking:

"He really believed in me. He saw something and he encouraged me to stay where I would have probably been the police chief. I tell that to ___ all the time….. They don’t tend to do that but it’s important that you network.” (Larry)

David talked about a long-lasting relationship he has had with one of his mentors. This mentor provided him guidance for over 30 years:

"___, to this day he’s a mentor of mine, 31 years later, because I followed in his footsteps, and he, over the years, has watched me.” (David)
David continued to state that his dad was a mentor too. His influence was to have a
strong work ethic. David also stressed the importance of multiple mentors and different types of
mentors. Each one provided different support in his progression through the fire service:

*My dad was a mentor. What I mean by that is that the work ethic he instilled in my
brother and me.... (David)*

Edward spoke to the importance of multiple mentors too. He referred to outgrowing
mentors as a person develops. He stressed the importance of always finding new mentors to help
that development. It is evident in the narrative below that multiple mentors help a person to
evolve. He addressed the growth and development that transpired in his career due to his
mentors. He did refer to outgrowing a mentor but always made reference to his first mentor,
Bob:

______, probably number one ... he’s the one that started all of it. There’s been a few
since then, but this is the other thing I think about mentorship, I didn’t get to see him as
much, because as you go up in ranks, and you’re in the field doing your own thing ... but
I always know I can pick up the phone and call him. (Edward)

Farah identified two mentors and how they supported her in different roles. Farah
stressed the importance of seeking out a mentor and building networks with others in the fire
service whom she thought to be successful. This approach worked well for her, and she always
mentioned them in an upbeat and positive tone:

*I consider two that I have...... I don’t know if they know they’re my mentors. I force them
into it a little bit. Chief ____ , who retired from our department ... has given me some of
the best advice and vast exposure. Learning from his mistakes, I couldn’t even put a
price tag on that type of coaching and leadership. (Farah)*

*I loved the captain in that fire house. He was a person I wanted to be more like—not his
captain skills, but as a person, he was such a fine man that I felt really ... He was always
encouraging me with the studying. (Irene)*

James identified his father as his mentor as well as the Marine Corp:

*My father provided guidance and the years in the Marine Corp. (James)*
Kyle took a different approach to his career and considered traits that he didn’t want. He determined that others could remind him of the traits he did not want to acquire.

*A lot of time it’s based on the negative of what you’ve been exposed to…. Whatever. It was never one individual, because you’re exposed to a lot of different people; some outside of fire department. You try to take those traits that they exhume and fake them on. Also you would think over time we would have nothing but good traits.* (Kyle)

Kyle’s approach is unique from all the others. He identified both the importance of both good and bad traits. Irene addressed the support that she received from many of her mentors. That support carried on in her own leadership.

**Forms of Leadership Training**

Eleven of the participants participated in either formal or informal leadership training. Formal leadership training was generally considered important by the participants and not supported by their departments. All participants stated that they participated in formal or informal training at the department level, but not specific to leadership, and felt it was needed to establish the foundation that was necessary to be a leader. Nine of the participants discussed training at the state level, again not specific to leadership. Eight referred to the national level, specifically attending the National Fire Academy, and they considered this to be an outstanding opportunity for leadership development.

Formal training. Formal training was supported by Adam’s chief and department. He attended the National Fire Academy:

*Our fire chief, especially when I was in _____, (supported formal training) our fire chief was very much interested in us being well trained…. Most of the people he brought in were people that were well recognized, or had experience at what I would consider a higher level, a higher impact in for that.* (Adam)

Carl basically promoted his own formal training with no support from members of his department:
From a department standpoint? No. No. No. That’s one of the things I wanted to change, to offer those things. My big requirement was that you’d have to sit in that position for 3 years before you’d be promoted so I know that you have some experience before you’re at the next level. That’s what the union shot down, shot down everything through the parish government, so you’re handicapped. (Carl)

I have EFO, I’m a big trainer… I love training. Fire Officer III and Instructor III. Basically they offer something. I’m also a paramedic. (Farah)

Hank referred to the extensive leadership training that he had to develop and how there was very little for him when he was progressing through the ranks. He was encouraged to attend the National Fire Academy and did, but that was the only formal leadership opportunity afforded to him:

Very, very little as I was progressing up, very little formal training. The only thing that we were really emphasizing at that time, as I was progressing up the rank levels was ICS positions, stuff like that. I did, I did (come to the National Fire Academy). When I was in my paramedic coordinator position is when I got a chance to come back because typically the department wasn’t sending anybody if you were working field positions ideas. That carried on for quite a while actually and then through my graduate school, ultimately, there was another battalion chief, _____, he and I went to graduate school together and we were able to convince the university to allow us to do a joint thesis. That led to the creation of the ______ Leadership Institute. (Hank)

Irene did not attend the National Fire Academy and received most of her formal/informal training at the department level:

I was offered one leadership training course with what they call Fire Offices Management Program. I never attended the National Fire Academy but, also when you become a lieutenant you go through FLIPs, First Line Supervised Training, which all over the state to attend. I went to _____ Fire Academy for the very first time for Women’s weekend and the first women’s week they had in 2002. That was the first time I ever attended ____. I have only attended the Women’s weekend there. (Irene)

James discussed the importance of formal training:

Formal training is a part of the fire service. The state requires so many hours a year, and basically, our policy is part of our daily schedule is that we had at least 2 hours a day of training. Also I have taken various courses at the State Fire Academy also at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg. There was leadership training involved in most of the courses I’ve taken. I’ve also attended lectures and seminars from those that were considered to be the gurus in the fire service: national gurus (James)
My advice would be to obviously acquire as much knowledge as possible, in training and education. To be self-motivated and never, ever, go off-duty without having learned something. (James)

Kyle attended the National Fire Academy and was supported by the department. He found the academy to be very informative:

I went to the National Fire Academy. I think in fact that was probably while I was at the training division. Any of those things like that they encouraged you to..... Before there used to be whatever training happens in house that was it. Nothing extra, unless you were a training guy. That was my job to train people. That’s different. If you’re in a fire house and you train new guys, you’ve got to do it on your own. You’ve got to do it on your own. (Kyle)

Larry stated that he attended the National Fire Academy as well as had formal training at the state fire academy. He found both to be informative in his leadership role:

You have to send them to the ___’s program. Then, sending to the Fire Academy if we can. That then allows them to be a better trainee for their crew, and they have a better focus on what they need. We were encouraged to come to the national fire academy and we brought in people for leadership seminars, quite often to the department itself. It varied depending on what was going on but six times a year, we met as officers within the department and did some internal training and then, probably at least quarterly, if not sooner, we were doing more training. (Larry)

Informal training. Bert’s department offered a mentorship program, which linked him to the leaders of his department:

No to formal training, I went into a mentorship program, and it was a chief’s mentorship program. What are the protocols? The firefighters were great. (Bert)

Carl discussed the importance of understanding leadership. Carl did seek out outside literature to support his leadership journey:

Read all you can about being in leadership, Ronnie Coleman has a good book Going for the Gold, it’s lonely at the top (Carl)

Greg stated that there was no formal training in his department. He discussed the former military training that he had received with no support for training from his department:
Formal training for leadership was in the United States Military, I went through the NCO Leadership Academy. I went through the Senior NCO Academy. (Greg)

It is evident that the participants’ approach to leadership training in a formal or informal format did exist. The format did not seem to be consistent, but many praised the format at the National Fire Academy as it was consistent over the years.

Exhibited Leadership Styles

Eleven out of 12 of the participants demonstrated leadership styles that included servant, transformational, and follower-centered, according to the researcher’s observations.

Servant leadership. David discussed his approach to leadership and to being a great teacher. He also self-identified as using servant leadership:

*I’m a people person, so I try to treat people like I want to be treated. I have a lot of empathy for individuals. We’re in the people business. People are having a bad day enough if we show up. Whatever we do, we should be doing it helps them.* (David)

*If you want to strive, the higher you go up it’s servant leadership and I am such a huge fan. The things that I have achieved in my career has nothing to do with what I did. If I was able to do anything is that if I can make them feel that they are a valued member of this team.* (David)

Greg demonstrated the importance of the value that the followers bring to the fire service by showing respect at meal time:

*Station meals in a fire station are very important. It’s part of the culture. When we sit down we eat together. I always make sure we eat together. You make sure that you let them eat first.* (Greg)

Transformational. Adam considered leadership a true partnership with the members of his department:

*I’m a people person, and treat people like I want to be treated. I have a lot of empathy for individuals… whatever they are going through…. We should be doing what needs to be done to help.* (Adam)
Edward’s leadership style would be defined in the area of transformational as he understood the importance of assisting others in self-development:

_In order to feed the right people, you’ve got to give them help and structure.… My personality lends itself to good, hard workers, not necessarily do they care about education and stuff like that, but they study enough and they train enough to get the job done. Lazy people usually do not like me._ (Edward)

Hank had the traits of a transformational leader. He discussed the International Public Safety Leadership Ethics Institution that strives to leads by example, and he stressed the importance of self-improvement, stating that he was a strong proponent of the ISSLEI Program:

_The (IPSLEI) Program teaches them to be critical thinkers and to think critically.… We ask the question: What role does your organization play in exercising leadership for the community?… Leadership development starts at recruitment._ (Hank)

Irene demonstrated traits of a transformational leader. She was a role model and motivated others:

_Don’t micromanage. Give them a task. Walk away. Give them a chance to do it but come back before it should be complete to correct any mistakes. That works well. It really does. It’s two really silly things but it’s true._ (Irene)

James demonstrated the traits of a transformational leader. His approach was to identify the needs of the department and get a buy-in from others:

_It’s very beneficial to be able to motivate people and have them want to reach your goals on their own without directly forcing them to._ (James)

Larry said that he understood the importance of his role as a leader:

_They all know me, I encourage my chief officers…. I encourage networking…. I go to visit people and ask if they need anything from us….how is it going?_ (Larry)

Follower-centered leadership. Bert demonstrated a leadership style of follower-centered. He worked closely with his subordinates to encourage positive growth:

_I also developed this tool, this mentorship program._ (Bert)
Farrah believed that listening was a very important aspect. Through this listening, the development of the follower will be supported:

*People are very important. People and listening, and they kind of go hand in hand, but I think the majority of the fire service is bred to train and dictate and show, but the listening and understanding your people and being predictable, those type of things.* (Farrah)

Kyle was a role model as well as supported his firefighters:

*A leader understands who does the work.... And supports them. That’s really what it’s about. In the fire service and the police department, probably the same…. These are service. We’re not making widgets..... Most firemen want to please (and understand the goals of the department). They really do. They want to please.* (Kyle)

**Evidence of the Role of the Family**

Another emerging theme among the 12 participants was the role of the family in influencing their choosing a career in the fire service. Eight of the participants had family members who served in the field of emergency services, specifically in the fire service. Thus, not all 12 interviewees had families of origin in the fire service. Yet, their families of origin may still have wielded some influence over them in their choice of career in the fire service. One comprehensive study did find a link between family of origin influences on career development and one’s occupational choice (Chope, 2002). The study further concluded that family members become involved in these choices even when they are unaware of this influence (Chope, 2002). Based on their comments, it is evident that having members in the fire service in one’s family provided an influence on many of the participants in this study.

**Family history in the fire service.** A subcategory that emerged in this theme was family history in the fire service. To that end, the following comments were made:

*My uncle was a volunteer firefighter that I started out in.* (Adam)

*My son was a volunteer firefighter.* (Carl)
My daddy died when I was in second grade, and then my mother got remarried, she married firefighter…. Growing up I never thought I would be a firefighter. (Edward)

I was actually raised in a whole fire department world, uncles, cousins…. I have a picture of me 2 years old in my uncle’s turnout boots….. I think just like most of the guys. I was there. I liked it. (Farah)

I got involved in the fire service as a junior firefighter. I knew I wanted to help people at a young age. (Greg)

My uncle was a firefighter and he retired out as a captain II, ____. I had a cousin in ___ department. His two sons are both firefighter paramedics. On the fire side, as family background, on the fire side, I had a lot of that. (Hank)

My dad was a firefighter…. I was young when he retired. (Irene)

My late father was a fire captain in the ___ Fire Department. I still remember him in that role to this day. (James)

Strong work ethic. Anther subtheme was work ethic. The following comments were made:

My dad was a mentor. What I mean by that is that the work ethic he instilled in us… he just inspired in us to work hard. (Adam)

Dad was very strict disciplining…taught us our core values growing up, work hard and earn your keep. (David)

They have a very strong work ethic. (James)

Support and guidance. Another subtheme was support and guidance. As noted by Chope (2002), A supportive family will teach or support the new connections with others or promote networking in the field, which in turn will result in strong ties and support to career success. The following comments were made concerning this subtheme:

A big Italian family that I was pretty much raised by, good family life, excellent. (Farah)

We (my sisters and I) were encouraged by our dad to try things and do things…. We would mow the lawn as soon as we could…we had no choice… that’s the way it was, a real team effort. (Irene)
It comes from my upbringing, my parents, that strong family. I do remember when my dad saying, “You want to be a what? You got a 4-year degree and you want to do what?” (Larry)

Religion influence. Seven of the participants (58%) included religion during their discussion on the role of family. The research considered this significant since over half of the participants mentioned religion. Six of the participants, 50%, discussed the Catholic faith specifically.

A good family structure….we were raised Catholic and stayed together. (Carl)

Raised Roman Catholic. (Greg)

Attended Catholic schools. (Hank)

I went to an all-girls Catholic high school. (Irene)

They did their best to instill in their seven children the Catholic faith. (James)

Good Catholics…went to Catholic grammar and high school. It [the Catholic faith] was very strong in my upbringing. (Kyle)

I was brought up Baptist, and I am a member of Purchase Friends Meeting…. It is a community that helps you in life when you have issues or needs…. My parents built a foundation. (Larry)

Leadership Development

Leadership development includes formal training, developmental activities, and self-help (Yukl, 2013). Formal training works well when the top executives support the training (Yukl, 2013). Developmental activities can be set up by human resources or other areas of a department, and they may include succession planning, career counseling, and simulation of leadership experiences (Yukl, 2013). Other programs may include self-help through computer interactive programs (Yukl, 2013). All three were of these forms of leadership development were mentioned by the participants. The participants talked about formal training at local, state, and national levels. Examples of developmental activities included mentors, family influence,
and self-identified best practices. Finally, self-help was identified as a leadership development style that transpired throughout their careers.

All of these themes support leadership development and can be applied to Argyris’s five principles of leadership development, using his double-loop learning theory. The participants’ transcripts revealed the principles in the themes that they support. These include family background, mentors, leadership style, formal and informal training, and best practices for future leaders. Each one of these themes promotes the importance of the overarching premise of Argyris’s five principles of leadership development, as listed here:

1. The learning should be based on the use of real-life problems that include a quick response.

2. The effective implementation or action should be directly connected to the participants’ competency and skill level, as well as consideration for the group of colleagues they work with.

3. Problems must have participants taking action or determining how they achieve approval.

4. Problems need to be difficult enough to require innovative thinking for a resolution.

5. The action used as a leader should be used to solve future problems. (Argyris, 1993)
Figure 4.11

*Principles of Leadership Development Competencies and Theory Application*

Figure 4.1 demonstrates the theoretical application to the theme of leadership competencies. This competency includes education, professional development, experience, critical thinking, and effective communication. Yukl’s developmental activities and self-help (2013), as well as Argyris’s Principles (1993) support and can be applied to this theme.
Mentorship was discussed by all participants. Through inductive analysis, this theme emerged as did theoretical relationships. This theme encompasses different types of leadership training.
Leadership training was revealed during the deductive analysis as a predefined element. The forms of leadership training included those identified by Yukl (self-help) and four of Argyris’s five principles: 1, 2, 4, and 5. These developmental activities support this theme.
Leadership style was either self-identified or revealed in the participants’ explanations of their approaches to their own leadership development. Yukl’s self-help (2013) and developmental activities supported this convergence of leadership style and theoretical application. Further, all of Argyris’s principles can be applied here. Kolb’s developmental activities are created through the individual’s experiences, both on and off the job.
Yukl’s (2013) self-help and developmental activities can be applied to the role of the family. Yukl’s support of the role of the family was determined during the deductive stage of the research through the common responses. Further, Schon’s reflective practices also support the participants’ reflections on the role of their family in their leadership development.

Before summarizing this chapter generally, this researcher wishes to summarize commonalities that emerged from the participants’ interviews. First, all of the participants talked about their spouses and family members. Ten of the participants who talked about families—and they all talked about their families favorably—identified the role of family values growing up as having a significant role on their success in the fire service. Six of these 10 included their Catholic upbringing as a factor in these family values.
All participants described the experiences of moving through the ranks of firefighter as being deeply rooted in the culture of the fire service. All participants also valued education and considered it to be important in the development of a firefighter. Seven of the participants stressed the importance of their military background. Nine of the participants said that they had studied for promotion exams in groups with other department members; five had studied with the same members of their departments throughout their career. All agreed that teamwork is essential to being successful in the fire service. Each of the 12 participants said that they had sought out on their own training and coursework that helped them in their leadership development. This included seminars, coursework with the National Fire Academy, and attendance at their State Fire Academy, as well as the work they completed through the Executive Fire Officer training.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the research questions:

RQ1: How do experienced fire service leaders learn to develop key leadership competencies?
RQ2: What are the developmental experiences identified by experienced fire service leaders that future fire service leaders need to learn to acquire key leadership competencies?

From the individual narratives, using both deductive and inductive analysis, five themes emerged for leadership development that provide the basis for informing the leadership development of the next generation of fire service leaders. These five emerging themes are (a) principles of leadership development competencies, (b) creation of mentor relationships, (c) forms of leadership training, (d) exhibited leadership style, and (e) evidence of role of the family. In the final chapter, Chapter 5, this researcher will discuss these five emerging themes and their implications, as well as offer recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret the key findings from the narrative research interviews and to present conclusions in response to the purpose of the study. This chapter is divided into three sections: (a) overview of the study, (b) interpretations and conclusions, and (c) recommendations for future research.

Overview of the Study

Firefighters hold a special place in society, and they are portrayed as community heroes that are fit and brave and provide selfless service to community members. The fire service is tasked with the large order of protection of property. They help those in need, be it saving someone from a burning building or being first-responders to a terrorist attack. The preparation for, and undertaking of, the range of emergencies that firefighters face requires capable leaders who have the requisite expertise, education, professional development, and training. In addition to the many significant challenges that these leaders face, they must deal with the challenges that present with understaffing, as well as the selection process of next generation leaders and rooky firefighters, all under the umbrella of the complexity and diversity in the 21st century.

Stress is also an issue, which is characteristic of the emergency services field in general (Scott & Myers, 2005). It can also be emotionally demanding. Since the 9/11 attacks, stress has increased because not only are firefighters concerned about saving others, but they must be concerned about their own safety. This stress often leads to physical ailments. One example is heart disease: “Heart disease causes 45% of the deaths that occur among U.S. firefighters while they are on duty” (Kales, Soteriades, Christophi, & Christiani, 2007, p. 1207). This is an alarming statistic that needs to be recognized and addressed by all in the fire service. Kales et al.’s study illustrated the importance of recognizing firefighters as being in a high-risk group (Elliot et al., 2004). When not fighting fires, firefighters often lead sedentary lifestyles, which
can lead to obesity, hypertension, and chronic musculoskeletal complaints (Elliot et al., 2004). In addition, cancer is another major concern for firefighters as they are often exposed to toxic substances: “The carcinogen exposure during active firefighting may promote and enhance progression of specific cancers that are already present rather than induce them de novo” (Youakim, 2006, p. 230).

The health of firefighters and ranking officers is one priority that should be addressed in the establishment of future leaders. The fire service has an organizational culture made up of the emergency services’ norms, values, mores, and beliefs of the individuals members of the organization, as well as of the surrounding environment they serve. This culture provides the foundation or guidelines for the members to function. In 1952, Elliot Jaques defined organizational culture as follows: “The culture of the factory is its customary and traditional way of thinking and doing of things which are shared to greater or lesser degrees by all its members, and which new members must learn, and at least partially accept, in order to be accepted into service in the firm” (as cited in Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013, p. 160). Jaques identified the importance of the cultivation of the culture and knowledge that is disseminated from the current members to the new members.

Consideration of the outside environment’s effects on the organization must also be considered. As stated by Hatch and Cunliffe (2013), “Organizational cultures have a two-way relationship with the environments in which they are found and from which they recruit their members” (p. 163). The outside environment might be likened to the universe, and the organization is a piece that exists within the universe. So, when the universe is disrupted, the organization is disrupted as well. For this reason, Hatch and Cunliffe asserted, “Thus to fully
appreciate organization-environment relations you need to track conditions and trends in the environment in addition to doing a tier-organizational network analysis” (p. 61).

These current leaders interviewed for this study understand the importance of, and need for, having competent future leaders (Traut, Larsen, & Feimer, 2000). This study stresses the importance of understanding the current fire service leaders’ history, beliefs, and strategies in order to inform and ultimately prepare future leaders in the fire service. Individuals who are involved in the fire service field are exposed to situations that are often dangerous and require the ability to stay calm, think clearly, act rationally, and provide leadership in the most challenging of situations. But Scot and Myers (2005) also stressed that these situations are often emotionally demanding, and this factor also needs to be considered when seeking employment in the field.

**Emergency Services Culture**

The purpose of this study was to inform the leadership development of the next generation of fire service leaders through the reflections of today’s experienced leaders. The importance of maintaining a strong leadership structure is reinforced by the number of fires and other emergencies that occur every year in the United States. This was accomplished by capturing the narratives of 12 current or recently retired fire service leaders. The study explored and documented their leadership development journeys. Five common themes emerged: (a) leadership development competencies, (b) mentorship, (c) leadership training, (d) leadership style, and (e) role of the family.

Leadership development prepares leaders to assume their roles effectively by providing the tools for them to become competent and efficient. Leadership has been continually evolving over the last 3,000 years and continues to evolve as we attempt to learn from current and previous leaders. Yukl (2013) recognized that changes have occurred in both the external and
internal environments of these organizations where organizational leaders now face numerous challenges. This has prompted the need to address these challenges. This research will contribute to the limited literature on leadership development in the fire service.

The narrative research method was selected as the best mode in which to collect the stories of these current and recently retired leaders in the fire service. This method allows for the retrieval of both professional and personal knowledge from the participants (Caduri, 2013). The findings of this study provided insight into the participants’ individual characteristics, from five themes were generated. Participants were members of career and combination fire departments throughout the United States, held the rank of lieutenant or above, and had at least 8 years of experience. Over 50% of the participants had 30 years or more experience. Interviews were transcribed, and data was analyzed both deductively and inductively. The findings were coded in three cycles: initial coding, reduced coding, and formulation of refined themes and new categories. The themes were organized and categorized to include the participants’ stories on their leadership journey in the fire service. These findings were described in detail in the previous chapter. The study’s finding provided insight into the participants’ backgrounds and the evolution of the five common themes. The findings of this research were determined through the use of the narrative research techniques, which were guided by the theories of Schon and Kolb. Schon’s reflective practice theory recognizes the practitioner’s know-how. It looks at how practitioners solve real work problems and the application of their knowledge to the problems and processes to resolve them (Wieringa, 2011). Kolb’s experiential theory was also utilized. The use of these approaches afforded the researcher the opportunity to explore each participant’s leadership development journey through the participant’s self-reflection. The transcripts were also vetted through Yukl’s leadership development processes and Argyris’s leadership.
development principles. The five emerging themes were identified in Chapter 4, and they will be discussed in greater detail below.

**Theme 1: Principles for Leadership Development Competencies**

All of the participants provided input into the categories of the theme of leadership development of future fire service leaders. Their reflections provide the foundation for future leadership development as all participants demonstrated in their reflections determination and commitment to the leadership development of the future leaders. As a result of inductive analysis, five subthemes were identified within this first theme: education, professional development opportunities, experience, critical thinking, and effective communication. Some of these subthemes are addressed below.

First, all participants discussed the importance of experience, obtaining knowledge, and formal higher education. One respondent, Hank summed this up in the following way:

> When staff assignments or administrative assignments come up, imperative that they take those assignments. The reason that it’s imperative is because they get soloed in their fire station and they don’t understand the complexities of running an organization. It’s an awakening for them. And they broaden their perspective when that happens. The second part of it is, obviously is education. I use words of caution with the men and women about their education and that is number one, I emphasize strongly, that it’s through regionally accredited institutions. I emphasize to them, if you... let’s say if you’ve obtained a master’s or excuse me, a bachelor’s degree in Fire Service Management, get your master’s degree in something completely different. (Hank)

Hank’s comments were echoed by all the participants. In regards to experience, all of them stated that future leaders need to take advantage of any experience or training opportunities. Eight of the participants talked about forming study groups for preparation of promotional exams:

> I made a decision that I would start to study for promotion, the next test was going to be four years out, so I really jumped in with both feet and started studying every day. We were all friends, and we all had the same let’s say goal. We formed a study group, and we made it, if you will, a business. Why I say that is this was not going to be a social meeting of five firemen getting together, talking about fire stories and what do we got to
read? We made it a business that we formed this study group because we have a goal, and that goal is to be promoted to lieutenant. We were giving assignments to each other, and you’d come back to the group, and you would deliver it. (Bert)

Five of the participants also addressed the importance of recognizing the different characteristics of Generation Y. As previously introduced, Generation Y is technology-savvy, uses social media as one of their primary modes of communication, tend to be self-centered and have a sense of entitlement, and are confident in themselves (Black 2010). They are also close to their parents and look to their parents for support and promotion of their self-centeredness and assistance in making life decisions (Macleod, 2008).

Carl made the following reflections:

I think it’s a generational thing. You hear people say at a McDonalds, a hardware store, or whatever, “I can’t get anybody to work.” I think that’s part of that. The parents are working so the kids are brought up with little parental guidance and interaction. Kid may be at home as a latchkey kid and that’s the way they grow up. They don’t know how to interact. It’s incumbent on the leaders and managers today, to be the motivator and guide, encourage, entice, or however you want to say it, the shift to go train and to work out and to study for their annual test, or whatever it is. I’m not sure my grandson would even know how to use a hand saw. (Carl)

In sum, education, experience, professional development opportunities, use of critical thinking skills, and effective communication are needed in leadership development of future fire service leaders. Notably, education and experience opportunities must be explored. Furthermore, an understanding of the characteristics of Generation Y need to be considered as a component of leadership development when developing opportunities for future leaders.

**Theme 2: Creation of Mentor Relationships**

“Mentoring has been defined as a relationship whereby a more senior, experienced individual is committed to providing development assistance and guidance to a less experienced protégé” (Kram, 1985, as cited in Ghosh & Reio, 2013, p. 112). This is not a new concept, and the career benefits that mentees experience are numerous and include (a) knowing how to display
appropriate skills and attitudes, (b) receiving exposure and visibility, (c) being able to observe firsthand ethical integrity, and (d) being coached in how to deal with difficult situations (Ghosh & Reio, 2013). Yukl (2010) also emphasized the significant role that mentors play in leadership development.

Mentors played a significant role in all the participants’ leadership development. In fact, during the interviews, all participants would perk up and speak in a loud and enthusiastic voice when talking about their mentors. Titles or names of the mentors were quick to be discussed, and they told many stories of how these mentors had had a positive influence in their careers. All participants but one referred to having a mentor in the fire service. Four of them stated that members of a volunteer fire department had mentored them. Three of them had served as volunteers before joining a career department, and one had had numerous interactions with fire service members because a family member worked in a volunteer department. In two cases, the participants commented that negative behavior assisted them too. After having observed the negative behavior, they both stated that they had asked themselves what they could do differently in that situation. Those two participants made it clear that the negative behavior was something they would never display in their leadership roles.

Five of them had actively sought out mentors. Mentors helped them with various operational issues they encountered and also guided them through various challenges that they faced. All of the participants stated that they had multiple mentors throughout the years. Only one participant, Bert, stated that a formal mentorship program had been offered to him a program developed by the chief and offered to all captains. In this formal mentorship program, when they had made the rank of captain, they were to ride along with a battalion chief for 3 months. During this time they would be able to observe firsthand the expectations of this rank. Hank talked about
his other mentors, including individuals who were not in the fire service. These mentors espoused the importance of family members, education, and professional development that supported the members of the fire service.

The two women participants spoke of males who had taken on the role of mentor. Irene is currently on the board of directors of an organization that was established by women in the fire service to provide a formal mentorship program for females. This program serves those who have expressed an interest in or are currently a member of the fire service. It is a successful program that includes women in the fire service throughout the United States and Canada. Its mission is “to encourage the participation of women in the career and volunteer fire service of the State of New York; to disseminate pertinent fire service information to its members; to provide a supportive network and communication among women in the fire service; to conduct an annual training week for fire service women; to annually hold Phoenix Fire camp, a week-long residential summer camp for young women” (Fire Service Women of New York State, 2015, par. 1). One instructor in the program stated that “this is the next generation of women in firefighting, and we are thrilled to be their mentor” (Fire Service Women of New York State, 2015, par. 4 Ber).

One respondent, Edward, discussed the importance of mentorship when an individual is growing and developing as a leader; he relied on these mentors. The mentors helped expand his knowledge, skills, and abilities. Edward further discussed how they push one to work with others outside the department:

*I’m very fortunate in meeting and building relationships with a lot of top people in the profession that will actually allow me more opportunity. I’ve been very fortunate in that aspect, and none of that would have happened if I’d stayed back. I wouldn’t be involved in FESHE, but the person that got it all started is _____. He was the fire instructor at the _____ Fire Academy when I came on in ’85, and he ended being the Deputy Chief of the _____ Fire Department. Throughout his whole time, we always stayed in contact. I
didn’t get to see him as much, because as you go up in ranks, and you’re out in the field doing your own thing ... but I always know I can pick up the phone and call him ....... building the relationships of people that think proactively and have a passion for their profession, so when you go back and you’re surrounded by all the naysayers, the people that don’t care, the people that wouldn’t go anywhere, you can always think, man, out there, I know there’s some other people that think like me, and wouldn’t this department be a whole lot better if there was more people that had the passion for the job, that had the willingness to try to learn to do the job. (Edward)

In sum, mentors are a vital component of leadership development. These mentors provided all participants with an opportunity to develop as a leader. Thus, it can be deduced that mentors are a clear necessity in the leadership development of future leaders.

**Theme 3: Forms of Leadership Training**

Leadership training exists on an informal and a formal level. Informal training was provided at the department level for all participants. Five of the participants discussed state training that was offered, which was considered a much-needed source of the leadership development:

*Yeah. Not being up that Fire Academy, I would not have gone this far as I did. That was a really big piece for me because the motivation, my officers at that time.* (Larry)

The most significant training was offered at the National Fire Academy, which the participants identified as being the most comprehensive. The National Fire Academy has national recognition with fire departments, and its leadership programs are an outstanding resource for formal leadership development and were discussed by eight of the participants. Four of them stated that this was an opportunity that they explored on their own or through the advice of a mentor. The other four stated that their department initiated the training at the fire academy, and the participants were paid to attend. The National Fire Academy has an Executive Officer Training Program (EFOP), which provides senior fire officers with a broad perspective on various facets of fire and emergency services administration. The courses and accompanying research examine how to exercise leadership when dealing with difficult or unique problems.
within communities” (FEMA, 2010, par 5). A number of the participants claimed that this was an outstanding program in leadership development. However, two of the participants stated that they did not complete the program due to professional obligations.

EFOP students enhance their professional development through graduate and upper-division baccalaureate courses taken over a 4-year period. Courses are offered over a 2-week period. The course requirements include the completion of an Applied Research Project (ARP) that relates to their department. This ARP is due within 6 months after the completion of each of the courses (FEMA 2010). One testimonial of this program is offered here: “The Executive Fire Officer Program experience has been one of the most rewarding of my fire service career.... The development and growth opportunity assisted me in moving through the fire department ranks. In researching fire service issues, I was able to propose best practices for our department, adopting and building upon the body of research for our future fire service” (U.S. Fire Administration, 2015, par. 3).

One participant stated that she had just been accepted into the program and considered it an honor to be chosen to participate as the criteria for being selected is rigorous. To be selected, the following criteria must be met by all attending:

1. Participants’ rank or position must be one of the following: chief of department or equivalent or a chief that heads a major bureau or division within a fire department/emergency medical services organization.

2. The participants’ training could include suppression, emergency medical, prevention, emergency management, and training at the rank of battalion-level chief officer and above from metro-size fire organizations (U. S. Fire Administration, 2015). If this was not the level of rank mentioned, but the firefighter serves in a supervisory level position (e.g., battalion chief, captain,
lieutenant, etc.) and aspires to a more senior position of authority, the program will consider participation in the leadership program. Firefighters, firefighter paramedics, engineers, drivers, or chauffeurs are not considered eligible (FEMA, 2010).

3. There also is an academic requirement that includes either a bachelor’s degree with strict guidelines on the number of credits by life experience that will be considered.

Four of the participants referred to the training they had received in the military prior to their rank in the fire service and the leadership development training that they received. Military training can be considered as training in the fire service as it parallels the training that a firefighter receives. Some of the training is similar due to the formal structure of both organizations.

In sum, leadership training provides a method of hands-on learning and the opportunity for a learner-engaged environment (Yonghui, 2010). It can also facilitate the learner’s interest, involvement, and participation in development (Yonghui, 2010). Formal leadership training is necessary for the development of future fire service leaders. The National Fire Academy leadership programs are an outstanding resource to receive formal leadership development training, and many departments send their members for formal development. In addition, informal training at the department level is provided.

**Theme 4: Exhibited Leadership Styles**

Some leadership theories refer to the importance of the follower. With the interest in leadership development, it is only natural that theories and perspectives would be the foundation of research in the field. Yukl (2013) identified three variables teristics necessary for understanding leadership effectiveness: They are the characteristics of the (a) leaders, (b) the followers, and (c) the situation (p. 26). Three leadership styles were introduced in Chapter 2:
transformational, follower-centered, and servant. These three leadership styles are discussed briefly below.

**Servant Leadership**

Servant leadership was first introduced in the 1970s and values the service to others. Good servant leaders offer assistance in a timely manner to assist their subordinates in goal and skill attainment (Chen, Zhu, & Zhou, 2015). When an employee can observe a leader’s servant leadership behaviors, employees acquire similar strategies when serving their clients (Chen et al., 2015). This leadership style also facilitates creative and innovative work performance to benefit the organizational performance (Chen et al., 2015). Two of the participants self-identified as following the servant leadership model, and one other participant exhibited traits that a servant leadership style would demonstrate.

**Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership uplifts the morale, motivation, and morals of the followers (Bass, 1999). Transformational leaders are encouraged to empower their followers through a focus on quality and service (Bass, 1999). If the followers believe in the mission of the organization, then they will build commitment and support objectives established by the leaders (Yukl, 2013). Three participants demonstrated the characteristic traits of transformational leaders. James provided further insight into transformational leadership in relationship to the fire service:

> I’ve learned that being a great firefighter doesn’t necessarily mean that one is going to be a great leader. It’s very beneficial to be able to motivate people and have them want to reach your organization’s goals on their own. To implement the department’s goals... there’s a style, it’s more negotiated. You can sell your concepts to your subordinates and also your bosses, political bosses, things go more smoothly with less stress. (James)
Follower-Centered Leadership

Follower-centered leadership can be traced throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} century and continues to flourish in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century (Baker et al., 2011). This style places the emphasis on the follower, as it considers the followers to be the most important component of the organization—as without followers, there would be no leaders (Bligh et al., 2011). Follower-centered leadership is unique in the sense that it focuses on the development and growth of the follower (Baker et al., 2011). With the steady increase in the popularity of this approach, the concept of followers being passive, compliant, and taking orders has gradually been replaced with a more proactive approach to the importance of followers. The follower-centered leadership has a significant impact on the importance of leadership processes and what motivates the followers (Bligh et al., 2011). Four participants demonstrated the characteristics of follower-centered leadership. As evidenced in this quote below, Kyle understands the importance of his followers:

\textit{Don’t let someone convince you that the organization is more important than the people who make it up. The fire department is always first. Bottom line of fire department the fire trucks don’t put the fires out. The mayor doesn’t put the [the fire out]…. The firefighter puts the fire out. If you don’t get that, if you don’t get who does the work, you’re really not a leader. A leader understands who does the work.} \textit{(Kyle)}

The 12 participants embraced all three leadership styles, and as such these three leadership styles provide a foundation for this research into preparing future leaders in the fire services.

Theme 5: Evidence of the Role of the Family

As stated by Bratcher (1982), “The family’s myths, rules and boundaries are among the most influential systemic issues likely to affect one’s career” (Chope, 2002, p. 176). In this study the participants offered numerous comments supporting the family’s influence in their development in the fire service. All participants stated they came from a “good” family. Granted, “good” is subjective in nature, but one could deduce that all participants had a positive
childhood. Six of them discussed their Catholic upbringing. Chope (2002) contended that religion is one of the most important variables to be considered when young people make decisions (the other being running a family business). Three of the participants’ families owned businesses; however, they did not elaborate on their roles in these businesses.

Nine of the participants came from families who were connected to the fire service. Five participants had had an important relationship within the volunteer fire service prior to their career positions. All nine who had family members in the fire service said that this helped them to understand the organization and the expectations of being in the fire service. Five of the participants discussed the importance of a strong work ethic being instilled in them from a very young age.

Eleven participants discussed the strong family support and guidance they had received. Thus, these fire service leaders made their career choices with full support from their families. Chope (2002) referred to this as a family member giving unconditional emotional support, suggesting that members of the family support all decisions that one makes. However, as the family structure and dynamics continue to evolve, traditional patterns of family influence on career choices have been altered. Notably, there is an increase in single-parent households; gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender families; domestic partnerships; and grandparents as primary caregivers (Chope, 2002). These changes also affect members of the fire service.

In sum, family influence has played an important role in the lives of the participants, which emphasized a strong work ethic, provided an introduction to the fire service, and supplied emotional support.

Implications for Practice

Based on the finding of this doctoral thesis, two areas of implication for practice are evident. The first is for aspiring leaders in the fire service, and the second, is for fire
departments looking to provide direction and opportunities to those aspiring leaders. Both of these implications will provide and promote the opportunity for future discussions for both groups.

The most significant implication is for aspiring future leaders in fire service to seek out opportunities in leadership development. These future leaders can learn from the experiences and best practices of these 12 successful leaders in the fire service. The participants offered guidelines and recommendations for future leaders. These included (a) seeking out mentors, (b) pursuing formal and informal training and education, (c) learning from one’s experiences in the field and administrative units, and (d) receiving the support of family. Additionally, future leaders should review various leadership styles (i.e., servant, transformational, follower-centered) to determine which style best suits them and the organization for which they work.

First, mentors figured significantly into the leadership development process for all 12 participants. Numerous examples were provided. These mentors came from their families, from the fire department they work in, from another department, and from members of organizations that they worked closely with.

Second, formal and informal education and training were recommended. The most highly recommended resource for formal training for leadership development was the National Fire Academy. Their program was known nationwide, and all participants who had received training from the National Fire Academy reported that they had had a positive experience with it. Informal leadership development opportunities include meeting with members of the department informally to create networks and initiating professional development events, such as guest speakers or roundtables. Formal education may also provide future leaders the opportunity to study and become familiar with the various leadership styles, which would allow them to
identify and enhance their own natural leadership style. In short, formal education can provide a foundation for leadership growth. All participants identified testing as the means of promotion in rank. They strongly advocated joining or creating a study group to network with through their leadership advancements. If a strong network is formed, then success is more likely to be the end result. The other two areas that figured significantly into their leadership development were family support and experiences in the field.

The second implication of this study is that fire take an active role in creating an environment that encourages leadership development opportunities. While the firefighters must be accountable and unique responsible for their own development, fire departments should make these opportunities for development available. These opportunities might include formalized mentorship programs, training and educational opportunities, and helping to create promotion test-taking networks. If a firefighter wishes to become a fire service leader, he or she should seek out and participate in these programs early on in his or her career. Finally, fire service departments need to be aware of the unique qualities and characteristics of Generation Y, our next leaders in the fire service, in order to offer exceptional and customized training and guidance for these future leaders.

These implications for practice were extracted from the interviewees’ input. The researcher understands that not all firefighters wish to become fire service leaders. However, for those who are interested in leadership development, from the researcher’s experience, academic background, and work with various fire departments, it is evident that the individual state fire academies, The National Fire Academy, and local higher educational institutions are outstanding resources for both the aspiring leaders and the departments that are members. If an aspiring
leader needs sponsorship or approval to attend any of these institutions, the department should provide support.

**Future Research**

The research on leaders in the fire service is limited. Numerous studies have been conducted on leadership development but few are specific to the fire service. And those few that do exist, are narrow in scope. Future studies could include specific levels of rank and other demographics that include diversity components of members of the fire service. Specific diversity components include might include gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and progression of leadership, or how these demographic components reflect the communities they serve.

One must first consider that most fire service leaders are adult learners when strategizing how best to provide leadership development opportunities. This can be accomplished through an understanding of andragogy. To practice andragogy, everything related to learning and teaching adults needs to be explored (Knowles et al., 1998). This theory attempts to identify how adult learners learn and how to involve them in the learning process. Andragogy is based on six learning principles. First, the learner must understand why learning is important; that is, the learner must be aware of how the material will benefit them, through the why, what, and how it will relate to the learner. Second, the self-concept of the learner must be considered. Is the learner confident and comfortable in the learning environment? Are they self-directed in the learning process? Third, the learner’s own experiences must be considered: the role of the learner in the learning process. Fourth, the learner must be ready to learn. What stage in life are they in, both developmentally and with life experiences? Fifth, is the orientation to learning making the learner feel comfortable with the setting? Finally, andragogy states that adults can be motivated by both internal and external factors. This approach would work well in the fire
service. All learners have experience that has been obtained over their lifetime, and it needs to be applied in the learning process.

Additionally, future research needs to consider the characteristics of Generation Y and how they learn. The leadership development opportunities need to fit the learning styles of this generation. Generation Y is unique in the characteristics and talents that they bring to the workplace. They are the generation of students and employees who will represent the upcoming leadership in the area of fire service. They embrace different perspectives and technology. They are radically different from previous generations. They are sometimes defined as having a lack of commitment and possessing a sense of entitlement. One concern with members of Generation Y is that they may expect frequent promotions and yet lack a work ethic that would provide the means to be promoted. Understanding the makeup of Generation Y is necessary to successfully attract them to leadership development. This may include online networking and learning as well as the use of social media. We must now take the knowledge of our current talented leaders and share it with the aspiring future leaders so that the needs of the fire service and members of their community are met. Finally, an unanticipated finding was the importance of the participants’ religious faith (50% of the respondents discussed their Catholic faith). Thus, further researchers might wish to review historical data on religious influence in the fire service culture.
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doi: 10.1080/135943299398410


Appendix A
Format and Scripts for Interviews

First Interview Introduction

In this initial conversation, the researcher will introduce herself, establish rapport, review the study, and answer any of the participant’s questions. After the participant has signed the Informed Consent Form (Appendix C), the researcher will thank the participant for agreeing to take part in the study, then ask the participant to do the following:

- Fill out a demographic information sheet
- Choose a pseudonym to use for the study

Script

My name is Marianne Buttenschon. I am a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Education program at Northeastern University. I am in my final phase of my doctoral studies at Northeastern University.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this dissertation research. The purpose of my research is to gather stories about your experiences as a leader in emergency services. This interview will focus on your experience and the experiences leading up to this role. I am hoping the study will provide me with greater insight for future leaders in the field of emergency services.

All information is (and will be kept) anonymous and confidential, with no personally identifying information used. Throughout the interviews, I will refer to you by your chosen pseudonym. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. At this time please review and sign consent form.

With your permission, I will record this session. Afterward, I will provide you a copy of the transcript for your review. May I proceed?
After obtaining the participant’s agreement to continue, the researcher will address the participant by his or her pseudonym, beginning the formal interview process as follows:

**Background Questions:**

We will not start the actual interview just yet; however, I would like to start by asking you for some background information that will help me understand your experiences. This part should take no more than 5-8 minutes, so please provide brief answers.

- Please tell me about your family background?
- Please tell me about your educational background? (did you like high school/college, what were your interests?, major)
- What made you decide to choose the field of emergency services?
- Please tell me about your progression in the field of emergency services?
- How many years have you been in the field of emergency services?
- What is your current title or recent title before you retired?
- How often did you participate in formal training?
- How often did you participate in formal leadership training?
- When is the last time you were required to attend formal leadership training?

After asking the background questions, the researcher will begin the formal interview, stating the participant’s pseudonym when describing with whom the interview is taking place. In an introductory statement, the researcher will reiterate that all responses are confidential, and will ask if the participant has any remaining questions before starting with formal interview questions.
Appendix B
Introduction Letter to Participants

Marianne Buttenschon
9663 Luke Road
Marcy, N. Y. 13403
315-525-6384
mbuttenschon@mvcc.edu
April 19, 2015
Recipient
Title
Address

Dear Recipient,

I am a doctoral candidate pursuing my Ed. D. in Organizational Leadership from Northeastern University. I am currently conducting my doctoral dissertation study on leaders in emergency services. Future leaders in emergency service need to be prepared to lead their organizations as the role becomes more demanding and complex. To prepare the future leaders, we must capture the stories of the successful current and recently retired leaders. I am interested in having you participate in this study. Enclosed is a summary sheet that provides an executive summary of my research for your review.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may quit at any time during the study.

I will be in contact with you next week to request your participation. I appreciate your time and consideration in this research. If you have any questions for me prior to our talk next week, please contact me at the above number or via email.

Sincerely,
Doctoral Thesis Executive Summary

Dissertation Title: Reflective Insights from Today’s Fire Service Leaders: A Narrative Inquiry to Inform the Next Generation’s Leadership Development

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this doctoral thesis is to uncover the ways experienced fire service leaders learned to develop key leadership competencies. This study explored the leadership development experiences of twelve fire service leaders stationed around the United States in order to understand how they learned to become competent leaders, and to identify their perceptions of the key competencies future leaders need to learn.

Theoretical Framework: The primary theoretical framework guiding this doctoral thesis is based on Argyris’s learning theory. The application of Argyris’s (1999) learning theory to leadership development is the primary lens used to explore the leadership journeys of experienced fire service leaders. The premise of Argyris’s theory is the notion that individuals can engage in meta-cognitive process to examine the link between what one does, and why. Argyris has extended his work to leadership development and he has identified five principles leaders need in order to engage in single-loop and double-loop meta-level learning.

Research Questions: The following research questions were used to guide this study.
RQ1: How do experienced fire service leaders learn to develop key leadership competencies?
RQ2: What are the developmental experiences identified by experienced fire service leaders that future fire service leaders need to learn to acquire key leadership competencies?

Research Design: A narrative approach with specific semi-structured interviews of 12 fire service leaders from various career fire departments in the United States. The study will be organized into three phases: Phase 1 will involve identifying, recruiting and contacting potential participants to confirm they meet the criteria of study, to obtain informed consent, set interview dates and times, to gather initial demographic data, and to establish rapport. Phase 2 will include the data collection. There will be 45 to 90-minute audio-taped interviews using semi-structured questions with 12 fire service leaders. The questions will focus on their personal leadership development experiences, their reflections on professional development experiences as fire services leaders, and sharing of any potential innovative practices associated with the development of next-generation leaders. The interviews will occur face-to-face, and all audio tapes will be transcribed by rev.works.com and the use of journal notes will be considered. Phase 3 will involve coding and data analysis. This will include a follow-up reflective interview protocol via email in which the participants will have an opportunity to provide any additional ideas about the items discussed as well as review the transcripts. Also, participants will be asked to further elaborate or detail previously identified innovative practices related to leadership development if necessary. The data analysis will involve both an inductive approach to explore their narrative and a deductive phase involving an overlay of the data with Argysis’s (1999) learning theory.

Significance: It has become more apparent since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks that leaders in the field of fire service have an appreciation for key competencies to lead. They need these skills to facilitate collaboration among various agencies that are involved in the field and
those constituents the fire service leaders will be assisting (Barg, 2009). Understanding the comprehensive leadership development process of current fire service leaders can help design approaches for training, professional development and educational opportunities, and mentorship programs. This study provides valuable leadership development knowledge in approaches to best identify, educate, train, and support future leaders in the field of the fire services.

**Key Terms:**

- **Argyris’s (1993) Learning Theory:** A theory that is linked to leadership development and principles (Argyris, 1993).

- **Career Fire Departments:** Complement of paid firefighters (NFPA, 2011).

- **Combination Fire Department:** Complement of paid and volunteer firefighters (NFPA, 2015a).

- **Complement:** The quantity or amount that completes or fills; complete quantity, provision, or set; full allowance, totality (NFPD, 2015a).

- **Double-loop learning theory:** Double loop learning refers to the use of change in a mental model on which a decision is being made (Richardson, 2014).

- **Emergency Management:** Organized analysis, planning, decision-making, and assignment of available resources to mitigate (lessen the effect of or prevent), prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of all hazards (FEMA, 2010).

- **Emergency Services:** A term that is identified in the United States with existing emergency offices such as police, fire, and ambulance (FEMA, 2010).

- **Fire Agencies:** Refers to fire agencies that have career and combination fire departments (New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency& Competitiveness (n.d)).

- **Fire Service:** An organized fire-fighting and fire-preventing service or department. (FEMA, 2010).
**Narrative Research:** Research that is concerned with stories. These are stories that were solicited and analyzed by the researcher (Creswell, 2012).

**Schon’s Reflective Practice Theory:** Through the practitioner’s know-how it addresses how to solve real-world problems and the application of knowledge to those problems and processes (Wieringa, 2011).

**Semi-structured Interviews:** An interview technique that includes both predetermined and spontaneous interview questions (Creswell, 2012).

**Single-Loop Learning Theory:** Is the repeated attempt at the same problem, with no variation of method and without ever questioning the goal (Greenwood, 1998).

**Volunteer Fire Department:** A department with volunteer personnel (NFPA, 2012).
References


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doi: 10.1177/0741713608327367


http://training.fema.gov/hiedu/docs/hazdem/session%201%20syllabus%20intro%20to%20e%
0em%2014february0%20.doc


http://www.nfpa.org/research/reports-and-statistics/customized-reports
Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: Reflective Insights From Today’s Fire Service Leaders: A Narrative Inquiry to Inform the Next Generation’s Leadership Development

Principal Investigator: Dr. Margaret Gorman
Northeastern University Student Researcher: Marianne Buttenschon

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask any questions that you have at any time. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell me if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and provide you with a copy.

Why are you being asked to take part in this research study?

We are asking you participate in this research study on leadership in the field of emergency services because of your expertise in the area. You have served as a top leader in this field, and your experiences and stories will provide insight for aspiring and future leaders in this field.

Why is the research being done?

The purpose of this dissertation research is to prepare future leaders in emergency services by capturing the experiences of successful leaders in the field. A qualitative, narrative research approach will be used to identify those experiences that have influenced you as a leader.

What will I be asked to do?

As a participant you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview to capture a narrative story of your leadership development. This interview will be 60–90 minutes in length with the goal of obtaining a foundation of your leadership development, training opportunities, personal events, mentors, and experiences that have shaped you as a leader.

The interview will be scheduled face-to-face, unless circumstances do not allow; then interviews will be scheduled via the use of technology of Skype or Go-to–meetings.
You retain the right to decline answering any questions at any time. In the follow-up phase, interviewees will have the ability to check the accuracy of transcription and interpretation. Interviewees’ perceptions of leadership development, traits, and styles will be discussed. Interviewees will be asked to provide advice to aspiring leaders in emergency services.

Also, you may be contacted for clarification and follow-up if necessary. The transcription will be sent to you for accuracy, and the final report will be sent to you upon request.

**Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?**

You will be interviewed at a time and place that is convenient for you. There will be two interviews. The main semi-structured interview will take about 60 to 90 minutes. After the initial analysis, I will mail you a transcription and analysis to check for accuracy and schedule a follow-up video conference for 20 to 30 minutes.

**Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?**

There will not likely be any serious risk in participating in the interviews although there may be some discomfort as you reflect on the challenges you faced in your life.

**Will I benefit by participating in the research?**

There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. However, the information from this study will be used to prepare future leaders in emergency services.

**Who will see this information about me?**

Your part in this study will be confidential. Only the researchers on this study will see the information about you. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way or any individual as being part of the group.

The researcher will take every precaution to keep all information confidential. Only the researcher will see the information about you. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way. Your statements during the interview will be transcribed by a professional company following industry standards for security and confidentiality. Participants are identified as Participant 1, Participant 2, etc. All recordings and transcripts will be maintained by Marianne Buttenschon until the thesis has been approved. Afterwards, all transcripts, recordings, and data files will be destroyed.

Real names will not be used in the notes taken during the interviews. You will be assigned a pseudonym that only Marianne Buttenschon will know. That pseudonym will be used throughout the interview to ensure confidentiality and protect your identity.

In rare instances, authorized people may request to see research information about you and other people in this study. This is done only to be sure that the research is done properly. We would
only permit people who are authorized by organizations such as the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board.

Can I stop my participation in this study?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to, and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. Your participation or non-participation will not affect your relationship with Northeastern University or any other organization.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?

Please contact the researcher, Marianne Buttenschon, at (315) 525-6384 or by email at buttenschon.m@husky.neu.edu. You may also contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Margaret Gorman, by email at m.kirchoff@neu.edu.

Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: (617) 373-4588, Email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Yes, I agree to take part in this research:

________________________________________________________________________

Print Name/ Signature/Date

________________________________________________________________________

Print Name/Signature of person who explained the study/Date
Appendix D

Post Interview Follow-up E-mail

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your time and willingness to share your experiences with me on (date).

As we discussed, I am sending you the transcription of the interview for your review for accuracy (see attached). Please feel free to edit, as well as add additional thoughts, ideas, and reflections.

Please contact me when you are complete with the review, via email or at (315) 525-6384. Thank you again for your time and consideration in this research to prepare future leaders in emergency services.

Sincerely,

Marianne Buttenschon
Appendix E

Leadership Development Competencies Supplement Transcripts

Chiefs are trying to lead people who will follow you anywhere. Basically, firemen will follow the leader anywhere if you’re a good leader. That’s all I try to be, was to be a good leader. That was very difficult because I want to be a leader of them and have them follow me. It was down a path that even I didn’t buy in. Even I didn’t buy into it. That’s where it’s like this is stupid. I struggled for … I said for two years before I realized this is pointless. This is politics. Not the job is politics. Politics could care a less about what’s going on in a firehouse. The Mayor has many different hats. One of them being, she is an employer. She is the boss of 4000 people. She has an under ling who did … She could care less about that. She has the Deputy Mayor who that was his job to take care of the personnel issues. She didn’t even … That wasn’t a high priority. Sorry, not that I had a go to her. You have a Law Department. You have Human Relations. You got water suit. You’re competing for dollars.

You’re trying to keep it out of City Hall so that there is no hassle. …… For the most part, that was the problem that we always thought about, and always heard about is you’re spending 100% of your time at about 5% of your employees, the troublemakers. I didn’t want to be that person where all we talked about were the troublemakers because after a while you just think that every employee is a troublemaker. That kind of is a drag. It’s a part of it. That may not be a problem for some people. Again, based on my personality that was like, “Most firemen are great. This sucks,” and that like, “Why are we spending so much time.” You’re draining our energy because of your being stupid. Good people are being forgotten. That was another thing. Like I said, just some people have no problem doing that they love. They love antagonizing and fighting and anything to do with the like, “I’m out on all that.” You know what I mean.

That part was … That’s where the leadership thing. You didn’t have to do that. I could keep my firehouses in checking and make sure they playing right … doing the right things without having to do any of that at that level, but when you get to the top level, and it gets to a point where some one’s spring into you. Now, you have to deal with it. I get it. That’s our job … Having disciplined people for stupid things; DWI’s and all the stuff that’s just starts that life. You know what I mean. I get it. That’s part of the job of chief, not necessarily being a leader. That’s a part of being an administrator. That’s an administrator job, not necessarily a leadership role...It has to be done. Unfortunately, there’s nowhere else to go where you are at the top. Those things by default fall on your lap too. Those are the things that like I said the leadership part, I had no problem being a leader. I don’t care……I’d be the face. I’d be here. I’d there….. No problem being the leader. ……..administrative part was at that level; budgets, discipline with the union, and hearings. That was all new…..There was a learning curve of having to learn all those things and the process and what’s they’re entitled to…… That’s all stuff that we had to learn. It wasn’t fun, but it was more the … The worst part was having to deal with the politicians. ....trying to not educate them, but you would talk to them and try to educate them. I really don’t think they will ... They really are at their own agendas.” (Kyle
Education

(What advice do you have for aspiring fire fighters?) Two things. One, is pursue a degree. Preferably in Fire Science, rather than some other topic just to get a degree. The classes today in the Fire Science, or Fire Engineering programs are much more useful today into fire service than maybe even they were, years ago. That’ll pay dividends because it will put them in a little better position, than folks that are not in college. They’ll have information that they’ll be able to use. They will have been in decision making scenarios and things that they’ll be able to use. It’ll give them a leg up. Get outside of the fire station. Work in the training, fire prevention, and logistics. Move around the department and get a full view of the department. Not just my fire station. Too many folks ... I loved it too. Love to ride the firetruck and don’t want to do anything else but they want to be promoted. To be promoted, you may not always be riding on a firetruck. If you have no experience ... Like myself, being in a fire marshal’s office, the experience I have as an investigator, as an inspector, certainly helps me today. (David)

Hank feels there are two needs, experience and education to be a successful leader.

It’s experience and education. By experience, it’s don’t get locked into doing nothing but working in a fire station. When staff assignments or administrative assignments come up, imperative that they take those assignments. The reason that it’s imperative is because they get soloed in their fire station and they don’t understand the complexities of running an organization and more times than not, I can tell you these kids would come in and they’d get assigned to a staff position, either because they were on a worker’s comp deal, an injury type of thing and they were on light duty or they decided to do it, usually in a very short period of time, they sit back and go, “Oh my gosh, I had no clue that that is what it takes to run the place.” It’s an awakening for them. And they broaden their perspective when that happens. That kind of fits the experience part of it.

Obviously the other experience part of it too is on incidents, like particularly in a place like XXXXXXX where you have large scale incidents all up and down the state was to again get out on those incidents as much as possible and to try to do so in positions other than suppression. Get a job in the plan section or the logistics or whatnot because again, you get a feel for what does it take to manage and run and so forth these large scale organizations. That’s an important piece. (Hank)

Next, Hank stresses the importance of education.

The second part of it is, obviously is education. I use words of caution with the men and women about their education and that is number one, I emphasize strongly, that it’s through regionally accredited institutions. Two, that, be cautious about limiting degrees. While there’s a big push
for all these fire service management degrees, and the likes of that, they are limiting degrees. I emphasize to them, if you ... let’s say if you’ve obtained a master’s or excuse me, a bachelor’s degree in Fire Service Management, get your master’s degree in something completely different. (Hank)

My advice would be to obviously acquire as much knowledge as possible, in training and education. To be self-motivated and never, ever, go off-duty without having learned something. My advice would be to treat others as you would want to be treated, to lead by example, and to keep developing that component of wanting to help others. As I said, especially those most in need of it. Not just on-duty, but make that part of your life, part of your resident being involved in the community in some way, shape, or man. (James)

Larry reconfirmed the importance of his education

My education paid off. Having the college degree gave me the tools to know how.... I needed college is what really got me where I am. (Larry)

You can’t sell yourself. You have to stick to your principles. Don’t let someone convince you that the organization is more important than the people who make it up. The fire department is always first. Bottom line of fire department the fire trucks don’t put the fires out. The Mayor doesn’t put the ... The firefighter put the fire out. If you don’t get that, if you don’t get who does the work, you’re really not a leader. You know what I mean. You’re just either a pencil pusher or an actuarial or someone who can please politicians. A leader understands who does the work. Who does the work? That’s really what it’s about. In the fire service and the police department, probably the same ... These are service. We’re not making widgets. You know what I mean? We’re out there dealing with people face to face in their really bad day. It doesn’t happen without somebody who cares, is caring; knows what he is supposed to do. He is professional. Does it any much without ... I mean they gripe about it. They don’t gripe about it after the fact, you know what I mean? They’re not really stopping or work stopping or anything like that that affects your performance. Most firemen want to please. They really do. They want to please. (Kyle)
Our message doesn’t change a whole lot. What changes is how we deliver it to people. How we change that behavior, how we get across to children, teenagers, the twenty, thirty year olds, the elderly, is the trick. How we can get them to buy into that. (Adam)

Adam discusses the approach that you deliver the message. The message must change with the generation that you are talking to.

Edward does training now and feels that there are areas of concern.

I tell this story when I teach sometimes, because I teach about leadership now. I talk about the 5 levels of leadership when I teach, the kind of leading from where you are and all that kind of stuff, but I can really, really, truly remember when, as a captain on the tiller truck, being in charge of all those individuals that were older than me ... I guess when you first get your true ... not your first leadership position but your first big-time position, and for different areas of the country it’s different, but if you’re the Captain of the house, and you go in with a certain mindset of a game plan to change the world basically. You’re going to do all the stuff that nobody else wants to do, and you’re going to make it bigger, and you’re going to make it better, and all that fake stuff, and you’re going to go on pre-plans, and you’re going to have people working out, and you’re going to have people training ... We have a bid system in the city. Every 6 months a bid system comes out to where anybody in the city can bid anywhere they want to if there’s a vacancy. I looked up, after the first 6 months that I was there, and there wasn’t a single person left on my company. They all bid out, from either me thinking that I was kind of in charge, but I really wasn’t in charge, or whatever, I don’t know. I talked to all of them since then, and ... you know, I wasn’t mean to them, I just went in there with a different plan, and it didn’t fit their plan. There were no hard feelings or anything, it just didn’t work. It didn’t feel right for them. They kind of packed up and moved on, and I looked around, and hell, the only person I was trying to lead was myself because they’d all bailed on me. It wasn’t that great of an experience, I’ll say that, because you start looking around and think damn, was I that bad?

It is what it is. I always try to be true to myself. I think when Company Officers get themselves in trouble, and some of us learned ... and something that they can practice on, but when they truly get themselves in trouble is when they try to be somebody that they’re not. When you try to be somebody that you’re not, eventually you’re going to get spelled out. I’ve always tried to be true to myself in my decision making and everything, and found out that if you make decisions based on the best of the organization, that even though the guys may not understand it up front, that eventually, as long as they know it’s not for your benefit, all of them are not going to come around, but at least they can process and understand it ... as long as it’s for the better of the organization. That’s how I try to make my decisions.

Back then, I guess I just thought I was going to have everybody doing 1, 2’s and 3’s and it didn’t work. That would be my first actual, true ... wow, I only thought that I was ... basically I guess at the end of the day what I’m saying, I had a title, and I had a position, and it was recognized, but
it was not followed. I think a lot of that has to do with relationships, myself. That’s what I think. (Edward)

He also addresses the importance of outside influence on personal and professional development.

I’m very fortunate in meeting and building relationships with a lot of top people in the profession that will actually allow me more opportunity. I’ve been very fortunate in that aspect, and none of that would have happened if I’d stayed back there. My poor guys, they don’t know hardly anybody. I try to get them out, but most of them just don’t care. They see guys when they come into the city ... I’ll take them to the firehouse to at least meet the guys or whatever, and they’re just astonished of how people from all over the country come into XXXXX to see XXXXX. It’s beyond them. It’s like overwhelming for them, because they’re coming from everywhere. They say, “How do you know these people?” I said, “Well, if I go to this conference, just talk to them.” (Edward)

Hank identified the International level there is a program, The International Public Safety Leadership and Ethics Institute, which provides leadership opportunities to public safety. Their mission is to develop individuals through innovative leadership and ethics education to include effective leadership through ethically standards in the field of public safety.

Because of the program that I’ve been associated with, the IPSLEI program because I think while in its entirety it’s a very significant program, if I was to say one of the key things that needs to happen right now is ... and this is one that IPSLEI is trying to make happen is we have to go to introduce the concept and we have got to begin the development of leadership in our recruitment academies. Well, hypothetically, or in an ideal world, you actually begin that process of developing leadership for your organization through your recruitment processes. As the Training Chief, you get what HR sends you. (Hank)

**Experience**

Bert addresses the importance of being a positive role model and the importance that others are prepared.

Give them all the support you can. Give them all the knowledge and tools they need to become good at what they do. Make sure that they learn the skills, the physical skills to do the job. To just elaborate on that, how could I teach forcible entry from a book? It says, “Put the tool in the door like this.” You know what? If I don’t know how to do it myself, to hold the tool and show them, in other words, I had to develop those skills in order to become the teacher. (Bert)

David had quite a lot to say concerning advice and best practices for future leaders.
The advice that I would have for somebody else that wants to come up in the fire service, here’s my advice to that. Find the place where you are happy in life, whether that is a firefighter, an engineer, a fire chief. If you are happy with your place in life, don’t strive to become the next level if you truly don’t want to be it. Know that when they go up to that next level, there’s a great deal of responsibility that goes with it and none of it is yours in regards to self-satisfaction. You got to captain, your job is to take care of your crew. Three other firefighters, five other firefighters, whatever that is. Your life now as a fire officer, as a captain is not for yourself anymore. You’re supposed to strive to be the next person. Find your mentor that’s the one up, but your job in life is to teach those below you and run a good firehouse. When you become a battalion chief, your job is not for you. Your job is to take care of your battalion. I have known people that have remained as ... I know I’ll give you one perfect example. He’s a technical rescue expert on a technical rescue truck and he is the best firefighter I’ve ever met in my life and he’s 34 years on the job. He never wanted to aspire to be a captain or a battalion chief within his big city department. That’s all he wanted to do. He was the very best and his whole goal in life was to teach and every technical rescue firefighter for the last 25 years has gone under his and his training program. He’s made them the very best that he was. People lose scope of that this guy, all he wanted to do was be a firefighter. No, he was assistant fire chief in my department so he always had “it”. You can never define “it”. You just know it when you see it. That guy had “it”. I tell people, find where you want to be and if that is perfectly where you want to be and happy where you want to be then stay there and be the very best at that. If you want to strive, the higher you go up it’s servant leadership and I am such a huge fan. The things that I have achieved in my career has nothing to do with what I did. If I was able to do anything is that if I can make them feel that they are a valued member of this team than they will go through that brick wall to fight any fire for me. If I feed them first, if I bed them down first, if I shelter them first before I shelter myself, then our departments will never fail. The team will never fail. That is my leadership strategy. (David)

Irene discusses the importance of experience

I was a lieutenant, I was the typical lieutenant. I did take an assignment to truck company because I didn’t have any truck experience. That was interesting. And it was interesting just dealing with guys and realizing when I say something they don’t hear what I say. Not intentionally but, it doesn’t register the same. We’re in the field and there’s a car fire and engine had to coming back to fill the pumper up. I said, what you think purple k we’ll knock it down with water. Purple k is a real pain in the neck to refill. They’re like no I don’t think so. I’m like I wasn’t really asking you. Well you said, what do you think? I’m like I didn’t really think what do you think, I really don’t care what you think. There’s a difference in communication. That was a little weird. I really think for me I didn’t realize that I was even in a leadership position truly until after 9/11. I was a Captain. I was assigned to lower XXXXXXX on South Street and XXXI. 9/11, we lost everyone in the engine company except for the chauffeur and everyone in the truck company except for the chauffeur plus other guys who were off duty who were leaving who
wound up taking it in. A guy was on vacation coming to meet one of the guys who was getting off duty. A guy who was detailed someplace else that died ...for the day he was detailing for the day, he was killed there. I was away, I was on vacation and the Captain was filling my vacation spot died that day also. (Irene)

One of the leadership lessons, it's just a silly thing but I remember being told early on ...Two things when I was getting far as lieutenant that one was one of the guys that worked at the very first fire house was promoted up to Captain and we had lunch and he says, you're going to have to learn how to drink tea. I'm like tea? He's like yeah, you're going to have to learn to drink tea. I'm like why? He's like 'cause you're in the kitchen and if you have to correct something it's great. You put the pot of tea up, put the water up, you make your deal and say what you got to say and then you can leave and you're going to come back in about 5 minutes to get that tea. He goes, they followed to what you said and they adjusted to it and now you could come back in and they're totally agreeable or you're prepared to tell them oh well this is where it's going. (Irene)

9/11 I was in the engine there's a Captain in the truck and he'd been a Vietnam veteran, he was a parachute jumper and as the anniversary for 9/11 came around he suddenly retired like 2 weeks before the anniversary. Was gone. He was like tonight's my last night, I'm not coming back to work. I'm like, what? He goes, yup I can't do it. I can't be here for the anniversary I just can't. I was stunned. I was like, Tim pull it together. He was like nope I am done.

A year after that he came, we have a service every year in the fire house on 9/11 and because we're so close to downtown I could always go to the service at the site and then just come over and have lunch with us. Tim was there and he says, “I’m so happy.” I’m like, you really shocked me. He goes, you don’t know the stress you’re under. You don’t realize right now you’re under a lot of stress. I’m like, what is he talking about? Just doing your job every day. One foot in front of the other is doing your job. I got promoted to Battalion chief and I still thought he’s a little nutty.

I got injured. I had a herniated disc in my neck. I had to have surgery and this was just suggesting surgery and I went to the Chief Medical Officer, XXXXX and she said XXX you have the surgery you’re not going back to the field. I said okay, then we’ll do everything else. She goes, you don’t have the surgery I’m never go back to the field. It was this instantaneous feeling, I don’t know how to describe it. It was crushing. I spent 28 years at this point in my life just fighting this battle and you’re taking it away from me. This can’t happen. There was a sense of relief at the exact same moment. It’s a combination of I’m not responsible for all these people anymore, I’m not going to make life and death decisions on a daily basis. I was so depressed and so relieved all at the same time which is kind of crazy. I’ve never experienced that feeling. When I saw Tim, I said, you were right but the stress didn’t leave until I left the job. (Irene)

It’s to be prepared. Be the best that you can be. I always encourage and I also speak to the women but to guys to, they should study for lieutenant. Even if they aren’t successful at their first
attempt they’re going to be a smarter firefighter because of it. There’s no shame in taking the test and not doing well the first time or never getting promoted because you’ll be a smarter and a more intelligent firefighter. That is something that every officer needs.

The other thing I wish I had learned much earlier in my career is to laugh at myself. I spent 12 years as a firefighter, always in fear of any mistake I made it wasn’t going to be for any other reason but I was a woman. It’s all, the girl can’t do it, and the girl shouldn’t do it. I hit lieutenant and after studying intensely 2 years part time, 2 years full time. I’m talking full time, 4 hours minimum a day plus my study group that wasn’t part of my 4 hours plus Fire Tech, that wasn’t part of my 4 hours. If I was going in for night tour, I’d study 4 hours at home and then study more at night. If I had a busy night, I had to do 4 hours. I was doing that 5 days a week. I was giving myself 2 days a week off but, it was intense. For 2 years like that. When I became Lieutenant I was feeling pretty smart. As a firefighter when you get promoted to lieutenant the new officers coming through you’re like jeez this guy got promoted, I know this stuff how come he doesn’t know this stuff.

When I got promoted my very first run was a medical call and we pulled out of quarters we made a left hand turn on a full lane street. We cut up to a red light and the driver says, the siren is your job. I’m like THE SIREN?! I get to do the siren? I was a jerk. We pulled up, I forgot to hit a button which we had 10 84s the discussion that we arrived. I forgot. I had to call back to do it. I pulled the paper work out to fill out the medical call. I pulled out the one for building inspection. I had to have them come up. We had to take them up and they’re calling the engine company, it was 254 but, that number didn’t mean anything to me. I had been in 159 for a long time. They called me so many times on the air. Dispatch to 254. Second time. Third time they say do you realize we are in 254. I’m like oh my god! I kept laughing. You made fun of those guys, you are an idiot. My husband said you’re having way too much fun with yourself in this new position. I learned to laugh at myself and in doing that. You own it. You don’t have to laugh at yourself but even if you made a mistake say, my bad I will do better next time. Once you own it, they can’t use it against you. I wish I had learned that lesson. It would’ve been great to have that lesson earlier in my career. Those are the two things I tell people all the time, study and learn to laugh at your mistakes or at least own them. If they’re not laughable, at least own them. (Irene)

Critical Thinking

These days, it’s going to be personnel. Our society has changed. We have a different group of folks being hired. Their vision is more job-related. It’s not “What I can do for the community?” They’re dealing with kids today that are broken homes, no discipline, and no respect. It’s hard when you try to run an organization and raise people at the same time. That’s been the biggest problem.
We spent $549 thousand for a piece of equipment, a truck. They just wrecked the truck, just an example. No one reported the damage, brand new truck. Definitely not like that years ago. It’s one thing to get in an accident and report it. Everybody makes a mistake. Now it’s like trying to get away with something, and it’s really hard for me to comprehend and understand that. Losing things, you don’t know where it’s at. The accountability is out. (Carl)

James also discusses that when you are the leader, you need to be prepared to handle both good and bad situations. The reality of being a leader is that the buck stops here. If any issue that doesn’t go well, it reflects on a leader; it’s the responsibility of the leader. You have to be willing to take that criticism. Any issue that you do, whether it’s a fire or whatever operation, can be critiqued. A critical review should be held, and should always be striving to do things better the next time. That’s simply saying things went well and we’ll rest on our laurels. Keep always be self-critical.

The city of XXXXX, we’ve had alarms of fire that we’ve had multiple fatalities. I’ve been at fires where there have been up to 10 firefighters trapped in an upper floor with fire below it and no way out. There’s been a number of critical emergencies... There are planned events with large number of guests. It’s a little different. You’re planning for the worst-case scenario, you have everything in place. There’s other events like this. If something happens, just open the book with the plan in it. There are many, many, many calls, most calls, that there’s no definite plan for. The decision-making process takes place right at sight, where you have to go and do a risk benefit analysis. In other words, do I put people at risk to mitigate this incident? If I don’t put people at risk, what’s going to happen? It’s like a discernment. (James)

Effective Communication

I think a lot of it as far as from a leadership stand point, is direction. “Where are we going?” As Fire Marshal, I’m responsible for inspections, investigations, community programs, hazardous materials. I have XXXXXXX as well as our media person works for me. I have a big variety of areas that I manage. I think direction in what we’re trying to accomplish, setting some goals. People hate for me to say this a lot of times but I also try to figure out what we’re not going to do. Because we, as many fire marshal offices are, we’re short staffed. In the city of XXXXXXXX
we cannot get into every commercial building to do an inspection. We have to decide ... I try to
do it with my supervisors, where we get together every year and look at what we accomplished
but also look at where we’re going next. Do we need to continue inspecting assembly properties,
or change? This year we ... We had been working on all our restaurants and night clubs and
things like that. This year we changed and went to multi-family.

Trying to deal with them because that’s where we have most of our fires, is in residential
properties. We don’t have a major, knock on wood. We don’t have a major commercial fire
problem, in the city of XXXXXXX Residential wise, cooking is burning up places. We’re working
on that as an item with apartment managers and tenants. Meeting with tenants, meeting with
constituents at council member meetings and anyway we can get information out. I try to help to
bring out ideas and look at statistics with the troops, to figure out what we need to do next. Then
work towards that. Also, looking at grants, looking at what type of materials are we going to
offer the public, on our community program side. What kind of brochures? What kind of
giveaways? What can we do different from what we’ve been doing the last couple of years? What
can we do different, to take the same message to the public? That’s what we’re doing.

Our message doesn’t change a whole lot. What changes is how we deliver it to people. Cooking
fires, for example, which is our leading cause of fires, the way to stop that has been the same for
a long time. Sometimes we see a rise in the cooking fires and so, we got to change behavior. How
we change that behavior, how we get across to children, teenagers, the twenty, thirty year olds, the elderly, is the trick. How we can get them to buy into that. (David)

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change that behavior, how we get across to children, teenagers, the twenty, thirty year olds, the elderly, is the trick. How we can get them to buy into that. (Adam)

Adam discusses the approach that you deliver the message. The message must change with the
generation that you are talking to.

Edward adds information on all areas of the fire service that a leader may encounter.

I think each time that you go to any type of training or education, whether it’s dealing with
leadership or any other type of topic, that the more people that you talk to from outside your
little world, the broader perspective it gives you for when you go home to try to implement or sell
new ideas. While not all of them will be good for your community, it at least opens your eyes up
to possibilities.

I guess if I had to pinpoint one, I’d say it was the very first time that I went out of town and I
looked around, and there was a bunch of firefighters, and I thought, you know, XXXXXXX’s not
the only one doing this. Building the relationships of people that think proactively and have a passion for their profession, so when you go back and you’re surrounded by all the naysayers, the people that don’t care, the people that wouldn’t go anywhere, you can always think, man, out there, I know there’s some other people that think like me, and wouldn’t this department be a whole lot better if there was more people that had the passion for the job, that had the willingness to try to learn to do the job, and actually have the ability to do the job? Although it’d be a government job, that’s why it’s set up the way that it is. (Edward)

Farah is the youngest leader that was interviewed and discusses the importance of being a good listener.

People. People are very important. People and listening, and they kind of go hand in hand, but I think the majority of the fire service is bred to train and dictate and show. If you’re that quiet person only because you’re listening, then you’re perceived as weak, but the listening and understanding your people and being predictable, those type of things, for me those were elements that I didn’t know I was learning those things and I didn’t know all of that’s considered leadership. You’re just trying to do the best in your work day. (Farah)

Greg addresses the number of leadership roles that he grew into overtime. He identifies that he was clear in what he expected of the fire fighters that he led.

As a driver engineer, I was the liaison between the Captain the firefighters. I made sure that when the firefighters came in, they knew what the Captain expected. They were prepared, did their jobs, helped me check out the engine, and knew where everything was. That was my responsibility. As I progressed in the service, I picked up different leadership roles. (Greg)

Hank discussed the importance of critical thinkers and that they are crucial to the fire service.

I think the other thing in developing leaders for the future in the Fire Service is not only do we have to teach them to be critically ... critical thinkers and to think critically, we have to teach them the concept that the Fire Service is an element of the community, not the element of the community. We have got, from a true leadership perspective ... the question we ask our students oftentimes is say, “Okay, what’s the role, what role does your organization play in exercising leadership for the community?” They go, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. “Okay, what’s the role and responsibility of your organization to develop leadership in the community?” I guess it’s
that issue of trying to get these egotistical firefighters to start thinking beyond themselves.

(Hank)

James suggests that great leaders need to be negotiators. The fire service leader must work with various leaders in the community and must be flexible.

Obviously, I’ve learned that being a great firefighter doesn’t necessarily mean that one is going to be a great leader. It’s very beneficial to be able to motivate people and have them want to reach your goals on their own without directly forcing them to. I don’t know if that’s clear or not. There are 2 ways that I can implement the department’s goals. One way is just giving directions and not giving any explanations. This is my way or the highway, we’re going to do it this way. I can do that, we can implement things that way. Then there’s a style, it’s more negotiated. If you can sell your concepts to your subordinates and also your bosses, political bosses, things go more smoothly with less stress. You can do things either stressfully or without stress. I try to take the second method. I try to use that more. (James)

Kyle discusses the importance of determining the best traits that will be suited for you as a leader.

You’re exposed to a lot of different leaders. You get to pick and choose all the good traits. There’s no lack of being exposed to good traits. Unfortunately, there’s no lack of being exposed to bad traits either. You get to pick. It’s easy to identify what I want to don’t be like. Why do they like him? He was great. He always listened or he ... Whatever. It was never one individual, because you’re exposed to a lot of different people; some outside of fire department. You try to take those traits that they exhume and fake them on. Also you would think over time we would have nothing but good traits. Unfortunately they still seem disturbed for some reason. (Kyle)
Appendix F

Mentorship Transcripts Supplement Transcripts

Mentorship

Eleven of the twelve participants identified the importance of mentorship.

Another common theme among all the participants was the importance of mentors in their leadership development. They all identified the importance of mentors in their careers. Participants identified multiple mentors that provided guidance or assisted with their personal development as a leader. The mentors were all males. Some were family members that continued to support them along in their careers.

Importance of Mentors in Personal and Professional Leadership Development

Adam talked about mentors from the time he was a volunteer and how everyone in the fire service looked out for him, but he talked about his chief specifically.

“The fire chief was the most influential because...he had that air about him that you knew he was the one you wanted to follow, you respected him. He was always looking out for the public and instilled that in us. He led us and we were cutting edge, he brought in new ideas. (Adam)

Bert recalled a chief that took the time to talk to him and during their shift.

We had a chief in Quarters, the XX Battalion, and there’s this old-time Irish chief. He never went to bed. He always stayed up late at night doing paperwork.... I would go in and just talk with him, sit down and talk. He worked in all busy shops in his

Greg stressed the importance of knowing the people you work with and taking care of them.

I’ve had a couple mentors. The one that sticks out in my fire department was Chief XXXXX. He was a training instructor, but he was Battalion Chief, but he was a training instructor, did a lot of the academies for firefighters. One of the things that struck me about him is, I didn’t even work on a shift. He’d only met me a couple of times, but I was in Lowe’s one day with my dad, when my dad was still alive, and we were walking through the aisles. He walked up to me, and he shook my hand, he shook my dad’s hand and said, “This XXXXX, he’s going to be a good guy. He’s really sharp.” He knew me by name. I walked away feeling proud. The fact that he
took that time to recognize me made me feel really good. He was also one of those iconic leaders in the fire service. People know him by name. We have an award named after him. He was one of those real firemen. If he taught you something, it was something that was going to save your life one day. I remember a lot of lessons, things that we did back then that he taught. The one thing that I took away from the most was, “Always take care of your people.” (Greg)

Hank has similar thoughts, when referring to fire service mentors. He also addresses his family influence that David addressed. Hank discusses his dad and other professional mentors that have a lasting impact on him.

A mentor would always been my father. Just growing up, and things it was always my dad but then from a specific career perspective, the one that stands out the most, is the guy I still work with, the Program Chair at XXXXX College. He did a lot for us in the fire service ... he has been a primary mover in my ... in my whole career. And then another very profound friend and mentor was a gentleman by the name of Tom .... He was a motivational speaker. I met him originally when I was the Training Chief because I brought him in to be one of the speakers for the training days and we began to develop a relationship when we were talking about the leadership institute then he got very sick and subsequently died of cancer. But he was, I still talk about Tom a lot. He was very significant. (Hank)

Larry’s interview took place in his office, and throughout the interview he kept referring to photos of previous chiefs on the wall that mentored him throughout the years. Each one provided significant guidance to him. He also referred to a police chief that provided mentorship to him. In fact, he elaborated on the importance of working with the police department and networking.

He’s in the middle there. The one with the best picture ... He really believed in me. He saw something and he encouraged me to stay where I would have probably been the police chief. I tell that to XXX all the time..... He’s been the police chief for over 20 years. You won’t hear a fire chief say that about ... the police department, but he’s got great guys. We work together. I interact with the police all day long because I’ll go downstairs to Dispatch and see what’s going on. They all know me. I encourage my chief officers to do it. They’re a little busier. They don’t tend to do that but it’s important that you network. (Larry)

David talked about a long lasting relationship he has had with one of his mentors. This mentor provided him guidance for over 30 years.

XXXXX, to this day he’s a mentor of mine, 31 years later because I followed in his footsteps and he over the years has watched me. He retired when I was five years on the job and he can tell you my career path to this day, in my military career because my career path was his career
path and he had vested interest in me. He knew where I was going before I knew where I was going. He told me this a year ago. He said, “I knew one day you’d be the fire chief.... He says, “All the good things, you’re doing great but if you screw up I’m taking you out”...in a joking way. (David)

David continues to state that his dad was a mentor too. His influence was a strong work ethic.

David also stressed the importance of multiple mentors and different types of mentors. Each one provided different support in his progression through the fire service.

- My dad was a mentor. What I mean by that is that the work ethic he instilled in my brother and me ... We had no money growing up. He was self-employed and had no money to hire help. My brother and I were the help. We worked a day and then got to go play. He just inspired in us hard work and I told when I became to chief master sergeant, I hadn’t worked a day in my life harder than my dad did his whole life. He’s a pretty amazing man. Mom was probably a close second to that. Yeah, I had many mentors. A lot. You have to. You have to know who to emulate, even if they don’t know that they’re your mentor. I tell my airmen and soldiers and firefighters all the time is that you’ve got to find one that you want to emulate. Learn from the ones that you don’t, because you’re going to have both in your life. (David)

Edward demonstrates the importance of multiple mentors too. He refers to outgrowing mentors as a person develops. He stresses the importance of always finding new mentors to help that development. It is evident in the narrative below that multiple mentors help a person to evolve. He addresses the growth and development that transpired in his career due to his mentors. He does refer to outgrowing a mentor but always makes reference to his first mentor, Bob.

XXXXX, probably number one ... he’s the one that started all of it. There’s been a few since then, but this is the other thing I think about mentorship, if you want to write this in your research. Your first mentor will always take you to a certain place, but at some point in time, if you continue to grow and develop like what you should, you will outgrow them and you will need to find somebody else to continue your path. If you continue to grow and develop, you will need to rely on other individuals to continue to increase your abilities, your knowledge, skills, and abilities, and eventually you know you outgrow them, and it’s always ... that’s why it’s important to get outside. Bob was the fire instructor at the Fire Academy when I came on in ’XX, and he ended being the Deputy Chief of the Department...... we always stayed in contact. I didn’t get to see him as much, because as you go up in ranks, and you’re in the field doing your own thing ... but I always know I can pick up the phone and call him. (Edward)
Farah identified two mentors and how they supported her in different roles. Farah stressed the importance of seeking out a mentor and building networks with others in the fire service that she thought to be successful. This approach worked well for her, and she always mentioned them in an upbeat and positive tone.

I consider two that I have...... I don’t know if they know they’re my mentors. I force them into it a little bit. Chief XXXXX, who retired from our department. He retired from our department as a division chief, so two ranks from fire chief. He is now an assistant fire chief at a neighboring department. By watching him he was a mentor because there were a lot of people that did not like him, but he did so much for the fire service and he was so good with people and so connected. I thought that was so intriguing, “How do people not like you?” I could see it. Then I have another, current division chief who, he’s kind of my new ... I actually looked through our org chart and thought, “Who could I work well with? Who can be for me?” so I actually sought out the other one and said, “Hey, can we meet for lunch?” I don’t know him, but I thought, “I’m going to know you.” ..... Has given me some of the best advice and vast exposure. Learning from his mistakes, I couldn’t even put a price tag on that type of coaching and leadership. (Farah)

I loved the Captain in that fire house. He was a person I wanted to be more like. Not his Captain skills but as a person, he was such a fine man that I felt really ... He was always encouraging me with the studying. He was saying you have to make sure you’re ahead of the pack. You want to be ahead of the pack, you don’t want to be at the end of the pack. As long as you make yourself ahead of the pack you can hold your head up forever. When I first got there I remember we were doing something and there was a grouchy old guy and he complained that I had difficulty doing something. The Captain turned and said, “Well, you do some things well and you don’t do other things well and she’ll do some things well and she won’t do other things well. There’s a place for everybody in this fire house.” I thought I’d never hear those words. He was just that kind of person.... Once I got promoted to lieutenant I had really great Battalion chiefs in my Battalion. They were totally supportive of me. They really were. They were still working with the women sometimes. One chief said, “You noticed that when I come to see you, I always call you Lieutenant XXXXX because I want the men to respect you. Did you notice that?” I said, “I notice you call every other boss by their first name and I’m the only one you call Lieutenant Jones.” He was like, “I do.” I was like “Yeah, I do. I thought you were doing a good thing, you were treating me differently for no apparent reason.” ....They were great chiefs in the XX Battalion. They really were wonderful chiefs. Even when I got promoted to Captain, my Battalion Chiefs in the XXt Battalion they were great guys. They just were. In fact, when I got promoted to Captain and I went to UFO, the Deputy Chief and the Battalion Chief came by and said are you’re putting in for the company, we really want you to put in for the company. It was just like, I
haven’t even worked here yet, and I don’t know if I like these people yet. I was like what is wrong with this place, but they were totally supportive. (Irene)

Mentors were identified by James in the Marine Corp and his father.

My father provided guidance and the years in the Marine Corp (James)

Kyle took a different approach to his career and considered traits that he didn’t want. He determined that others could remind him of the traits he did not want to acquire.

A lot of time it’s based on the negative of what you’ve been exposed to. What I don’t want. I don’t want be like him. I don’t want to be like him. Fortunately, there’s more of that. They identify what they don’t want to than one individual, because you get, you’re exposed to a lot of different officers in your career, different lieutenants and this. Over time, you go to this fire house. You’re exposed to a lot of different leaders. You get to pick and choose all the good traits. There’s no lack of being exposed to good traits. Unfortunately, there’s no lack of being exposed to bad traits either. You get to pick. It’s easy to identify what I want to don’t be like. Why do they like him? He was great. He always listened or he … Whatever. It was never one individual, because you’re exposed to a lot of different people; some outside of fire department. You try to take those traits that they exhume and fake them on. Also you would think over time we would have nothing but good traits. (Kyle)

Kyle’s approach is unique from all the others. He identifies both the importance of both good and bad traits.

Irene addressed the support that she received from many of her mentors. That support carried on in her own leadership.
Appendix G

Complete Transcripts Regarding Leadership Development

Our fire chief, especially when I was in XXXXXXX, supported formal training. Our fire chief was very much interested in us being well trained. We had officer meetings where we had training every other month. We were encouraged to come to the (national) fire academy and we brought in people for leadership seminars, quite often to the department itself. It varied depending on what was going on but six times a year, we met as officers within the department and did some internal training and then, probably at least quarterly, if not sooner, we were doing more training. (It was beneficial?) Oh yeah. It was and I didn’t have any previous leadership, management training. Yeah it was very beneficial. Most of the people he brought in were people that were well recognized, or had experience at what I would consider a higher level, a higher impact in for that. (Adam)

Carl basically promoted his own formal training with no support from members of his department.

From a department standpoint? No. No. No. That’s one of the things I wanted to change, to offer those things. Just like when I was professor at XXXXXX, I brought the XXXXXX Fire Science program to the fire department. We set up training in the classroom, one of our classrooms. I had zero participation from my guys from my own department, which was on-duty training. With the mindset that this department has, you’re going to get your raise because of longevity, time, and grade. That’s where I would set up a whole matrix of promotional requirements, where the union and I butt heads on…… I was going to require each firefighter, before you’d be promoted to operator, you’d have to stay in that position for three years. The reason why I did that is, because we had folks that started off their career in maintenance, or fire alarm, or training. They’re time counted, so they wanted to jump into the fire side, they take the test, they get hired. They could be there ten years. They’re going to bump everybody that came one less than them, and these folks had no experience in firefighting….. My big requirement was that you’d have to sit in that position for three years before you’d be promoted so I know that you have some experience before you’re at the next level. That’s what the union shot down, shot down everything through the parish government, so you’re handicapped. (Carl)

I have EFO, I’m a big trainer….I love training. Fire Officer IIII and Instructor III. Basically they offer something, I want to get to the top of it so I’ll take instructor one and see what I think, but if there’s three that’s going to be offered, I’m going to take all three because, to me, I feel like any of those trainings have been offered in multiples for a reason and you get more out of it if you get the whole batch. I may be an over-trainer if that’s possible. I’m also a paramedic. (Farah)
Hank referred to the extensive leadership training that he had to develop and how there was very little for him when he was progressing through the ranks. He was encouraged to attend the National Fire Academy and did, but that was the only formal leadership opportunity afforded to him.

Very, very little as I was progressing up, very little formal training. The only thing that we were really emphasizing at that time, as I was progressing up the rank levels was ICS positions, stuff like that. I did, I did (come to the National Fire Academy). I did get encouragement, back in the early 80s is when I came here. When I was in my Paramedic Coordinator position is when I got a chance to come back here because typically the department wasn’t sending anybody if you were working field positions. Then when I took my promotional position and got accepted to the EFO program, then they would ... if you were in operations, they would allow you to go to that. They didn’t discourage applying and they didn’t discourage you applying to the EFO. Internally, there was the occasional deal. I, when I became the Training Chief, I began to try and apply that. There were some offerings that would come about through the county when we were the county department, you’d have these different classes that would show up but when I became the Training Chief, is when I really started to try to put a focus on bringing that kind of things into the department. We created a Captain’s academy, we created a Battalion Chief’s academy, we started doing internal development programs, and I went and got certified with DDI, Development Dimensions International. I got certified in Situational Leadership and I brought other people with me on that so that we could try to build up a cadre of folks. We started presenting the DDI sessions and other kinds of general development, personal development processes that were there. We had these, they were called PS … Then I did a series of all-day management seminar kind of things. Brought in different speakers and we did different team activities, you know, picture trying to do this with about 70-some managers. We did them, like I said, as all day things, feed them, watered them, all that kind of routine, brought in some good speakers to present and work on team building processes and ideas. That carried on for quite a while actually and then through my graduate school, ultimately, there was another Battalion Chief, XXXXXX, he and I went to graduate school together and we were able to convince the university to allow us to do a joint thesis. That led to the creation of the XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Leadership Institute. Which was a 116 hour program ….. a new chief came in, he didn’t believe in any kind of professional development so the program was cancelled and to date, they still haven’t re-instituted it. In five years’ time, he ruined the place as a whole. (Hank)

Irene did not attend the National Fire Academy and received most of her formal/informal training at the department level. I was offered one leadership training course with what they call Fire Offices Management Program. I never attended the National Fire Academy but, also when
you become a lieutenant you go through FLIPs, First Line Supervised Training, which all over
the state to attend. They had a Captain Development program which they sent you to
headquarters, took you off line to do some kind of projects…. No, it’s all internal in XXXXXX.
It’s a shame because we’re spoiled in the fact that everything is in house. I went to XXXXXX Fire
Academy for the very first time for Women’s weekend and the first women’s week they had in
2002. That was the first time I ever attended XXXXXX. I have only attended the Women’s
weekend there. (Irene)

James discussed the importance of formal training. “Formal training is a part of the fire service. The state requires so many hours a year, and basically, our policy is part of our daily schedule is that we had at least 2 hours a day of training. Also I have taken various courses at the State Fire Academy also at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg. There was leadership training involved in most of the courses I’ve taken. I’ve also attended lectures and seminars from those that were considered to be the gurus in the fire service: national gurus….Most of this I’ve done on my own. I seek it out. A very valuable course that I attended at the National Fire Academy had to do with the handling of large complicated emergency situations such as 9/11 and accidental chemical releases. I attended this, actually, they selected 25 command officers throughout the country to attend this. I had an opportunity to go there for a period of time and communicate and network with some of the great leaders in this country, some of the great fire service leaders. I found that to be very helpful. (James)

My advice would be to obviously acquire as much knowledge as possible, in training and
education. To be self-motivated and never, ever, go off-duty without having learned something. My advice would be to treat others as you would want to be treated, to lead by example, and to keep developing that component of wanting to help others. As I said, especially those most in need of it. Not just on-duty, but make that part of your life, part of your resident being involved in the community in some way, shape, or man. (James)

Kyle attended the National Fire Academy and was supported by the department.

I went to the National Fire Academy. I think in fact that was probably while I was at the training
division. Any of those things like that they encouraged you to … They had no problem with me
going. I could go on sitting time. I didn’t have to take vacation to go outside and get that outside training while I was at the training division. Over the years, I have seen that now more and more they’re very good at sending people outside for training, whether you are going go … because if they send somebody from a fire house somewhere, they have to back fill to cover him. I think the
federal government pays for the room and their transport it still costs that city money to cover your spot. You’re gone for five days. I got to hire a fire fighter for five days. It’s going to cost me $1500. Those things are new. That’s new. That’s not always the way. Before there used to be whatever training happens in house that was it. Nothing extra, unless you were a training guy. That was my job to train people. That’s different. If you’re in a fire house and you train new guys, you’ve got to do it on your own. You’ve got to do it on your own. (Kyle)

Larry stated that he attended the National Fire Academy as well as had formal training at the state fire academy.

You have to send them to the XXXX’s program. We send them down to XXXX’s. They get their leadership skills which is a great program. Then, sending to the Fire Academy if we can. That then allows them to be a better trainee for their crew, and they have a better focus on what they need. They went through the academy but they were on the other side. Now, you’re teaching it. You have to know the skills better. You have to be able to verbalize it, and it gives them practice somehow. Being at the Fire Academy while being a company officer, my training was on fire compared to other officers who didn’t have that advantage because I have the tools and the knowledge. That’s important but I went the other way. I was trying to do all this training without all that background. Hence, I started going away to the state courses and I played catchup. In the first year, I was struggling a little bit, but the next two years, things just took off. (Larry) Our fire chief was very much interested in us being well trained. We had officer meetings where we had training every other month. We were encouraged to come to the national fire academy and we brought in people for leadership seminars, quite often to the department itself. It varied depending on what was going on but six times a year, we met as officers within the department and did some internal training and then, probably at least quarterly, if not sooner, we were doing more training. (Larry)

Informal Training

Bert’s department offered a mentorship program which linked him to the leaders of his department.

No to formal training, I went into a mentorship program, and it was a chief’s mentorship program. I was a captain, and I went for three months to ride alongside, shadow, if you will, another chief, but yet the department never really gave these here mentors, if you will, “These are the guidelines. These are the things you should talk about,” and stuff like that. Basically I rode with the chief. We never really sat down for him to ... I think part of it was he looked at my pedigree. What I mean by that is all the places that I worked. Let’s say the pedigree, you would say, “Wow,” because I worked in the XXXXXX in a house that was mediocre with respect to fire duty, middle of the road. When I went to XXX that was a busy shop. Then when I was promoted to lieutenant I went into Midtown XXXXXXX and I was assigned as a lieutenant in Ladder
Company X, X Truck, in Midtown, XXXXX District, and the Uptown XXXXX District. This is a high-rise.......You’re working as a team. “I may be the boss. I’m responsible for you.” We never had that conversation but that is now my new role in life. “As a young fire officer I’m responsible for you,” but going into these high-rise buildings, the new found disciplines of how you operate, recalling elevators, using elevators, understanding now the fire protection systems that are in these building’s alarm systems, communication systems, stuff like that, you’ll have to learn. What are the protocols? The firefighters were great. (Bert)

Carl discussed the importance of understanding leadership.

“Read all you can about being in leadership, Ronnie Coleman has a good book “Going for the Gold”, it’s lonely at the top (Carl)

Greg stated that there was no formal training in his department. He discussed the former military training that he had received with no support for training from his department.

Formal training for leadership was in the United States Military, I went through the NCO Leadership Academy. I went through the Senior NCO Academy. I have all of the leadership ... I went through processed action training, total quality management training..... No, no. My department didn’t pay for anything. My department does not really. .......We’re starting to now. We have a new Fire Chief, and he’s very progressive. I see them already starting to go in that direction, but no. At the time, no. Our previous Fire Chief did not have any college at all, and did not have any experience at all. He was one of those EMS guys that basically got into the position, and we suffered. (Greg)
Appendix H

Complete Transcripts Regarding Leadership Styles

Leadership Style

Eleven out of twelve of the participants demonstrated leadership styles that include servant, transformational, and follower-centered.

Servant Leadership

David discusses his approach to leadership and to being a great teacher. He also self identifies as using servant leadership.

I’m a people person, so I try to treat people like I want to be treated. I have a lot of empathy for individuals. Not only them as the individual but the family life too because whatever’s going on there, they bring to work. I want people to be up front and honest. I don’t like hidden agendas. I don’t like people to lie to me. I'd rather for you to tell me. My mom and dad taught me that in that, it’s better to tell me now then I find out later, I’m going to burn your butt. I took that to the job and I’ve always, even today, have offered for folks to come to my office. Shut the door, yell at me, beat on the walls, or whatever. Get it out but don’t get it out, to the other people on the shift, in the office, especially on the street. Again, that goes back to that professional image and being helpful to people and not create problems. We’re in the people business. People are having a bad day enough if we show up. Whatever we do, we should be doing it helps them. (David)

I tell people, find where you want to be and if that is perfectly where you want to be and happy where you want to be then stay there and be the very best at that. If you want to strive, the higher you go up its servant leadership and I am such a huge fan. The things that I have achieved in my career has nothing to do with what I did. If I was able to do anything is that if I can make them feel that they are a valued member of this team. (David)

Greg demonstrated the importance of the value that the followers bring to the fire service by showing the respect at meal time.

Station meals in a fire station are very important. It’s part of the culture. When we sit down we eat together. I always make sure we eat together. .....Whenever possible, I make sure, if our dinner’s ready, and the rescue unit’s on the way back from the hospital, I wait until they get back. We eat together. A lot of stations, the Company Officer will be the first one to eat. Military etiquette is your enlisted people eat first, the officers eat last. As a Station Officer, no matter how hungry you are, you show them the respect that they’re doing the work for you. You make sure that you let them eat first. (Greg)

Transformational
Adam considers leadership a true partnership with the members of his department.

*I'm a people person, and treat people like I want to be treated. I have a lot of empathy for individuals......whatever they are going through....we should be doing what needs to be done to help.* (Adam)

Edward’s leadership style would be defined in the area of transformational. He understands the importance of assisting others in self- development.

*In order to feed the right people, you’ve got to give them help and structure......my personality lends itself to good, hard workers, not necessarily do they care about education and stuff like that, but they study enough and they train enough to get the job done. Lazy people usually do not like me. They don’t care to even see me pull up on the scene. Make no stretch of it, I will eat their ass. In the literal sense.* (Edward)

Hank instills traits of a transformational leader. He discussed the International Public Safety Leadership Ethics Institution that strives to leads by example and stresses the importance of self-improvement. He is a strong opponent of the ISSLEI Program.

*“The (IPSLEI) Program teaches them to be critical thinkers and to think critically......we ask the question, what role does your organization play in exercising leadership for the community...... “Leadership development starts at recruitment.”* (Hank)

Irene demonstrated traits of a transformational leader. She was a role model and motivated others.

*Don’t micromanage. Give them a task. Walk away. Give them a chance to do it but come back before it should be complete to correct any mistakes. That works well. It really does. It’s two really silly things but it’s true.* (Irene)

James demonstrated the traits of a transformational leader. His approach was to identify the needs of the department and get a buy-in from others.

*It’s very beneficial to be able to motivate people and have them want to reach your goals on their own without directly forcing them to. ....... There are 2 ways that I can implement the department’s goals. One way is just giving directions and not giving any explanations. This is my way or the highway, we’re going to do it this way. I can do that, we can implement things that way. Then there’s a style, it’s more negotiated. If you can sell your concepts to your*
subordinates and also your bosses, political bosses, things go more smoothly..... I try to use the second method. (James)
Larry understands the importance of his role as a leader.

They all know me, I encourage my chief officers....I encourage networking.....I go to visit people and ask if they need anything from us....how is it going? The ISO rating we got is not because we are good firemen... it's because we have good relationships with public. (Larry)

**Follower-Centered Leadership**

Bert demonstrated a leadership style of follower-centered. He worked closely with his subordinates to encourage positive growth.

I also developed this tool, this mentorship program to, one, also give me an idea of what they know, meaning in their head and their commitment, meaning their responses, their writing coming back to me, that they really want to give me or blow me off, stuff like that. I just used it as another tool to see. They all go to the academy, meaning they go for training. Training comes to the firehouse. The officers do training but that doesn’t tell me that they get it. They could sit there and you could ask them the question, “You understand?” You’ll get the shaking of the head. You don’t know if they got it, or you don’t even know if they misinterpreted what was presented. (Bert)

Farrah feels that listening is a very important aspect. Through this listening, the development of the follower will be supported.

People are very important. People and listening, and they kind of go hand in hand, but I think the majority of the fire service is bred to train and dictate and show., but the listening and understanding your people and being predictable, those type of things. (Farrah)

Kyle was a role model as well as supported his firefighters.

A leader understands who does the work.... And supports them. That’s really what it’s about. In the fire service and the police department, probably the same ... These are service. We’re not making widgets..... We’re out there dealing with people face to face in their really bad day. It doesn’t happen without somebody who cares, is caring; knows what he is supposed to do. He is professional. Does it any much without .....They’re not really stopping or work stopping or anything like that that affects your performance. Most firemen want to please (and understand the goals of the department). They really do. They want to please. (Kyle)
Appendix I
Complete Transcript Related to Role of the Family

Family History in the Fire Service

My uncle was a volunteer firefighter that I start out in (Adam)
My son was a volunteer fire fighter. (Carl)
My daddy died when I was in second grade, and then my mother got remarried, she married firefighter….growing up I never thought I would be a firefighter. (Edward)
I was actually raised in a whole fire department world, uncles, cousins….I have a picture of me two years old in my uncle’s turnout boots…..I think just like most of the guys. I was there. I liked it. (Farah)
I got involved in the fire service a junior firefighter, I knew I wanted to help people at a young age. (Greg)
My uncle was a fire fighter and he retired out as a captain II, XXX. I had a cousin in XXXXXX department…. He was with me at XXXXXXXXXXXX. He retired out as an assistant chief there. His two sons are both firefighter paramedics. On the fire side, as family background, on the fire side, I had a lot of that. (Hank)
My dad was a firefighter…I was young when he retired (Irene)
My late father was a fire captain in the XXXXX Fire Department. My father kind of opened the door. When he saw there was some interest, our possibilities kind of led me down this road. To continue on, it was just an enormous feeling being able to help others, those most in need. Very gratifying. It still is to this day. (James)

Strong Work Ethic

My dad was a mentor. What I mean by that is that the work ethic he instilled in us… he just inspired us to work hard. (Adam)
Dad was very strict disciplining…taught us our core values growing up, work hard and earn your keep. (David)
They’re also a very strong work ethic (James)

Support and Guidance

A supportive family will teach or support the new connections with others or promote networking in the field, which in turn will result in strong ties and support to career success. (Chope, 2002)
A big Italian family that I was pretty much raised by, good family life, excellent. (Farah)
We (my sisters and I) were encouraged by our dad to try things and do things……we would mow the lawn as soon as we could…we had no choice… that’s the way it was, a real team effort. (Irene)
It comes from my upbringing, my parents, that strong family. Our family went everywhere together. We camped across the Midwest to the west. We went to everything that you could possibly think of from Yellowstone, to Yosemite, across the country, and we camped through Europe for 30 days. We had a great experience because we have a family of eight. It's hard to do the expensive things like flying to Bermuda, and spending a week, but we had a great experience growing up. I think your family pushing you. I do remember when my dad saying “You want to be a what? You got a four-year degree and you want to do what?” (Larry)

Religion Influence

Religion was included during their discussion on role of family by 7 of the participants during the interviews. The research considered this significant since 58% of the participants mentioned religion. Six of the participant, 50%, discussed the Catholic faith specifically.

A good family structure….we were raised Catholic and stayed together. (Carl)

Raised Roman Catholic (Greg)

Attended Catholic Schools (Hank)

I went to a an all-girls Catholic High School (Irene)

They did their best to instill in their seven children the Catholic faith (James)

Good Catholics…went to Catholic Grammar and High School. (It, (the Catholic faith) was very strong in my upbringing (Kyle)

I was brought up Baptist and I am a member of Purchase Friends Meeting…it is a community that helps you in life when you have issues or needs…. my parents build a foundation (Larry)