AN INTRINSIC CASE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF NAVAL OFFICERS’ LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A thesis presented
By
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Doctoral Project Seminar (80527)

to
The School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

in the field of
Education

College of Professional Studies
Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
March 2019
Acknowledgments

I would like to recognize the contribution made to my education by my wife, Susan, and my parents and grandparents, who have steadfastly believed in the value of higher education as well as the virtue of learning for its own sake. Completing this study, indeed the entire doctoral program at Northeastern, could not have been possible without their support, encouragement, and high expectations.

I am also grateful for all the leadership lessons “taught” by friends, colleagues, supervisors, and subordinates in the myriad organizations I have worked for throughout my career in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. This journey has been enlightening, challenging, and not always smooth sailing; but the experiences were never boring. While my innate curiosity led me to a profession in research, a key focus has always been to use the results to improve organizations. Hence, the doctorate in organizational leadership is the fulfillment of a decades-old goal for this scholar/practitioner. It is also a continuation of the life-long learning process.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Bryan Patterson, for his advice and coaching during all phases of the research study, and for helping me navigate the learning journey. Thanks to Dr. Tova Sanders, my second reader, for her insightful feedback during the study, and for her wonderful foundational classes in the OL track. I am also grateful to Dr. Thomas Gibbons, my third reader, for his advice and assistance on the study, the internal IRB process, and for valuable feedback on the project.

I am thankful for the support of my Northeastern classmates, the Navy officers who shared their leadership journey by participating in the study, and my colleagues at the U.S. Naval War College who provided advice and encouragement; especially Dr. George “Bud” Baker.
Abstract

This qualitative, intrinsic case study explored the most important leadership experiences mid-career officers had in the Navy, and whether these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs, or frameworks (formal schooling, on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education). Applying research questions framed using the lens of authentic leadership theory, participants’ revealed that they principally learned about Navy leadership through on-the-job experiences. Early Navy leadership development was considered too administrative and bureaucratic; and offered little individual development. Later Navy leadership education addressed this need, but this was deemed to be too late. Participants’ descriptions of their leadership styles consisted of the four constructs of authentic leadership, without instruction in the theory itself. Participants felt the Navy should try to improve sailors’ moral and professional ethics (character), but some believed the Navy’s climate and culture make it difficult to do so. This study added to the authentic leadership literature while also addressing the research gap in Navy officer leadership development. There is a need to better understand Navy leadership development longitudinally, and to examine the current content of early leadership courses. Additionally, paying more attention to authentic followership is recommended. Suggestions for theory included a more explicit emphasis on the role of experience and active reflection in the authentic leadership model and recognizing the cyclical and cumulative experiential/informal leadership learning cycle in it. Suggestions for practice were offered including adding ethical fitness to the FITREP (performance management) system and addressing toxic leaders. Study results argue for the inclusion of authentic leadership theory and its focus on moral decision-making in the Navy’s formal leadership development programs.
It aligns well with the Navy’s stated goals of improving the competence and character of all sailors. Findings also accentuate the importance of providing a continuum of challenging experiences for Navy leadership development coupled with quality feedback and fostering the practice in officers of intentionally reflecting on those experiences.

*Keywords:* authentic leadership, critical thinking, feedback, leadership, moral component of authentic leadership, professional military education, reflection, self-awareness, self-regulation
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The exploration of the concepts of leading and leadership have created interest among researchers, practitioners, and the public for the past several decades. According to a Bersin by Deloitte research report (2014) and other researchers (Sinar, Wellins, Ray, Abel, & Neal, 2014), organizations spend billions of dollars developing their leaders. Even with this tremendous investment of resources, gauging the results of leadership development programs has been noted as being overlooked or ignored by Day (2011) or deemed not effective per Howard and Wellins (2008). Looking at the proliferation of college leadership programs, Posner (2009) cites the inadequacy of empirical study on their efficacy. Riggio (2008) suggests that many scholars bemoan the lack of leadership development research, but the “complexity of the construct of leadership” poses a large task to assessing leadership development programs (p. 388).

This lack of attention may be due to the longitudinal nature of leader development as a growth process where individual change occurs over time, as explained by adult learning theorists (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009; Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2015; Merriam, 2008; Thorne & Marshall, 1984). In many business and education situations, leader development interventions and programs typically have shorter time horizons, which may pose obstacles to gauging their impact (Shamir, 2011). Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa, and Chan’s (2009) meta-analysis of leadership interventions cited temporal concerns and the low percentage of longitudinally-designed leader development studies as an area for more research attention. This concern is especially important for leader development programs focusing on lasting change such as developing trust, self-concept adjustment, or other transformations (Avolio, Reichard, et al., 2009). For example, the U.S. Army’s leadership framework of “BE, KNOW, DO” is an example of a military member’s self-concept (identity) that Day et al. (2009)
describe as “the culmination of an individual’s attributes, values, knowledge, experiences, and self-perceptions” (p. 57). From a developmental perspective, these time-sensitive leadership constructs help members of the armed forces become more self-aware, identify objectives or desired end states, and understand personal assets and deficiencies (Day et al., 2009).

Notwithstanding some progress in studying leadership development, Day and Dragoni (2015) still describe it as an embryonic area of scholarship, due to an absence of shared agreement and understanding of basic terms, conceptual considerations, theories, and measurement outcomes. These factors have slowed progress in the leadership development field.

The United States Navy is an organization that has been producing leaders for over two centuries. The U.S. Naval War College (USNWC) has been educating leaders since 1884. Hutchinson (2013) explains that the U.S. military has been studying leadership for over a half-century. Until very recently, however, the Navy had not produced a leadership doctrine to promote a comprehensive leader development framework for all sailors (Hayes, 2008). In the past, lessons for petty officers were found in “Wheel Books,” a small notebook that served as a professional reference library for individual sailors interested in successfully performing required duties (Cutler, 2015a, 2015b). Nearly five years ago, the Navy developed an initiative to address this concern by publishing the Navy Leader Development Strategy (NLDS, 2013). The NLDS attempts to develop leaders by integrating four essential elements: experience, education, training, and personal development; while also articulating expected leader development outcomes along a lifelong learning continuum (NLDS, 2013). In 2017, the Navy revised the NLDS, into a Navy Leadership Development Framework (NLDF), stating that “leaders can still take advantage of a rich combination of formal schools, structured on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education” (NLDF, 2017, p. 1) for professional development.
To date, neither the strategy nor the framework has been fully operationalized. Perhaps this is because the current Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), who took office in September 2015, has been working to update and align the leader development effort with the ideas he articulated in *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority* (Richardson, 2016), one of several guiding documents encompassing leadership development.

Many scholars have contributed to the discussion on the importance of leader development, including (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Day & Dragoni, 2015; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014; Riggio, 2008). Sinar et al. (2014) found that improving an organization’s leadership development program was a key human capital strategy for CEOs. A study by Ferguson, Rybacki, Butts, and Carrigan (2016), at the Center for Creative Leadership, found that personal leadership, including leadership development and assessment, was the third most vital leadership challenge for the military. This formal education is called Professional Military Education (PME) offered at the nation’s war colleges (CJCSI OPMEP 1805.01, 2015).

In 2013, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported on a Department of Defense study conducted by the Military Education Coordinating Committee, regarding actions needed to enhance leadership development at joint PME institutions. The Military Education Coordinating Committee, using articulated Desired Leader Attributes from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, conducted a gap analysis in officer joint PME curricula associated with the leader attributes. This research study was focused on the professional opinion of academic deans and program directors of the 27 officer and enlisted programs and found gaps in three Desired Leader Attributes (U.S. GAO-14-29). While the report made recommendations, such as conducting further study on tools to achieve particular leader outcomes and looking at ways to incentivize lifelong learning, it did not provide details by
institution, nor did it provide any cost estimates for implementing its recommendations (U.S.
GAO-14-29). Moreover, an in-depth analysis of student/officer perspectives on leader
development was not conducted.

The purpose of this qualitative, intrinsic case study is to explore and better understand the
experiences of intermediate-level and senior-level Navy officers that contributed significantly to
their leadership development. The study inquired into the most important leadership experiences
these officers have had in the Navy, and whether these experiences connect with the Navy’s
leadership development programs or methods (formal schooling, on-the-job training and
experience, and self-guided education). Intermediate-level officers are the first career group of
Navy officers that enter the USNWC seeking a master’s degree and Joint Professional Military
Education I (JPME I) certification. Typically, they are male (88%), at the Lieutenant
Commander rank (O-4), have 11-15 years of service, and are 28-35 years old (USNWC, 2016b).
Senior-level Navy officers already have their JPME I certification and are seeking a master’s
degree and the JPME II certification. They are typically male (87.4%), at the Commander (O-5)
or Captain (O-6) rank, have 16-26 or more years of service, and are over 40 years old (USNWC,
2016b). In seeking to better understand the leadership experiences of these officers, lessons can
be derived as to how to best operationalize the Navy leader development programs for these
critically important officers at a crucial time in their professional career.

**Context and Problem of Practice**

In 2013, the United States Navy published the *Navy Leader Development Strategy*
(NLDS). The publication was done in recognition that the profession of arms faces a complex
and ever-changing and challenging strategic environment. In late 2014, an internal USNWC
group was established to look into operationalizing the NLDS (W. Spain, personal...
communication, December 1, 2014), but it focused primarily on ethics education and not on leadership development (USNWC, 2015).

The Navy and the military in general (Joint Staff) have a rather elaborate and hierarchical oversight structure to oversee leader development as shown in Figure 1.1. The President of the U.S. Naval War College (USNWC) chairs the Leader Development Continuum Council (LDCC) which is responsible for ensuring alignment of the core elements of leader development (formal education, on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education), and supporting the various Navy communities (surface warfare, submariners, aviation, etc.) in their leader development efforts (NLDF, 2017). The LDCC, through the USNWC President, reports to the Advanced Educational Review Board which is responsible for Navy education policy, programs, and related infrastructure, per the Chief of Naval Operations’ directive (Chief of Naval Operations, 2015: OPNAVINST 1520.23C, 2015). A corresponding structure exists for Professional Military Education (PME) / Joint Professional Military Education (JPME). Serving in a boundary spanner role, the President of the USNWC sits on both the Advanced Education Review Board and Military Education Coordinating Committee. Military education guidance is promulgated by the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (often from the Department of Defense) or the Navy (via the Chief of Naval Operations), and then it cascades down the hierarchy to the respective PME schools and students. Feedback also flows upward via military accreditation reviews and various educational committees.

The key role played by the President of the U.S. Naval War College is a function of the job’s positional responsibilities and those of the College. One of the key mission tasks of the school is to educate and develop leaders.
The College’s Mission, Functions, and Tasks (MFT) document explicates that:

The NWC shall provide professional military education (PME) programs supporting the Navy’s Future Leader Development and Professional Military Education Continua. The designed effect is to create leaders that are operationally and strategically-minded critical thinkers proficient in joint matters, and skilled Naval and Joint warfighters, prepared to meet the strategic and operational level of war challenges of today and tomorrow … NWC shall foster leader development across the Navy. These efforts also conduct proactive leading-edge research, assessment, and analysis. The desired effect is a fully integrated and Fleet-executed Navy Leader Development Continuum which produces leaders of character, prepared to lead effectively in the complex global security environment. (USNWC, 2012: OPNAVINST 5450.027D, 2012, p. 1)

Of the essential elements of leader development, education instills the basic doctrines of Navy leadership and “serves to contextualize past experience to enable the application of new learning to future assignments, cultivate adaptive leader abilities, and provide methods for
exploring and addressing unknowns” (NLDS, 2013, p. 8). These educational goals are further refined in the outcomes specified in a leader development continuum which includes organizational values, ethical conduct, sound judgment, and trustworthy leadership (NLDS, 2013). These goals combine with the type of leadership attributes the military expects as an officer moves up in rank such as lifelong learning, building relationships, and communicating and fostering mutual trust between leader and followers to allow for mission command and mission accomplishment (Dempsey, 2013); suggesting a positive leadership profile. A similar call to positive authentic leadership was made by the business practitioner, Bill George, when he said:

All my experiences lead me to the same conclusion: when leaders are dedicated stewards and lead in an authentic manner, they build enduring organizations that do great good for people and make enormous difference in the world…leaders who lead with purpose, values, and integrity and who are good stewards of the legacy they inherited from their predecessors. We need leaders who build enduring organizations, motivate their employees to provide superior customer service, and create long-term value for shareholders. (George, 2003, pp. xvii–9)

Considering that the American people are the “shareholders” of the Navy’s national security efforts, and the USNWC is tasked with helping the Navy advance leadership development, it seems prudent to study the experiences of Navy officers in becoming leaders. The USNWC is an excellent setting to do this. The College’s primary responsibility in the NLDS is to educate mid-career officers (intermediate O-3 and O-4 officers and senior O-5 and O-6 officers), and it does this using two master’s degree programs targeting these career levels. The outcomes of the programs are to build up, at appropriate career milestones, the required “character attributes, behaviors, and skills expected of Navy leaders” as they take on more complex responsibilities (NLDS, 2013, p. 9). This research study, using an authentic leadership lens, focuses on the most important experiences that promote leadership development in Navy
Naval officers come to the USNWC from operational fleet assignments or shore-side duties and take either the intermediate-level master’s degree program which leads to an M.A. in Defense and Strategic Studies or the senior-level master’s degree program which leads to an M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies. The program runs 10 to 13 months. However, the Navy has a long-standing practice and culture of privileging fleet operations over school time ashore, so the resident educational component of a sailor’s leader development often gets short-shrift per Johnson-Freese (2013). This practice means that its best officers may not participate in the resident MA programs. J. Kelly (2014) suggests that Navy’s culture believes that leadership happens by watching senior leaders: “what Admiral James Stavridis, recently retired, has described as ‘transference’—‘just do what I do and you will be a good leader’” (p. 1). The NLDS and NLDF initiatives recognize that leadership development is more than following good examples, and that it must be an intentional individual sailor and Navy organizational commitment involving all of the leadership development methods (education, on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education). The overall hope is that the leadership initiative will change the cultural orientation.

While these larger Navy cultural and personnel assignment issues extend beyond the USNWC at Newport, there is still the essential need to investigate the leader development framework as experienced by Navy officers. A key population that is worthy of investigation is the intermediate-level and senior-level Navy officers attending the USNWC as resident students. This in-depth examination is necessary as the USNWC, like other traditional colleges and universities, has to assess its relevance vis-a-vis a multitude of stakeholders. Further complexity
arises in that the education it delivers is relevant to its officer-students; the operating fleet; Navy hierarchy; other United States military Services; international partners; local and national political leaders; the American public, which pays taxes to support the programs; and stakeholders worldwide. Moreover, developing leaders is one of the College’s primary missions as articulated in its Mission, Function, and Tasks document cited earlier in this narrative (USNWC MFT: (USNWC, 2012: OPNAVINST 5450.027D, 2012, p. 1). Gathering evidence on the impact of key Navy leadership development experiences, and how officers apply the educational, experiential, and self-educational components of the Navy’s leadership development framework, provided important insights into the applicability and contribution of the framework and its effectiveness for these officers. This research assists in sorting out historic and present cultural mores with respect to leadership development in Navy officers and their communities. Finally, the study provides insight on how to enhance the existing formal education leadership development curriculum, which could lead to more positive outcomes for present and future naval officers who serve the nation, interact with domestic and international partners, and are often entrusted with maintaining peace and providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, in addition to winning wars.

Significance of the Problem

The US Navy is a large, complex organization. More than 329,000 active duty sailors (54,745 officers) and 270,666 enlisted, 200,688 reservists and 274,300 civilians currently serve (U.S. Navy, 2018b). Not only is the organization complex, the operational environment is dynamic and extremely challenging. Moreover, failure to leverage its most strategic resource (people), means the Navy may generate individuals who are ill-prepared to lead and who lack the mental and moral resilience to safeguard mission accomplishment in today’s complex military
environment (Hayes, 2008; J. Kelly, 2014; Mensch & Rahschulte, 2008). While the NLDS states that “there is no higher priority than to develop effective Navy leaders” (NLDS, 2013, p. 3), nearly five years after publication of the strategy document, the program suggested has still not been fully operationalized or studied. As suggested earlier, this delay could be due to the wish of the CNO to align Navy doctrine, specifically the leadership development efforts, with *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority* (Richardson, 2016). Additionally, the sheer enormity of strategy implementation in a large complex and bureaucratic organization such as the Navy is very challenging. Indeed, in December 2018 an updated version of the *Design* was issued. The Navy’s goal is to supplement the proven doctrines of leadership with “leader[ship] development that cultivates critical thinking, broadens perspectives in decision making, builds cultural expertise, fosters innovation, encourages lifelong learning, and shapes and enhances character and integrity” (NLDS, 2013, p. 4). To achieve its vision, the Navy must embrace institutional and cultural transformation. It “must critically examine existing policies, processes, and programs associated with personnel management, ensuring their relevance to evolving Navy leader development needs” (NLDS, 2013, p. 6). The 2018 *Design* addresses these issues.

The Navy’s “Fat Leonard” bribery scandal (Cavas, 2015; Watson, 2017), poor morale onboard ships (Ziezulewicz, 2017b), recent fatal collisions in the 7th Fleet (Faram, 2017; Larter, 2017a, 2017b) its “can-do” culture (Olsen, 2017), and underfunded and over-tasked environment (Lendon, Cohen, & George, 2017) have called into question its leadership; and by extension its leadership development efforts. To fix these problems, the CNO wants to empower junior Navy leaders (Ziezulewicz, 2017a). Therefore, a study focusing on the most important leadership development experiences of intermediate-level and senior-level Navy officers (junior officers mentioned by the CNO), and how the experiences connect with Navy leadership development
programs or methods; especially the formal educational, experiential, and self-guided learning avenues articulated in the *Navy’s Leader Development Framework* (2017), could provide important officer perspectives. In his critical analysis of the method the Navy employs to develop operational leaders, Christopher Hayes (2008) says that the Service has for decades labored unsuccessfully to officially outline and put into operation a development program for naval leaders. Hayes’ suggestion is that “leadership must be integrated into the PME curriculum and not be left to languish on its own…Unless tied to an integrated system linking assessment, career management, and advancement selection criteria, initiatives to reform the Navy’s processes will fall out of favor as the helm is passed to the next cohort of Navy leaders” (Hayes, 2008, p. 78). Publication of the leader development doctrines (NLDF, 2017; NLDS, 2013) were the initial steps toward accomplishing this strategic goal. On a more operational level, a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) refines the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction, 2015) and learning areas (learning outcomes) for PME schools. This research study is designed to collect officers’ experiences of their own personal leadership development, including PME leadership learning outcomes (CJCSI OPMEP 1805.01, 2015), as well as was the larger effort to implement the Navy’s leadership development strategy and framework (NLDF, 2017, 2018; NLDS, 2013).

According to Merriam (2008), USNWC students would be considered self-directed adults benefiting from andragogy, or the discipline of adult learning. Despite this, the College has not until recently offered a core course on leadership per se; instead, it cascaded leadership and ethics content throughout its three core courses in its Master of Arts programs. It will try a one-credit-hour course in Leadership in the Profession of Arms in fall 2018. However, these approaches may present challenges for officers as they have to explicitly attend to, understand,
link, and apply principles of leadership that may not emerge as clearly as they could otherwise to their own professional situations. Therefore, there is a pressing need to study in-depth how Navy officers perceive successful naval leadership, better understand their own seminal leadership experiences, and discover how they develop the “competence and character” specified in Navy guiding doctrine (NLDF, 2017, 2018). In effect, how they connect their individual leadership experiences with Navy leadership development programs or methods. Results could be used to determine whether these developmental efforts provide the necessary skills and capabilities to fulfill the Navy’s goals for leadership education and the positive outcomes it seeks. Study results can contribute to answering the question of whether the Navy is leveraging its most strategic resource—its people.

**Purpose of the Study and Research Preview**

The primary purpose of this qualitative, intrinsic case study is to explore and understand the experiences of intermediate-level and senior-level Navy officers that contributed significantly to their leadership development. Basically, it asks what are the significant experiences, learnings, and understandings of leadership developed by officers at these career levels in the Navy, and how well the experiences connect with Navy leadership development programs and methods. It uses authentic leadership (defined below) as a theoretical framework. The possibility that the Navy does not promote authentic leadership development in these officers, or that the methods used are suboptimal, was also examined. While not a focus of this research study, follower experiences in the Navy were expressed by participants. This was due to their mid-career positions in the Navy and related responsibility of leading subordinates, but also their role as followers of higher ranking Navy leaders. Authentic followership is an important aspect of authentic leadership theory due to the leader-follower dyad (Gardner, et al. 2005).
Semi-structured interviews were conducted with USNWC students to gather specific insights into their leadership experiences, and how they incorporate the three key leadership development framework components into prior leadership learning and future leadership development plans. USNWC and U.S. Navy documents on leadership, ethics, and the Profession of Arms; relevant literature on leadership development; and leadership theory were reviewed to provide a better understanding of the dynamics of these components in the overall leadership development experience. Institutional assessment research reports compiled by the College relative to leadership educational outcomes were also examined as part of this research study. These include student self-assessed progress on the Navy’s leadership outcomes and learning areas outlined in guiding documents (CJCSI OPMEP 1805.01, 2015).

Research Questions
This research will ask these officers: What are the core foundational experiences that promote leadership development in Navy officers? How do these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework?

Conceptual Framework
This study is grounded in the conceptual framework of authentic leadership theory, which specifically address the Navy’s leader development outcomes related to lifelong learning and enhanced character and integrity (authentic leadership), while recognizing the volatile, unstructured, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment in which military leadership happens (NLDF, 2017, 2018).

Persistent national media stories about the failure of corporate and military leaders suggest that something is missing in many leaders—a moral compass. Numerous examples of this situation exist, with some more disturbing than others. One is the situation where, within the
past two years, three Navy Admirals were relieved of duty for cause related to a bribery and corruption scandal (Cavas, 2015). This incident impacted hundreds of sailors and has ramifications for both leader and follower development. As a result of this and other embarrassments, in May 2016 the Chief of Naval Operations assembled 200 admirals near Washington, DC and communicated that “the personal conduct of senior leaders and the example it sets is essential to the Navy’s credibility” (Richardson, as cited by Whitlock, 2016). Thus, Navy leader development must have a moral/ethical component so as to generate trust between leaders and followers within the Service, and to maintain credibility between the Navy and external stakeholders. Generally, leadership theories do not attend to the moral development of leaders, but authentic leadership theory does (Day et al., 2009).

**Authentic Leadership Development**

Authentic leadership has been proposed by some as an emerging concept worthy of investigation in this regard as “trust is the foundation of our [military] profession” (Dempsey, 2012, p. 3). Luthans and Avolio (2003) “define authentic leadership in organizations as a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development” (p. 243). In this process associates are followers and the benefits of authentic leadership development accrue to both leaders and followers. In their review of the literature, Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, and Dickens (2011) describe authenticity as an assortment of interactive and intellectual steps that make clear how individuals ascertain and build a core identity, and how this sense of self is preserved across time and varying circumstances. Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, and Walumbwa (2005) suggest authenticity is possessing one’s individual experiences and behaving
in consonance with one’s true self. Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, and Joseph (2008) developed an authenticity scale finding that authentic individuals are more affable, outgoing, conscientious, open, and less neurotic. Additionally, the authenticity scale was correlated with subjective well-being and psychological well-being. These are important measures of self-esteem.

Avolio, Gardner, and Walumbwa (2007) developed the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) to measure the four components that comprise authentic leadership: self-awareness (the degree the leader is aware of his or her strengths, limitations, how others see him or her, and how the leader impacts others); relational transparency (the degree the leader reinforces a level of openness with others that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges, and opinions); balanced processing (the degree the leader solicits sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions); and ethical/moral behavior (the degree the leader sets a high standard for moral and ethical conduct). Originally, authentic leadership had five components, but Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) combined internalized regulation processes (authentic behavior) and positive moral perspective into internalized moral perspective during their validation research. Avolio and Gardner (2005) and Luthans and Avolio (2003) focus on the affirmative methods of leadership and its advancement, while May, Chan, Hodges, and Avolio (2003) concentrate on the moral component.

This study focused on two aspects of authentic leadership: self-awareness and the development of self-regulation. Self-awareness is the degree to which an individual is aware of different aspects of identity and the extent to which self-perceptions are integrated internally and compatible with the way others perceive the individual, per Day et al. (2009 citing Hall, 2004).
Self-regulation is a process of monitoring and adjusting thoughts, actions, and feelings. It includes taking goal-directive action such as defining a goal, taking action to obtain the desired outcome, and assessing progress toward the goal, per Day et al. (2009 citing Baumeister, Muraven, & Tice, 2000). Relational transparency, ethical/moral conduct (later called internalized moral perspective), and balanced processing are considered self-regulatory activities, while self-awareness is related to identity and congruence (Day et al., 2009).

May et al. (2003) propose a developmental model for fostering the moral component of authentic leadership in individuals and organizations. The framework includes authentic decision-making, authentic behavior, and authentic leadership development and suggests related sub-constructs to produce “a leader who is an integrated and balanced person who treats ethical behavior as part of his/her personal life, and his/her organizational life” (May et al. 2003, p. 250, italics in original).

Figure 1.2 depicts this research study’s conceptual framework using authentic leadership while recognizing that the Navy leadership development framework has three key developmental methods.
Day et al. (2009) believe that critical thinking is a key component in ethical reasoning and cerebral agility. They suggest that critical thinking, combined with reflective judgment (a leader’s interpretive assessment regarding ill-structured challenges), and epistemic cognition (how the leader thinks about knowledge and knowing) are requirements to learn from experience (Day et al., 2009). Not surprisingly, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction mentions producing professionally proficient critical thinkers in its educational outcomes for Joint Leader Development for the 21st Century (CJCSI OPMEP 1805.01, 2015). “Critical thinking requires adults to be able to challenge assumptions that guide their lives, which also requires a higher level of cognitive development to recognize that there are multiple correct ways to live” (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 209, italics in original). These concepts may be especially important when considering the Navy Leader Development Framework goals of
developing officers’ (operational) competence and (ethical/moral character) per the NLDF (2017; 2018); and the related aspects of self-awareness and authentic moral development found in authentic leadership. As leaders, military officers must often weigh the goals of the profession against the goals of the bureaucracy. The four components that comprise authentic leadership may play a role in successfully navigating this balancing act. Learning from experience and reflecting on it are key components of any leadership development program.

The literature review (Chapter 2) provides the foundational information for the leadership theories, concepts, and constructs that informed the conceptual framework of the research study. The study methodology (Chapter 3) explains in detail the intrinsic case study approach employed to research the experiences of students. The researcher’s perspective and preconceptions (biases) are explained below.

Positionality Statement

This researcher became personally interested in learning more about outcomes assessment when the researcher was part of a cross-functional college team working on regional accreditation at an adult, minority-serving institution in New York City several years ago. However, the researcher acknowledges that interest for this study is a function of a twenty-five plus years of leadership and administrative experience in for-profit (market research) and nonprofit (public benefit, higher education) institutions, which included teaching business classes and leading cross-functional teams. Most recently, involvement in institutional research and assessment and a growing scholar/practitioner focus on trying to improve higher educational organizations motivated this research. Inspiration is also a result of losing research clients during 9/11 and a subsequent return to the higher education industry. The fact that the researcher is now an inside researcher at the U.S. Naval War College may allow a more complete
fulfillment of the scholar/practitioner role. Rooney (2005), citing Robson (2002), identifies an inside researcher as an individual with direct engagement with the specific research setting. Unluer (2012) notes several benefits of being an inside researcher, including knowing the language, comprehending organizational values and culture, recognizing the official and unofficial power arrangements, and the ability to gain access to records and study participants.

As Carlton Parsons (2008) indicates, the positionality of both the researcher and the participants is critical. Conducting research in a military organization with officer rank(s) and a culture of male warrior hegemony, the researcher must make allowances for the “other” perspective to surface. Briscoe (2005) reminds us that understanding positionality involves consideration of the self and others beyond pure demographics; it includes dimensions of ideological, discursive, and inclusive positioning of the other as well. As a civilian working in a military organization, this researcher was mindful of the different cultures at play, including the respective sub-cultures within the Navy (i.e., surface warfighters, submariners, aviators, etc.), individuals from other military Services, and government agencies.

As an insider, the researcher designed steps to ensure trustworthy data that is not biased. Validity checks on coding themes were developed from the interviews and were incorporated into the research design as well as a member checking process.

The researcher’s participation on a faculty/staff working group looking into operationalizing the Navy Leadership Development Strategy (NLDS) also informed this research study as did annual student assessments carried out as part of the ongoing College evaluation protocol. It is anticipated that discovering the most important experiences Navy officer have had that contributed significantly to their leadership development in the Service, and how the experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework will
inform Navy administration, leadership researchers, and USNWC’s academic planners. This placed the researcher in a boundary spanner role; someone who is interested in bridging the academic and practice domains as outlined by Zaghab and Rodriguez de Bittner (2013) in their reconceptualization of practice-based research. This researcher was also mindful of the problems Unluer (2012) identified for inside researchers such as role duality, missing routine organizational behaviors, failure to seek clarification of the meaning of events (making assumptions about participant’s perspectives), and recognizing that participants may assume the researcher knows what they know.

Since the study is nested in the larger Navy Leadership Development Strategy initiative and may serve as a source of useful data to that effort, it was supported by a variety of stakeholders. Additionally, by embedding in the study structures and processes to respect ethical considerations and avoid potential researcher biases, it is hoped that results will be as value-neutral as possible.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations of this research study are considered demarcations or study boundaries controlled by the researcher to make the effort more manageable (Roberts, 2010). The study concentrated on Navy officers as they complete the M.A. degree. This research includes both intermediate-level and senior-level resident Navy officers attending the U. S. States Naval War College (USNWC). Ten (10) participants were purposefully selected to allow the researcher to delve deeper into these officers’ leadership experiences; focusing on “information-rich cases,” per Merriam (1998, p. 61), who cites Patton (1990, p. 169, emphasis in original). A review (pre-test) of the survey questions was performed involving two faculty members and one student prior to conducting the interviews. “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the
investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and thus must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). The methodology section (Chapter 3) explains this approach in greater detail.

**Research Paradigm**

The researcher desires to pursue a social constructivist framework to answer the research questions. Constructivists believe that learning is a process of constructing meaning from experience (Anfara & Mertz, 2014). Mezirow’s (1991) transformational learning theory is an example where reflective learning (assessment and reassessment of assumptions) plays a key role in the dialogue of meaning-making. “To the extent that adult education strives to foster reflective learning, its goal becomes one of either conformation or transformation of ways of interpreting experience” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 6). The constructivist frame is consistent with the proposition that leader identity and development is constructed through social interactions. This interpretive philosophical assumption attempts to understand the subjective meaning of officer experiences, accounting for the complexity of views (various interpretations) formed through social interactions with colleagues, superiors, and subordinates (Creswell, 2013). This focus on “social construction and sensemaking” is the process by which individuals “create their social worlds and identities” (Bettis & Mills, 2006, p. 59). Knowles et al. (2015) remind us that the constructivist perspective stresses that “all knowledge is context-bound, and that individuals make personal meaning of their learning experiences” (p. 177).

**Definitions**

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were utilized: adult learning, andragogy, authenticity, authentic leadership, critical thinking, feedback, graduate education, leadership, learning, learning outcomes, meta-cognition, moral component of authentic
leadership, officer, professional military education (PME), Profession of Arms, reflection, self-awareness, self-regulation, and semi-structured interviews.

**Adult learning.** The process of adults acquiring knowledge and expertise based on their personal or career goals (Knowles et al., 2015).

**Andragogy.** “The art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1984, p. 6).

**Authenticity.** The quality of developing a core self-identity and related moral attributes that are consistent with one’s decision making and behavior. Attributes of authentic leadership include showing respect, generating trust, being accountable, and dealing fairly with others, per Kouzes and Posner (2007).

**Authentic leadership.** Authentic leadership (AL), according to Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009), who cite Luthans and Avolio (2003), is “a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development” (p. 423). Avolio et al. (2007) cite four constructs that encompass authentic leadership: self-awareness; balanced processing; relational transparency; and ethical/moral behavior (internalized moral perspective).

**Critical thinking.** Fischer, Spiker and Riedel’s (2008, p. 4) research on critical thinking for the Army (Research report 1881) defined critical thinking (CT) as: “A time-limited mode of controlled, deliberate, processing that is purposeful, stimulus-driven, and context bound. Integral to CT are checks on the processes and products of thinking, which make it a fundamentally meta-cognitive process. Its function is to serve other cognitive tasks such as decision-making and problem solving.”
**Feedback.** In an educational situation, feedback is communication regarding the correctness of the student’s response or action related to a specific learning outcome or goal. Feedback is normally given by instructors; however, peers or others (followers, leaders, etc.) can also provide it. Providing constructive feedback to learners in an academic setting, or to subordinates in a military setting, is done to improve performance. DeRue and Wellman (2009) suggest that the availability of feedback (context) is key in developing leaders by experience.

**Graduate education.** The formal level of education beyond a bachelor’s degree.

**Leader.** An individual who influences others to work in concert toward a common vision (Daft, 2008).

**Leadership.** Northouse (2016, p. 6) says that: “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”

**Learning.** “The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 2015, p. 49).

**Learning outcomes.** Formally articulated graduate learning goals which describe the “knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits of mind that students take from their learning experience” (Suskie, 2004, p. 75).

**Meta-cognition.** Being aware of one’s learning and thinking procedures (Kitchener, 1983).

**Moral component of authentic leadership.** An aspect of self-regulation in authentic leadership, May et al. (2003) propose a model to develop the ethical/moral component of authentic leadership. It entails authentic decision-making (recognizing moral dilemmas, transparent evaluation, acting authentically); and authentic leadership development (self-awareness and reflection, leading to moral capacity and moral efficacy, which generates moral
courage and moral resiliency); eventually promoting authentic moral action and sustainable authentic behavior (May et al., 2003, p. 250).

**Officer.** Individuals commissioned into the U.S. military. For this study, all participants are resident students taking one of the two master’s degree programs at the USNWC.

**Professional Military Education (PME).** For the purposes of this research study, PME is the educational program(s) of the War Colleges which “brings together two important areas: national security and education” (Johnson-Freese, 2013, p. vi).

**Profession of Arms.** Military individuals who are engaged in providing national defense services.

**Reflection.** The internal transformation of experience into learning along a continuum that includes imagining, reflecting and analyzing (Kolb, 2015).

**Self-awareness.** The degree to which an individual is aware of different aspects of identity and the extent to which self-perceptions are integrated internally and compatible with the way others perceive the individual, per Day et al. (2009), citing Hall (2004).

**Self-regulation.** The process of attending to and adjusting thoughts, actions, and feelings. Self-regulation includes goal directive behavior (establishing an outcome, behaving in a way to obtain those outcomes, and evaluating movement toward the outcome), per Day et al. (2009, citing Baumeister et al., 2000).

**Semi-structured interviews.** A research method where the researcher employs both prearranged and spontaneous questions based on the emerging dialogue.

**Conclusion**

Using the theoretical framework of authentic leadership theory, while being mindful that leadership development occurs over time, the researcher explored the most important
experiences of Naval officers that contributed significantly to their leadership development in the Service; and how these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework: how officers utilize formal schooling, on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education to become better leaders. Chapter 1 began with a short summary of the research context, outlined the problem of practice, significance of the research, briefly summarized the existing literature, proposed research questions, introduced key theoretical frameworks, previewed the research plan and researcher positionality, and included limitations and definitions of terms.

A rigorous process of research was conducted to “give voice” to participants’ key leadership developmental experiences and developmental processes. Results can inform stakeholders interested in better understanding individual Navy leadership development, and in enhancing the Service’s overall leadership development process. In Chapter 2, the researcher presents a scholarly literature review.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In the review of the literature, the researcher investigates the leadership development writings most applicable to the problem of practice of operationalizing and researching the Navy leader development framework. Navy officers are adult learners who must work in a military bureaucracy and operate in a complex environment. To be “world-class leaders...[that] inspire their teams to perform at or near their theoretical limits” Navy leaders develop both competence and character (NLDF, 2017, p. 2). They become skilled at their operational warfighting job, and incorporate leadership learning and cultivate a moral/ethical character that embraces the Navy’s “core values of honor, courage and commitment” (NLDF, 2017, p. 3). Ideally, they accomplish this by building and supporting the habit of lifelong learning, constantly improving thinking and decision making, and deepening their professional ethics (NLDS, 2013). Therefore, the literature review focused on leader and leadership development in general and military and Navy leadership specifically.

Machi and McEvoy (2009) define a literature review as “a written argument that promotes a thesis position by building a case from credible evidence based on previous research” (p. 4). In this inquiry, the processes associated with authentic leadership development was examined to provide a conceptual framework to better understand the leadership development experience of officers at a key point in their Navy careers. The purpose of this intrinsic case study was to explore and understand the experiences of intermediate-level and senior-level Navy officers that contributed significantly to their leadership development. In addition to learning about the most important leadership experiences officers have had in the Navy, this study asked how these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework; especially how officers apply the Navy leadership development methods of formal schooling,
on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education. The study was open to the possibility that the Navy does not effectively promote authentic leadership development, or that the articulated methods of leadership development are not optimal.

In this chapter, the researcher relates a brief history of the United States Naval War College for context. A discussion of relevant literature related to leadership development writ large follows, with military and Navy leadership development research coming next, and then other constructs related to the case study are presented. This study is grounded in the theoretical framework of authentic leadership theory. It also recognizes the goal of the NLDF is to produce leaders who:

Study every text, try every method, seize every moment, and expand every effort to outfox their competition. They ceaselessly communicate, train, test, and challenge their teams. They are toughest on themselves; they routinely seek out feedback, and are ready to be shown their errors in the interest of learning and getting better. When they win, they are grateful, humble, and spent from their effort. By doing these things, great leaders bring their teams to a deeply shared commitment to each other in the pursuit of victory. (NLDF, 2017, p. 2)

The Navy’s articulated leader development framework is a lifelong learning continuum that attempts to reach its goal by helping sailors develop competence and character and become more accomplished as leaders at key career milestones (NLDF, 2017). At the intermediate-level, military officers are looking to complete their Joint Professional Military Education (JPME-I) requirement needed for promotion. The objective of this education is to “expand student understanding of Joint Matters from a Service component perspective at the operational and tactical level” (Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction, 2015, p. E-C-1). At the senior-level, military officers seek to complete their Joint Military Education (JPME-II) requirement needed for advancement. The “fundamental objective of each [Service] is to prepare future [senior-level] military and civilian leaders for high-level policy, command and staff responsibilities
requiring joint and Service operational expertise and warfighting skills…The goal is to develop agile and adaptive leaders with the requisite values, strategic vision and thinking skills to keep pace with the changing strategic environment” (Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction, 2015, p. E-C-1). Select Navy and other Service officers (Marines, Army, Air Force, etc.) and civilians advance in their career by taking a master’s degree and their JPME courses at the USNWC. The Naval War College has been educating leaders since 1884 (https://www.usnwc.edu/about/161004-fast-facts.aspx) and the current Dean of Academics has clarified this role as not creating leaders, but further developing leaders (P. Haun, personal communication, May 23, 2017). To better understand the context of Navy officers and their ongoing leadership development process, especially the integration of the NLDF (2017; 2018) methods of education, experience, and self-guided education, it is important to know some background about the USNWC.

A Brief History of the United States Naval War College

The Historical Significance of the Early Years

Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce was the visionary who realized that the naval service was not furnishing sufficient training or education in many crucial professional areas. He took action to address these issues including writing the first seamanship text in 1861 and initiating a procedure to exercise experimental tactics, and starting the first Navy recruiting training station in 1883. Luce came to appreciate that there was:

No place in the Navy to study the central issue for a professional officer in the armed forces: war … Luce understood that the study of war requires original research and scholarship to understand how wars begin, how wars are fought, how wars end, and how wars can be prevented. (https://www.usnwc.edu/About/History-and-Campus)
Luce eventually convinced the Navy of his concept to remedy the situation, and in 1884 the United States Naval War College was founded on Coaster’s Harbor Island in Newport, RI. The College’s mission was expressed by Luce: “The War College is a place of original research on all questions relating to war and to statesmanship connected with war, or the prevention of war” (USNWC, 2013). For Luce, this broad view involved topics related to “governmental management, finance, decision-making, logistics, campaign planning and tactics, international relations, and grand strategy,” so the frameworks supplied by these areas of study (including wargaming game boards to marry political-military issues and new naval technologies) became the educational foundation of the College (https://www.usnwc.edu/About/History-and-Campus).

**Cutting-Edge Thinking and Political Challenges**

Notable teachers, thinkers, and writers linked to the College influenced international naval thinking for decades. These included Alfred Thayer Mahan’s lectures and book on the *Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783* and Captain Charles H. Stockton’s publication of the first code of international law for naval operations in 1900. These luminaries helped the College earn its professional bona fides (https://www.usnwc.edu/About/History-and-Campus).

In his official history of the USNWC, John Hattendorf (Hattendorf, Simpson, & Wadleigh, 1984) relates several instances where the viability of the College was threatened by internal Navy politics and personalities as well as preference for fleet assignments versus school. Despite these challenges, the U.S. student body gradually grew.

In the early 1900s, “the Naval War College was the principal engine behind the creation of operational naval doctrine and the innovation of an operational staff to support flag officers at sea. In addition, the College was the wellspring for the long-term movement that led to the creation in 1915 of a Chief of Naval Operations, with his shore-based naval staff, to advise
government leaders in Washington and to give the Navy the professional uniformed leadership it had not previously had” (https://www.usnwc.edu/About/History-and-Campus). In preparation for World War I, the Navy asked Captain William S. Sims to deliver lectures on military character and mission command to new Navy volunteers (Armstrong, 2015). In his usual iconoclastic style, Sims did not focus on “heroic leaders” but, defining character as a moral attribute, Sims foreshadowed the proponents of authentic leadership by:

Discussing the responsibilities of the junior officers and noncommissioned officers and their relationships and responsibilities toward their seniors ... [as] proper execution of mission command requires a relationship between the superior and subordinate. That relationship comes with responsibilities for both the subordinate just as much as the senior. Success as a subordinate requires, according to Sims, a balance between loyalty and initiative. Both are fundamental to success, but success requires keeping them from coming into conflict with each other. (Armstrong, 2015, p. 47)

Subsequent to World War I, under the presidency of (now) Admiral William S. Sims (who commanded U.S. Naval Forces in Europe during the war), the College started to focus on contemporary naval operations and started to: “think innovatively about future operational uses for submarines, aircraft, and amphibious forces” (https://www.usnwc.edu/About/History-and-Campus). The College made significant contributions to the development of war plans employed in World War II and several key naval leaders, particularly Halsey, Nimitz, King, and Spruance, honed their thinking at the USNWC in the 1930s (https://www.usnwc.edu/About/History-and-Campus).

As Hattendorf et al. (1984) record, Captain Earnest J. King in the USNWC’s wargaming exercises prior to WW II had anticipated Japan’s offensive. Nimitz refined his skills as a naval tactician, while William F. Halsey, a 1933 graduate, recognized the need for a higher-level course at the Naval War College for a select group of students. Fortunately, the new College president, Rear Admiral Luke McNamee, was also concerned with offering an advanced class.
He was able to secure approval for the initiative. The senior class was different than existing courses, as it had no set curriculum but focused on “international relations, major strategy, and the broader aspects of warfare, with particular attention to German and Japanese aspirations,” as these were of key interest to Washington policymakers (Hattendorf et al., 1984, p. 148).

Admiral Raymond Spruance, who won the battle of Midway, returned to the Naval War College for his fourth tour of duty in 1946. His Cold War era tenure at the USNWC focused on the issues of nuclear weapons and multinational cooperation (https://www.usnwc.edu/About/History-and-Campus).

Radical Change in Mindset

In 1972, Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner became the College’s thirty-seventh president, after Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Chief of Naval Operations, selected him to reinforce the strategy of promoting extreme and powerful change by broadening Naval officers’ mindsets beyond their technical specialty (surface warfare, aviation, submarines, etc.) and help them better analyze problems (Hattendorf et al., 1984).

Turner’s changes resulted in three shifts of emphasis in the College’s curriculum: a historical case approach to studying strategy; a managerial framework for making scarce military resource decisions (i.e., weapons) that translate decisions into action; and a study of the employment of forces acquired and led using problem-solving methods he called tactics (Turner, 1972). This strategic curricular change led to three academic departments: Strategy and Policy; National Security and Decision-Making; and Joint Military Operations. It also led to a high-quality, full-time, civilian and military teaching faculty; a more academically rigorous program; and a more stringent student selection process (https://www.usnwc.edu/About/History-and-
While many considered these changes revolutionary, Turner (1972) insisted “they represent a return to our great traditions” (p. 5).

In 1981, the Center for Naval Warfare Studies was established within the College for broadly based, advanced research on the naval contributions to national strategy. Research results from the Center are incorporated into the core curriculum, but importantly, they connect the College to the operational fleet and policy makers in Washington, DC (https://www.usnwc.edu/About/History-and-Campus).

**Goldwater-Nichols Act**

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 significantly altered the structure of the United States military by configuring the operational chain of command to “run from the President to Secretary of Defense to the combatant commanders” thereby reducing the role of the individual Service chiefs (i.e., CNO) to train personnel and supply equipment to the respective combatant commanders (Summary: H.R. 3622–99th Congress, 1985–1986, p. 2). The Act was an attempt to better coordinate efforts among the military branches and included joint officer personnel policies that “requires officers to have completed joint education and a full joint duty tour” before promotion to flag or general rank; it also established a Joint Staff under the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Department of Defense to oversee joint activities (Summary: H.R. 3622–99th Congress, 1985–1986, p. 2). The J-7 Directorate for Joint Force Development, Joint Staff, is involved in the USNWC’s Professional Military Education (PME), which ensures “the broad body of knowledge and develops the habits of mind that are essential to the military professional’s expertise in the art and science of war” and Joint Professional Military Education (JPME), which is “training based on joint doctrine or tactics, techniques and procedures to prepare individuals, joint commanders,
a joint staff, and joint forces to respond to strategic and operational requirements deemed necessary by combatant commanders to execute their assigned missions” (USNWC, 2013, definitions section, p. GL-4).

**Contemporary History**

The USNWC participated meaningfully in the formulation of the “Maritime Strategy” of the 1980s and the management of the Gulf War in 1990–1991. In 1990, the College was the first of the nation’s PME institutions to secure formal regional accreditation leading to the authorization to award a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies. In 2007, the College of Operational and Strategic Leadership was established as part of a broadening of PME requirements to deliver advanced level courses to flag and general officers. Additionally, the effort to bifurcate the intermediate level and senior level curriculums was intensified. This curricular effort was completed, and in 2015, and as part of its decennial regional accreditation process, the College secured permission to offer senior-level officers an M.A. in Defense and Strategic Studies. In 2016, the Naval Leadership and Ethics Center was established at USNWC to further inculcate leadership in the fleet (https://www.usnwc.edu/About/History-and-Campus).

Today, roughly 600 outstanding mid-career level officers of the U.S. Navy, other U.S. Services, civilian federal agencies, and international naval officers come to the USNWC as resident students to pursue a rigorous, relevant, and fleet-centric course of study that runs between 10–13 months, depending on specialization and time of entry. To meet Navy operational needs, three trimesters are delivered during the academic year, so new students arrive and graduating students leave three times a year. Today, the “U.S. Naval War College’s (NWC) mission is to educate and develop future leaders by building strategic and cultural perspective, and enhancing the capability to advise senior leaders and policy-makers”
More specifically, regarding promoting leadership and ethics throughout the force, the USNWC mission states that:

Leader Development rests on the twin prongs of competence and character. Effective Navy leaders work from a foundation of humility, embracing our core values of honor, courage, and commitment. Behaving with integrity, accountability, initiative, and toughness, leaders commit to improving the character of themselves and their teams. As the Chief of Naval Operations' Executive Agent for leadership and ethics, [the] Naval War College helps the Navy to strengthen the ability of its leaders to always behave consistently with our core values, throughout their careers.

However, despite its success, for the academic year 2016–2017, the Navy decided not to send any O-6 officers (captains) to the USNWC as other fleet requirements took precedence (USNWC, 2016c). This decision reinforces the fleet-centric preference versus formal in-residence education argument made by J. Kelly (2014), and the problem of short-changing naval officer education made by Johnson-Freese (2013). Efforts are underway to change the policy and actually make resident JPME II a requirement for promotion beyond Captain (O-6).

Interestingly, in January 2016, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) issued *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority*, a strategic publication that argues for a “Naval Force that produces leaders and teams who learn and adapt to achieve maximum possible performance” (Richardson, 2016, p. 8). One of the related initiatives is to broaden and improve fleet-centered leadership development programs by reinforcing the naval profession, focusing on character and Navy core values (honor, courage, and commitment), and by rewarding sailors who demonstrate these values with challenging assignments and advancement opportunities (Richardson, 2016).

In April 2018, the USNWC implemented a major organizational change to better meet this guidance from the CNO by creating the College for Leadership and Ethics (CLE). CLE faculty are responsible for the new one credit hour course, Leadership in the Profession of Arms,
leadership elective courses, as well as moving forward the CNO’s leader development framework for all Sailors (Kuester, 2017). This coincided with the publication of the CNO’s updated leadership development framework document (NLDF, 2018). In December 2018, the CNO updated *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority* (U.S. Navy, 2018a). For the USNWC, this will involve working with other Navy entities in fortifying “the synergy between development and dissemination of naval doctrine and naval capability” (U.S. Navy, 2018a, p. 10).

**Summary of Existing Leader Development Literature**

The existing leader development literature provides both broad and narrow perspectives on what precisely comprises the most effective practices in this domain. Here, we explore the variance and the commonalities among scholars and draw some conclusions from the literature that relates to the context of the present study.

**Leader Development**

A good deal of the leader development literature emphasizes coaching (Boyatzis, Smith, & Blaize, 2006; Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014); mentoring and leader identity (Lührmann & Eberl, 2007; Muir, 2014; Yeager & Callahan, 2016); after-event reviews (DeRue, Nahrgang, Hollenbeck, & Workman, 2012); and attending to return on investment (Peters, Baum, & Stephens, 2011). Posner (2009) looks at undergraduate college students; Ballou, Bowers, Boyatzis, and Kolb (1999); and Crawford, Brungardt, Scott, and Gould (2002) assess graduate-level organizational leadership; while Baker (2015), Day et al. (2009), Hayes (2008), Lohmeyer (1999), Tertychny (2013), and Yukl and Van Fleet (1982) investigate leader development in military settings; but few are at Navy military graduate school settings.
Stech (2008) suggests focusing leader development on self-awareness and being mindful of the influence an individual has on others. Hopkins, O'neil, Passarelli, and Bilimoria (2008) and Boyatzis (2008) posit that an impactful leadership development program must focus on both the individual and the organizational levels. Many of these studies involve business organizations. Of course, while there are learnings to be derived from such work, business organizations are different from military organizations in many respects. This creates a potential gap in the literature relative to assessing leadership development programs in military higher education institutions, especially graduate-level programs.

Other authors have contributed to leadership in the military setting in ways that are meaningful for this study. J. Kelly (2014) suggests that the Navy develop leadership in all of its sailors via experience, education, training, and personal development, reinforcing the four essential NLDS elements of how leadership is learned in the Navy. He expands on personal development as encompassing self-reflection (awareness), critical thinking, moral growth and lifelong learning (Kelly, 2014). These characteristics would seem to be in demand as leaders are challenged with increasingly complex environments. Day et al. (2009) lament that there is no scarcity of leadership theories or leadership training procedures, but that an all-inclusive theory of leader development is missing. Importantly, according to Riggio (2008), there is a collective acceptance that leadership development works and empirical evidence that it has a positive impact.

Avolio, Chan, et al.’s (2005) 100-year review of leadership intervention research for the Gallup Leadership Institute found that: 1) experimental leadership interventions did make a constructive difference in 67% of the studies examined; 2) there was little difference based on the leadership model used; and 3) leadership interventions were not culturally specific.
Interestingly, only 11 of the 201 intervention studies comprising their sample lasted over one month in duration. In a later publication of the same meta-analysis, Avolio, Reichard, et al. (2009) found that Pygmalion interventions (those that focus on leader expectations set within the experiment) had larger effect sizes than traditional leadership theories (behavioral and contingency) and newer theories (charismatic, inspirational, visionary and transformational). All types of interventions had a positive outcome. Defining leadership training or development as “an attempt by the investigators to enhance an individual’s knowledge, skill, ability, motivation, and/or perceived self-concept to enable them to exercise positive influence in the domain of leadership,” these authors found interesting results in their meta-analysis (Avolio, Reichard, et al., 2009, p. 765). For example, they discovered no effect size differences between research conducted in a lab versus the field; but they did find in general that leadership theories that concentrate on behavioral change do have a greater impact than those highlighting cognitive or emotional change (Avolio, Reichard, et al., 2009). These researchers also found that effect sizes were usually higher for manipulations using scenario, role play/actor, leader appointed/assigned, or others/leader expectations than for training or development approaches; that interventions had a greater impact on lower level leaders compared to higher leader levels; and that military organizational settings had larger effect sizes than other types of organizations (Avolio, Reichard, et al., 2009).

The Navy is trying to develop both individual leaders and leadership within the military organization itself; two different but related processes. Riggio (2008) alludes to Day’s (2000) distinction between these processes of leader development and leadership development:

Leader development focuses on the individual leader and increasing his or her capacity to lead through the acquisition of skills, self-awareness, and motivation to lead … Leadership development, on the other hand, focuses on the collective leadership capacity
of the organization – how leaders and followers together increase the shared leadership capacity of the group or organization. (Riggio, 2008, p. 385)

Gardner et al.’s (2005) authentic leadership model also posits that “authentic leaders encourage followers to likewise embark on a process of self-discovery whereby they nurture their strengths, resulting in desirable followers’ outcomes” (p. 359). In this process, followers travel along a similar path of utilizing self-awareness (knowing their strengths and weaknesses, identity, emotions, motives, and goals) and self-regulation (practicing balanced processing, relational transparency, and an internalized morel perspective/authentic moral behavior) in their own development as followers becoming leaders. Indeed, both leader and follower are formed over time by the authentic relationship (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), and this generates key follower outcomes of high levels of trust, greater engagement, and workplace well-being; per Gardner, et al. (2005). Moreover, the net effect is a positive work climate and better organizational performance.

In their review of leader (intrapersonal) and leadership (interpersonal) development research, Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, and McKee (2014) situate the former inside the latter; suggesting that leadership development is a process that begins at an early stage with parental modeling and the application of aptitudes such as “wisdom, intelligence, and creativity,” citing Sternberg (2008); and that development is fashioned by personal interactions with others and individual personality (p. 78). Additionally, leadership theories, such as authentic leadership, can contribute to this growth process, and progress can be measured by examining “experiences, skills, personality, self-development, social mechanisms, 360-degree feedback, self-other agreement, and self-narratives,” and aligning leadership practices with existing developmental requirements of the leader in an efficient and effective manner (Day et al., 2014, p. 79).
Citing Ericcson and Charness’ (1994) research on the 10-year requirement to become an expert in any domain, Day et al. (2014, p. 79) suggest that leader development is not the result of successive interventions, but that true growth occurs in the “so-called white space” sandwiched between leader development activities. Interestingly, intermediate-level Navy officers generally have 11-15 years of military experience (are experts in their domain) while senior-level officers have more military experience (typically 16-25 years), and may have had command of a ship or unit (USNWC, 2017). Attendance at the Naval War College could be just the “white space” these researchers suggest for both student levels. This could help re-focus related research on the ordinary lives of leaders as they practice (do) leadership. Day et al. (2014) suggest that, despite progress in the most recent 25 years of leader and leadership research and theory, the field is still “relatively immature” (p. 80).

Van Velsor, McCauley, and Ruderman (2010) at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) synthesize and summarize findings from the leadership development field and propose a two-part leader development model that includes developmental experiences and developmental processes. The elements that make developmental experiences influential (assessment, challenge, and support), also have a role to play in motivation and as a resource. The developmental process is context-specific, and Van Velsor et al. (2010) posit it involves the variety of developmental experiences, the ability to learn, and leadership development. Assessment data can come from oneself or from external sources (friends, colleagues, boss, and coach), among others. Assessments can be formal (360-degree appraisals, job performance appraisals, or personality assessment results), or they can be informal (feedback from a colleague or individual self-reflection); all of which provide current information and help gauge progress toward a desired end-state. Van Velsor et al. (2010) suggest that assessments play a role in
motivating people to close the distance between the current self and ideal self, and these evaluations serve as a resource to help explain the need for change and provide information on how to close the gap. Experiences that challenge people provide opportunities to move beyond current competencies; for example, by providing the chance to master new skills or handle difficult situations. Van Velsor et al. (2010) propose that the developmental experiences help motivate individuals to meet a new challenge and they also provide the opening to practice and experiment; thus, they afford opportunities to learn and to develop a new identity (leader vs. follower). Finally, developmental experiences may also come with the support of others (mentors), or with designed organizational systems of support (a culture that allows mistakes), which enable people to master the “struggle and pain of developing” thereby enhancing self-efficacy (Van Velsor et al., 2010, p. 12).

The mixture of developmental experiences influences phase two in the CCL model, as does one’s ability to learn and related leader development improvement efforts. The ability to learn is a recognition that different behaviors, competencies, or actions may be required; acknowledging accountability for one’s personal development and understanding individual strengths and weaknesses; reflecting on one’s learning process; and engendering a willingness to try novel learning methods to obtain needed competencies (Van Velsor et al., 2010). These proficiencies may also spur growth in followers enabling them to become leaders themselves. In becoming a leader, Van Velsor et al. (2010) suggest that the developmental process includes aspects related to leading oneself (self-awareness, the ability to balance priorities and different demands, and having honesty and integrity which breeds trust), leading others (communication competencies, relationship-building, working in teams, and an interest in developing others), and leading the organization (requiring management ability, strategic thinking, creativity, and leading
change). The Van Velsor et al. (2010), at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), developed the leader development model shown below in Figure 2.1

![Leader Development Model](image)

*Figure 2.1. Leader Development Model by Van Velsor, McCauley & Ruderman (2010, p. 4).*

Popper and Lipshitz (1993), who define institutional leadership development as the devised and methodological efforts to improve the quality of leadership, suggest that both individuals and organizations look for ways to enhance self-efficacy (coaching and being reflective in action are suggested) and awareness of how people can be motivated by transactional (instrumental) and transformational leadership (based on follower’s emotions). This is consistent with the concept of authentic followership development, per Gardner et al. (2005), as these authors believe that enhancing the leader’s self-awareness will arouse emotions in others and allow these processes to play out so that followers will exceed organizational expectations. Attending to leader self-knowledge, influence on others, and leader self-identity
narratives, may benefit from an understanding Kolb’s (2015, p. 51) experiential learning theory model (ELT) where learners transform experience into knowledge: they have experiences (concrete experience); they reflect on those experiences (reflective observation); the reflections are integrated into their thinking and possible implications for future courses of action (abstract conceptualization); and these possible implications or propositions can be verified and they can function as guides in generating new experiences (active experimentation).

Popper and Lipshitz (1993, p. 26), propose following Akin’s (1987) six modes of learning when considering the development of one’s leadership competency: 1) imitating a mentor (an emotional and likely unconscious process of emulating an advisor); 2) role learning (a conscious rational decision to intentionally emulate a competent leader); 3) learn through doing (acquiring knowledge through taking action, which involves learning from both achievement and failure); 4) learning by validation (evaluating one’s own leadership theory with new theories encountered in the classroom and other places); 5) learning of concepts (being exposed to new ideas presented by subject matter experts); and 6) personal growth (individual learning efforts and feedback, including recognizing dysfunctional actions and “blind spots” that inhibit optimal performance).

Looking at the effectiveness of leadership development efforts from a practitioner’s perspective, Vitello-Cicciu, Weatherford, Gemme, Glass, and Seymour-Route (2014) note the lack of research on leadership development programs, especially investigating changes in leader behaviors after participation in a program. These authors cite Kirkpatrick’s (1994) four levels of educational evaluation: reaction (how students respond to the learning process); learning (the knowledge acquired); behavior (the capability to perform the acquired proficiencies as part of executing the responsibilities of the position/profession); and results (the outcomes of the
educational program, expressed in financial or other metrics) as key areas to consider when assessing leader development effectiveness (Vitell-Cicciu et al. 2014).

Orvis and Ratwani (2010) employ Fleishman, Mumford, Zaccaro, Levin, Korotkin, and Hein’s (1991) taxonomy to examine leader development programs. This instructional design approach assesses five areas: content relevance (the degree the program content specifically attends to the needed skills and knowledge); learner engagement (an environment that requires leaders to participate in a “process of building, practicing, evaluating and applying the capability to be mastered;” challenge (the degree of physical and mental effort required); structure (the degree to which the developmental activity is assembled, paced, or ordered for the learner); and experiential variety (the extent to which self-development activities are qualitatively dissimilar to each other), per Orvis and Ratwani (2010, p. 661).

Petrie’s (2011) white paper for the Center for Creative Leadership, predicts four future trends in the field of leadership development: 1) an increased focus on developmental stages (vertical development of how people make sense of the world in complex and more comprehensive ways) instead of a horizontal focus on acquired skills, competencies, and behaviors; 2) a transfer of greater developmental ownership to the individual learner/leader; 3) an increase in collective leadership to manage in complex environments and a decline in the great man (heroic) leader approach; and 4) the need to create innovative leadership developmental methods (building leadership cultures, distributed leadership, social networking process) to better meet future challenges. Petrie (2011) suggests that more complex thinkers with “adaptability, self-awareness, boundary spanning, collaboration, and network thinking” (p. 9) are needed. Recalling that Navy leadership development articulates two concurrent paths to generating world-class leaders (competence and character development), and that these
competencies may be advanced educationally, experientially, and through self-guided education, it may prove efficacious to use the framework of authentic leadership theory to better understand Navy officer leadership development (NLDF, 2017).

**Authentic Leadership Development**

While leadership theories are germane to the discussion in this narrative and to better understanding differences between leadership and leader development, it should be noted that, at least generally, leadership theories do not attend to the moral development of leaders, but authentic leadership theory does (Day et al., 2009). Authentic leadership has been recognized by some as an emerging concept worthy of study as it formally incorporates an important moral component. As Northouse (2016) states:

> In recent times, upheavals in society have energized a tremendous demand for authentic leadership. The destruction of 9/11, corporate scandals at companies like WorldCom and Enron, and massive failures in the banking industry have created fear and uncertainty. People feel apprehensive and insecure about what is going on around them, and as a result, they long for bona fide leadership they can trust and for leaders who are honest and good. People’s demands for trustworthy leadership make the study of authentic leadership timely and worthwhile. (p. 195)

Such a framework is critical in an armed forces context. As former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Dempsey (2012) states: “trust is the foundation of our [military] profession” (p. 3). Maxwell (2007), the practitioner, believes that leaders need to be trusted to continue to influence others. He asserts that demonstrating “competence, connection and character” builds leadership trust (Maxwell, 2007, p. 63). While Joanne Ciulla (1998) suggests that ethics is at the heart of leadership, Robert Solomon (1998) writes, in the same publication, that “leadership is an emotional relationship of trust” between the leader and the led, and that trust has dimensional properties based on its “social role, its role as an emotion, and its role as background” (p. 102).
Two early leadership authors recognized the importance of authenticity in the leadership arena—Bernard and Burns. Chester Bernard’s *The Functions of the Executive* was published in 1938 and articulated his concept of authority, which is exercised by executives but dependent on followers’ agreement and willingness to accept it. Moreover, his concept of the “leader’s obligation to be responsible for maintaining organizations as social systems” exhibiting creative morality, according to Novicevic, Davis, Dorn, Buckley, and Brown (2005, p. 1397) is closely linked to the authenticity of organizational leadership. Novicevic et al. (2005) cite Bernard (1948) on the importance of the creative (moral) function of leadership as the heart of good leadership which provides dependability, motivation, and purpose to organizational members: “The authenticity of leadership can be measured by the leader’s moral capacity, courage and resilience in creating commonly held codes within the organization” (p. 1399). These authors felt that Barnard’s concepts of responsibilities and conflicts of responsibilities could shed light on the developmental view of authentic leadership, and the ideas of self-awareness and self-regulation of positive behaviors; such as consistently taking authentic moral action (Novicevic et al. 2005). Eriksen (2009) suggested that authentic leaders comprehend their own values, anchor their decisions in those principles, and clearly convey them to followers to establish well-defined expectations. This seems analogous to Barnard’s concepts of mutually shared organizational moral codes. The Navy’s core values of honor, courage, and commitment are examples.

James MacGregor Burns (1978), in his seminal work *Leadership*, was interested in highlighting the “interwoven texture of leadership and followership” (p. 5). His construct of moral transforming leadership encompassed the shared desires, values, and ambitions of both leaders and followers; such that followers have the knowledge and ability to choose among alternative courses of action and even among leaders; and that moral leaders should take
responsibility for their promises (Burns, 1978). Moral leadership would materialize from these fundamental foundations to “produce social change that will satisfy followers’ authentic needs” so that “we will consider as truly legitimate [authentic] only those acts of leaders that serve ultimately in some way to help release human potential” (Burns, 1978, pp. 4–5). Similar to Bernard’s creative moral function of leadership, Burns’ moral transforming leadership behavior transcends everyday desires, demands, and hopes to incorporate “a higher level of moral development [which is linked to] a set of reasoned, relatively explicit, conscious values” (Burns, 1978, p. 46). Bernard Bass (1995), who expanded on Burns’ concept of transformational leadership, suggested that such leaders have a more mature moral development, likely developed beginning in childhood with involvement in extracurricular pursuits. He cited a study he conducted with Yammarino in 1990 which found that junior naval officers who were rated as more transformational were likely to have been involved in high school team sports (Bass, 1995).

The further elaboration of a moral or ethical component of leadership had to wait for new champions who posited authentic leadership; largely in response to the huge leadership failures resulting from Enron, WorldCom, and the 2008 financial collapse. More recently, continued failures of top Navy leaders (Whitlock, 2016), the “Fat Leonard” bribery scandal (Cavas, 2015; Watson, 2017), poor morale onboard ships (Ziezulewicz, 2017a), recent fatal collisions in the 7th Fleet (Faram, 2017, Larter, 2017a, 2017b) and Navy culture (Olsen, 2017), would seem to argue for extra attention on the moral components of leadership development. Authentic leadership (AL), according to Avolio, Walumbwa, et al. (2009), who cite Luthans and Avolio (2003), is “a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development” (p. 423).
George (2003), the business leadership practitioner, suggested that authentic leaders employ their natural competencies and work hard to overcome their weaknesses. He states:

[Authentic leaders] lead with purpose, meaning, and values. They build enduring relationships with people. Others follow them because they know where they stand. They are consistent and self-disciplined. When their principles are tested, they refuse to compromise. Authentic leaders are dedicated to developing themselves because they know that becoming a leader takes a lifetime of personal growth. (George, 2003, p. 12)

A subsequent description by Day et al. (2009) considers authentic leadership as leadership that centers on the development of leaders who are genuine people that have real relationships with followers and colleagues. Gardner et al. (2011), in their review of the literature, portray authenticity as a collection of interactive and intellectual advances that make evident exactly how leaders establish and build a core identity, and how this sense of self is sustained over time and changing situations. Gardner et al. (2005) suggest that authenticity entails owning one’s personal experiences and acting in accordance with one’s true self.

Recognizing that the concept of authentic leadership was multidimensional, including “traits, states, behaviors, contexts, and attributions” as well as multi-level, involving “individual, team and organizational levels,” Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim (2005) propose that researchers clearly define, measure, and carefully research the construct before creating authentic leadership development programs or interventions (p. 475).

Possibly in response to this proposal, the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) was devised by Avolio et al. (2007) to measure the four constructs that encompass authentic leadership: self-awareness (the extent to which the leader knows his/her personal strong points and weak points, the impact he/she has on others, and exactly how others perceive him/her); balanced processing (the degree the leader solicits sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions); relational transparency (the degree the leader reinforces a level of
openness with others that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges, and opinions); and authentic moral behavior (the extent to which the leader sets a high standard for moral and ethical conduct).

Avolio and Gardner (2005) believe developing authentic leaders entails a focus on both leaders and followers; suggesting that authentic leadership development is not an individual process, but one that entails both parties acquiring self-awareness, establishing open and safe relations which can be enhanced by coaching or training. Citing the characteristics of authentic leader-follower relationships described by these authors, Day et al. (2009) suggested these interactions are open, transparent and trustworthy; goals and aims are laudable, and that authentic leaders accentuate followers’ developmental progress. May et al. (2003) concentrated on the ethical/moral component of leadership, while Avolio and Gardner (2005) and Luthans and Avolio (2003) converge on the affirmative methods of leadership and its advancement.

In this study, self-awareness and self-regulation, which includes developing an authentic ethical/moral behavior component, are key constructs of the authentic leadership model used, as shown below in Figure 2.2. Since the focus of this study is on the leader development side of the model, these aspects of the authentic leadership are highlighted. Not shown is the detailed follower side of the equation, which also includes self-awareness and self-regulation as key components of authentic followership.
Self-awareness is the extent to which a leader is aware of distinct aspects of identity and the degree to which these self-perceptions are incorporated internally and are harmonious with the way others perceive the individual, per Day et al. (2009), citing Hall (2004). Self-regulation is a process of monitoring and adjusting thoughts, actions, and feelings. It includes taking goal-directive action such as defining a goal, taking action to obtain the desired outcome, and assessing progress toward the goal, per Day et al. (2009), citing Baumeister et al. (2000). Originally, authentic leadership had five components, but Walumbwa et al. (2008) combined internalized regulation processes (authentic behavior driven by the leader’s core self) and
positive moral perspective into internalized moral perspective during their validation research. Internalized regulation, relational transparency, authentic moral behavior (later referred to as internalized moral perspective), and balanced processing are considered self-regulatory activities (Day et al. 2009). Antecedents to authentic leadership include the leader’s personal history (family background, work and school experiences, including leader role models) and trigger events (any change to the leader’s circumstance, either positive or negative, that encourages personal growth and promotes increased leader self-awareness), per Gardner et al. (2005).

The business practitioner, George (2003), has a slightly different take on authentic leadership and its development. He proposes five dimensions of authentic leadership and an associated developmental quality needed for effectiveness as shown in Table 2.1

Table 2.1

George’s Authentic Leader’s Characteristics (2003, p. 36)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authentic Leader Dimensions</th>
<th>Associated Qualities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Passion</td>
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<td>Values</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Connectedness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Discipline</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
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Authentic leaders have to comprehend their purpose and have passion for it, which requires self-awareness; they have to practice and behave according to their values, which entails moral testing and acting in accordance with those values; they have to lead with the heart and develop compassion for the challenges faced by others (followers); they establish long-term relationships often based on shared purposes or goals; and they exhibit consistency and self-discipline,
especially in handling challenges and stressful situations (George, 2003, pp. 18–25). This framework is not unlike a layman’s interpretation of the authentic leadership model proposed by Gardner et al. (2005).

Similar to Bandura’s (2001) agentic perspective and Boyatzis’ (2008) Intentional Change Theory (ICT), authentic leadership can be developed with self-determination. However, leaders model authentic leadership where behavior is congruent with stated values, and the positive psychological benefits of resiliency and optimism accrue to followers, which in turn facilitates sustained organizational performance (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). This version of authentic leadership, unlike Sparrowe’s (2005), includes an integral moral/ethical element. Avolio and Gardner (2005) suggest a developmental system where leaders build reserves of moral capacity, efficacy, courage, and resiliency as originally proposed by May et al. (2003). These capabilities allow authentic leaders to make the proper decisions since they have had experience doing so as they progressed in their career and addressed similar ethical issues. Avolio, Walumbwa, et al. (2009) illuminate the deficit in the leadership literature and research saying, “the field of leadership has done little to focus its energies on what contributes to or detracts from genuine leadership development” (p. 442). Not only is there a flourishing curiosity regarding the methods to actually develop leadership, Avolio, Walumbwa, et al. (2009) imply that leadership is viewed as a complex and emergent dynamic in organizations, explicitly referencing the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) nature present in military organizations and military missions.

Boyatzis et al. (2006) believe that leaders can be developed through coaching and compassion, and that poor performance is a function of the psychological and physiological effects of the “power stress” inherent in the leader role. While not writing specifically about the
moral lapses of corporate and military leaders, Boyatzis et al. (2006) believe organizations should prepare leaders to be compassionate coaches, since helping others achieve their dreams has a double-barrel effect: 1) it grows subordinates, and 2) it serves as an antidote to stress. Uusiautti, Syväjärvi, Stenvall, Perttula, and Määttä’s (2012) research focused on university leaders and how they describe themselves as leaders. Similar to Boyatzis et al. (2006), their findings underscore the necessity for caring and understanding relations that includes “authentic and experienced-based viewpoints” (Uusiautti et al., 2012, p. 828). Ladegard and Gjerde’s (2014) mixed methods study assessing coaching as a leadership development intervention, found that leader’s role efficacy and trust in subordinates increased with coaching and subsequently employees who were trusted had lower turnover. Findings also indicate that goals change over the coaching process as a result of participants’ self-reflection and greater self-awareness.

Walumbwa et al. (2008) validated their authentic leadership model via an authentic leadership questionnaire (ALQ) using the authentic leadership constructs of leader self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective (formerly ethical/moral behavior and internalized self-regulation), and balanced processing of information. In doing so, they modified their definition of authentic leadership:

A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, and internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 94)

The revised definition highlights not only individual leadership development and authentic followership (and followers positive growth into leaders), but a supportive (ethical) organizational context as well. This ethical organizational environment is especially important to the Navy given its focus on the character development of all sailors (NLDF, 2017).
An interesting and novel leadership development perspective was proposed by O’Connell (2014) to addresses complexity, authentic and shared leadership theories, and also accommodates adult learning paradigms. O’Connell’s (2014) five “webs of belief” for 21st century leader development are 1) learning (belief in the capacity to gain knowledge; creativity/expertise); 2) reverence (belief in accepting others; relational/collective); 3) purpose (personal mission, self-regulation); 4) authenticity (self-awareness/positive moral perspective; attended by genuine personal communication); and 5) flaneur (a belief in a philosophical approach to living; balance/reflexivity). This “simplified” framework applies across organizational levels, and different organizational contexts support connective value perspectives and shared meaning, encourages expertise and advanced leadership understanding, and is situated in identity and lifelong adult development (O’Connell, 2014). Interestingly, the “webs of belief” framework is similar to the “balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, relational transparency, and self-awareness” concepts Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009, p. 424) suggest as the scholar-agreed components of authentic leadership. Additionally, the frame is not dissimilar to Kelly’s (2014) elaboration of the type of personal development the Navy needs to promote in its leader development; which he suggests should encompass self-reflection, critical thinking, moral growth, and lifelong learning.

In a related study, Billsberry and North-Samardzic (2016), introduced a technique to surface authentic leadership using a novel method: a Japanese film (After Life) that asks a recently deceased individual to relate an important memory. The authors help leadership students discover authentic leadership by showing them the film, asking them subsequently to recall family experiences, individual and job histories connected to their leadership in front of a camera; filming their answers, and lastly, adding personal photos and images to the video in a
post-production phase (Billsberry & North-Samardzic, 2016). The objective was to provide an integrative learning activity and product that promotes authentic leadership development by recalling the foundations of personal values and experiences related to leadership; encouraging self-awareness and deeper critical insights into self-identity; and possibly providing an avenue and foundation for upcoming leadership development initiatives.

**Self-Awareness and Leader Identity**

For authentic leadership to take hold, leaders need a strong self-identity. Alvesson, Lee Ashcraft, and Thomas (2008) say that “identity holds a vital key to understanding the complex, unfolding and dynamic relationship between self, work and organization” (p. 9). These authors suggested that identity encompasses “subjective meanings and experiences” including modes of “feelings, values and behaviors” which are involved in addressing the key questions of “Who am I” and “How should I act?” (Alvesson et al., 2008, p. 6). Day et al. (2009) suggested that identity development accelerates important leadership behaviors, and that “effective leader development is the differentiation and integration of leadership and personal experiences, values and confidence [suggesting that] self-reflection and integration need to be planned and strategic” (p. 64). Gardner et al. (2005) implied that personal history and trigger events (core foundational experiences) serve as stimuli to authentic leadership development, especially self-awareness.

Leaders who build an integrated moral identity can develop confidence in making decisions, according to Day et al. (2009). They cited the work of Fischer and Pruynne (2002) and Kitchener and King (1990), who indicated that moral reasoning is linked to identity development, advanced critical thinking skills, and the capability for reflective thinking (Day et al. 2009). These attributes align with the authentic leadership model of Gardner et al. (2005) cited earlier. In a related study, Gallagher, Costal, and Ford’s (2012) validation of a leadership
model highlighted the importance of professional and emotional self-awareness as the key to successful leaders in the business world. It might be inferred that self-awareness is also an important attribute for military leaders.

Having an accurate picture of the self (self-awareness) includes being able to predict the outlooks of others, in addition to knowing the difference between oneself as compared to others. Sturm, Taylor, Atwater and Braddy’s (2014) research found that women under-predicted their bosses’ ratings [of themselves as leaders] compared to men; and that the difference was likely due to a lack of self-assurance, learned gender roles, dissimilar feedback requirements, and self-sexism. Leadership scholars, researchers, and planners involved in leadership development programs might find this insight helpful in lending more effectiveness to their work.

Finally, May et al. (2003) suggested that self-awareness and reflection are key constructs in authentic leadership development, as it is the foundation for moral capacity and moral efficacy needed to recognize moral issues and their intensity. This is important in making authentic decisions, and enables moral action and sustains authentic behavior.

**Self-Regulation: Developing the Moral Component of Authentic Leadership**

Citing Baumeister et al. (2000), Day et al. (2009) suggested that self-regulation is a method of checking and changing one’s thoughts, actions, and feelings. Nesbit (2012) describes it as the self-change phase, a key component in self-directed leadership development (SDLD), which occurs after a self-understanding (self-awareness) phase. Self-regulation as part of a developmental process helps leaders to “guide learning goal-directed activities over time and adapt to the demands across changing circumstances,” per Nesbit (2012), citing Karoly (1993). While self-regulation is essential, it seldom receives the overt attention it deserves in leader development interventions, even though it is part of a trio of meta-skills associated with handling
feelings from receiving feedback, engaging in self-reflective behaviors, and employing self-regulatory processes for development; including developing an internalized moral perspective to foster authentic moral behavior (Nesbit, 2012).

In the authentic leadership framework (Day et al. 2009), self-regulation involves taking goal-directive action such as naming a goal; initiating action to obtain the desired outcome; and gauging progress toward the goal. This framework borrowed from Bandura’s social cognitive theory, especially his concept of self-efficacy, or “the core belief that one has the power to produce effects by one’s actions...[and high self-efficacy, which] reduces vulnerability to stress and depression in taxing situations and strengthens resiliency to adversity (Bandura, 2001, p. 10). Hannah, Avolio, Walumbwa, and Chan (2012) expand the concept of efficacy by establishing the reliability and validity of leader self and means efficacy (LSME), defined as a “leader’s level of perceived capability to self-regulate their thoughts and motivation, draw from means in their environment, and act successfully across a span of leader challenges and tasks in their current context” (p. 143). In five separate studies, including one using senior-level U.S. Army officers, these researchers predicted leader motivation to lead, contingent reward (self and other reports of leadership style), and transformational leader behaviors and performance (external peer and supervisor ratings) in leadership interventions lasting up to two months (Hannah et al., 2012, pp. 143–158). It should be recalled that most leadership intervention studies are for much shorter programs.

Similar to the power stress concept proposed by Boyatzis et al. (2006), Joosten, Van Dijke, Van Hiel, and De Cremer (2014) suggested that the frantic pace and disjointed nature of daily leader challenges makes them predisposed to “resource depletion” and thus more likely to engage in unethical behavior. Their research implied that leaders high in moral identity have the
self-regulatory resources to be immune to ego depletion, while those low in moral identity (ego-depleted) exhibited more deviant deeds (Joosten et al. 2014). Providing leadership education and training that serves to make moral identity accessible and encouraging an organizational culture of ethical decision making are practical suggestions made to make principled behavior more habitual (Joosten et al. 2014). Similarly, Moss, Dowling and Callahan’s (2009) work on how the discrepancy between “explicit self-esteem—the attitudes towards themselves that individuals express overtly and consciously—and their implicit self-esteem—an unconscious representation of their attributes and characteristics that are manifested implicitly” produces fragility in employees’ self-esteem, which serves to undermine organizational performance (p. 164).

Follower’s fragility can be mediated by authentic moral leadership, as the leader’s deeds are inspired by their own core beliefs, which builds trust with followers and thus increases the likelihood they (followers) will follow the leader’s direction and model the leader’s actions (Moss et al., 2009). The case for furnishing a nurturing environment, one that increases the self-esteem of followers and allows them to perfect, adapt, and better regulate their own actions, is made by these authors. This is consistent with the organizational climate component of Gardner et al.’s (2005) model of authentic leadership depicted earlier in Figure 2.2.

Karp (2012) emphasized the importance of leader self-development and suggested that an individual’s ability to “learn from defining situations” and his or her involvement “in deep processes that build the necessary self-awareness, relational strength and environmental capabilities and qualities needed to act, and take leadership in a dynamic organizational environment” is more important than any organizational interventions or leadership program content (p. 136). Karp’s (2012) defining situations are similar to the trigger events proposed by Gardner et al. (2005); while similarly, the organizational environment plays a key role in the
authentic leadership models proposed by both Karp (2012) and Gardner et al. (2005). Karp’s (2012) conceptual discussion reinforces the findings of researchers who focused on the self-concept in leadership, citing Kouzes and Posner (2002), Stogdill (1974), and Yukl (2006), and the contention that the art of leadership is a function of self-mastery. This view is consistent with the military’s dependence on individual service members’ self-directed learning to augment classroom and job experience in leader and leadership development. In a related critique, Thomas (n.d.) laments that of all of the key dimensions of leadership (moral, physical, and intellectual), the military shortchanges the moral component of military leadership in its training and education. Defining moral leadership as “the quest to learn right from wrong,” Thomas (n.d., p. 2) articulates the four stages of moral development in military leaders: compliance (behavior modification); moral understanding (reflection on the reason for rules or standards); moral maturity (reconciling individual beliefs with those of the Service, mission, and the nation); and the apex-moral ambition (the active pursuit of honorable and righteous behavior individually and collectively for all individuals within the leader’s area of influence). Thomas (n.d.), suggests that self-actualized leaders who have progressed to the moral ambition stage can institute profound change by their day-to-day leadership actions. This final phase of moral development may have been alluded to in James Stockdale’s (1982) article in Education Digest on the principles of leadership. From his scholar-practitioner experience as a naval leader, Stockdale stated: “a disciplined life will encourage a commitment to a personal code of conduct, and from good habits a strength of character and resolve will grow. A moralist can, by action and example, make conscious among his followers, lifting them out of their everyday selves and into their better selves” (Stockdale, 1982, p. 27). Ciulla (2017), in a lecture on “The Ethical Challenges of Leadership” given at the USNWC, lists four practical ethical decision-making
questions leaders should consider: “Am I doing the right thing? Am I doing it the right way? Am I doing it for the right reason? [and] Am I using what I’ve learned?” Interestingly, she considers competency to be an ethical issue and, similar to Stockdale’s (1982, p. 24) belief about the importance of focusing on the “light and wisdom of the past,” Ciulla’s (2017) leadership research is based on historical foundations. Cissell and Polley (1987) uncover a definition of Navy leadership in operation before Stockdale became a POW in Vietnam, which may have influenced his early thinking:

Leadership is the art of accomplishing the Navy’s mission through people. It is the sum of those qualities of intellect, of human understanding and of moral character that enable a man [or woman] to inspire and to manage a group of people successfully. Effective leadership, therefore, is based on personal example, good management practices, and moral responsibility. CNO Leadership Support Manual, (1963) as cited by Cissell and Polley (1987)

Interestingly, while this Navy definition focuses on leadership and the moral and ethical leader explicitly, followership and follower development are also implicitly suggested.

May et al. (2003) proposed a developmental model for fostering the moral component of authentic leadership in individuals and organizations. The framework adds to the literature on authentic leadership, moral decision-making, and positive organizational behavior and psychology. The model shown in Figure 2.3, includes authentic decision-making, authentic behavior, and authentic leadership development and suggests related sub-constructs. The goal is to produce “a leader who is an integrated and balanced person who treats ethical behavior as part of his/her personal life, and his/her organizational life” (May et al. 2003, p. 250, italics in original).

An aspect of self-regulation in authentic leadership, May et al.’s (2003) moral component model entails authentic decision-making (recognizing moral dilemmas, transparently evaluating
the consequences of different solutions, and acting authentically on the evaluations in accordance with one’s beliefs and values); and authentic leadership development founded on self-awareness and reflection. This self-awareness, where leaders are “totally immersed in their core beliefs and values ... and convey those beliefs and values in every possible interaction at every level of the organization” promotes authentic leadership development and leads to greater moral capacity and moral efficacy, which generates moral courage and moral resiliency, thereby promoting authentic sustainable moral action and behavior (May et al. 2003, pp. 249–250). Drawing on past experience and their “core values and principles” authentic leaders have the cognitive capacity to take different perspectives, and their reflection on prior moral experience enables them to develop mental models that make recognition of moral problems easier, per May et al. (2003, p. 252). This builds the moral capacity to make authentic decisions and convert moral intentions into actions (moral courage) when faced with a moral dilemma. May et al. (2003) suggested that maintaining a positive internal focus on their core beliefs and values fortifies authentic leaders’ moral resiliency, allowing them to adapt to risk and sustain moral action and authentic behavior over time.

Interestingly, the article alludes to research supporting the model’s components, but does not cite them. Instead, it uses a case study example to better articulate the related constructs that the authors’ propose to develop the moral component of authentic leadership. May et al.’s (2003) model for the development of the moral component of authentic leadership is shown in Figure 2.3.
Figure 2.3. Moral Component of Authentic Leadership (May et al., 2003, p. 250).

Critiques of Authentic Leadership

Not all researchers subscribe to the position that authentic leadership as currently proposed is without problems. Early on, Price (2003) warned that Bass and Steidlmeier’s (1999) distinction between authentic transformational leadership and inauthentic (pseudo) transformational leadership was insufficient to account for ethical concerns. He suggests that researchers should be aware of the “undue focus” of authenticity on altruistic concepts such as “justice, equality, and human rights,” because leaders can behave immorally precisely because they are “blinded by these values” (Price, 2003, p. 79). Price (2003) urged authentic leaders to balance their individual understanding of the collective good and the morality of the means.
required to achieve the ends against “generally applicable moral requirements” when it is justified (p. 80).

Joosten et al.’s (2014) laboratory experiment and multi-source field study identified ego depletion (a state of diminished resources) as a factor that may make leaders more likely to engage in unethical behaviors. These authors suggested that the more value and prominence leaders ascribe to morality (a higher moral identity or being an ethical person), the fewer cognitive resources they will need to devote to self-regulation or to avoid unethical behavior. Using leadership deviance as a dependent variable, Joosten et al. (2014, p. 8) found that “leaders with low moral identity need self-regulatory resources to refrain from engaging in deviant behaviors, while for leaders who are high in moral identity, behaving ethically is less reliant on those resources and thus not influenced by regulatory resource depletion.” Today’s hectic leadership environment with high-stress levels, lack of sufficient sleep, frantic pace, and situational complexity, all conspire to deplete leadership resources and increase the odds of unethical behavior in organizations. Joosten et al. (2014, p. 8) suggested that leadership training and interventions that “make moral identity salient,” and an organizational culture with a “clear ethical climate” served to build moral identity and thus make acting ethically more reflexive.

Nyberg and Sveningsson (2014) conducted a study using in-depth interviews with three managers to understand how leaders use the construction of self as an authentic leader. Interestingly, they found that participants accentuated an upbeat and idealistic image of leadership, used narrative characters or metaphors (i.e., Mother Teresa, messiah, and coach) to link with their experiences, that organizational complexities can hinder being oneself (especially with respect to what followers’ need/expect from them), and that these demands produced tensions in remaining authentic and thereby threaten leader identity (Nyberg & Sveningsson,
The authors explained that their participants created “metaphorical selves” to manage this conflict, but this created identity “facilitate[d] a recall of leader centrisim in authentic leadership that prevents reflection and practice of more participative leader approaches” (Nyberg & Sveningsson, 2014, p. 452).

Ciulla (1998) reminds us that leadership is a moral relationship between people and that the ideals of trust and power often clash in organizations, especially when leaders try to empower followers authentically. Too often the end result is “bogus empowerment” where “therapeutic fictions” are employed to reduce organizational tensions, make employees feel better about themselves and more likely to fit in, and make them want to be more valuable and work toward organizational goals and objectives (Ciulla, 1998, p. 68). She suggested that true “authentic empowerment gives employees [followers] control over outcomes so that they can be responsible for their work…so authentic empowerment changes the rights, responsibilities, and duties of leaders as well as followers” (Ciulla, 1998, pp. 82–84).

Lawler and Ashman (2012) take issue with authenticity’s focus on an “inner or true self” and suggested an existentialist perspective that takes into account the situational “context, subjective and inter-subjective experience to understand and practice authentic existential leadership” (p. 327). Borrowing from Sartre, they proposed that to be truly authentic, leaders should “be in the world” (versus separate from it) and, from a moral standpoint, they should embrace the principle of self-determination (versus self-knowledge); both perspectives are different from the original authentic leadership orthodoxy (Lawler & Ashman, 2012). Steering clear of following a list of authentic behaviors or compulsory ethical frames, these authors believe that authentic leaders are always in a state of becoming; and that others (followers) have their own subjective and objective freedom which must be honored; so “true ‘empowerment’ [is
where] all those involved in the leadership process are involved in an inner-subjective, sense-
making dialogue” (Lawler & Ashman, 2012, p 340). Citing similar concerns, Algera and Lips-
Wiersma (2012) warned that authentic leadership, as currently constructed, may not reach its full
potential and is in danger of becoming a “management technique” rather than an approach to
enrich meaningful work and moral behavior. Algera and Lips-Wiersma also framed their
critique in existentialist terms proposing the following four arguments:

1) inauthenticity is inevitable; 2) authenticity requires creating one’s own meaning; 3)
authenticity does not imply goal and value congruence; and that 4) authenticity is not

These authors underscored the significance of personal freedom and individual
responsibility. Furthermore, they highlight that true authenticity involves being linked with and
accountable for the group in the organization. Recognizing the complexity and multilevel nature
of authenticity, Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) suggested asking reflective questions about
how individuals and the collective can overcome the three primary tensions of power, purpose,
and time; which are present when authenticity is conceived as having both individual and group
properties. These authors say that organizational control (power) may inhibit the freedom of
movement (discovery and expression of what is meaningful and moral) required for authenticity;
that organizational imperatives of profit and survival may supersede authentic aims for a greater
good; and that the scarce organizational resources of time and space essential to reflect on
collective and individual aspirations, values, and principles may not be available in today’s
complex contexts (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012). They recommended a more complicated and
longitudinal research program to address these tensions and to enable authentic leadership theory
development to progress.
Diddams and Chang (2012) suggested that the overly positive (strength-based) view of authentic leadership neglects the benefits of leaders recognizing their weaknesses connected to individual constructs such as reasoning, drive, social awareness, and team interactions. Being cognizant of these possible deficits, present in all humans, may enhance authentic leadership’s key attributes of self-awareness and self-regulation.

Sendjaya, Pekerti, Hartel, Hirst, and Butarbutar’s (2016) research, which employed case studies, simulations, role-playing, and surveys of 70 managers in a large public agency, showed that Machiavellianism (the principle that the end justifies the means), counterbalances the positive association between moral reasoning and authentic leadership. They found that, given the proper stimuli, one could score high in both Machiavellianism and authenticity; so moral reasoning needs to interact with low Machiavellianism to engender higher levels of authentic leadership (Sendjaya et al., 2016). Individual leadership development programs, therefore, should focus on building “moral capacity and courage” to balance the Machiavellianism tendency for self-promotion (Sendjaya et al., 2016, p. 138). This is consonant with the model proposed by May et al. (2003) to develop the moral component of authentic leadership.

Gini (1997), who defined leadership as the subtle mixture of the process (methods), the person (character, talents, and traits), and the job requirements; suggested that all leadership is value-laden with a philosophical perspective that is promoted. For him, the Socratic model of leadership is the proper use of power to conduct one’s duty conscientiously (being socially responsible); but Gini (1997) also listed the jobs of leadership (communicating a clear vision, managing decisions, attending to stakeholders, and taking responsibility for decisions) as important actions. Moreover, Gini (1997) stated that while leadership is multidisciplinary, “leadership as practiced in a particular profession is different from leadership as practiced in
other professions” (p. 328). Next, we explore leadership development in the military: the Profession of Arms.

**Military Leadership**

Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Martin E. Dempsey (2012), stated that “military service is our nation’s preeminent leadership experience” (p. 2) and, therefore, leader development is a priority that is both a personal and an organizational responsibility; one requiring assiduous study and relentless reflection. In his rhetorical analysis of military training material, Phillip Hutchison (2013) cited the Jeanne M. Holm Center’s (2009, p. 26) acknowledgment that all U.S. military services have actively “promoted, conducted, and funded leadership research for over 60 years.” However, the U.S. Army Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences, including its Leader Development Research Unit, is often referenced in military research, perhaps because it is very prolific. In an early research project for the Institute, Cullen, Klemp and Mansfield (1988) of McBer and Company conducted a job competence assessment focusing on junior officers, both superior (n=56) and satisfactory performers (n=49). Defining a competency as “a characteristic of an individual that underlies effective work performance,” they developed instruments to assess junior officers (Cullen et al. 1988, p. v). These researchers also developed an Army junior officer competency model with four clusters and the following sub-competencies: 1) Mission Focus (concern for efficiency, planning, initiative, concern for standards); 2) Professional Maturity (self-confidence, job involvement); 3) Power and Influence (persuading others, willingness to confront others, forcefulness, concern with image); and 4) Understanding and Managing Others (concern for clarity, understanding people, situations, and data; realistic positive attitude toward others; and
developing others, concrete learning style, technical proficiency, sees self as a manager), per Cullen et al. (1988).

Of the 17 hypothesized competencies, 9 competencies were found to distinguish superior from average junior officers at a statistically significant level. These were: planning, initiative, concern for standards, self-confidence, job involvement, willingness to confront others, concern with image, concern for clarity, and realistic positive attitude toward others. (Cullen et al. 1988, p. 86)

The McBer researchers discussed methods for acquiring leadership competencies through self-assessment, other-assessment, case studies, simulations, and on-the-job experiences; and they also create a matrix that identified the most appropriate method for each competency, and the associated level of difficulty in acquiring the competency.

In their selective review of U.S. Army leadership studies, Fallesen, Keller-Glaze, and Curnow (2011) tracked the evolution of leadership research. Fallesen et al.’s (2011) analysis spanned job-analytic methods (the knowledge, skills, and abilities to lead) to competency-based methods (study of an organization’s strategic plans to discern competencies needed for strategy implementation and goal attainment); from leadership based on gauging cognitive factors (intelligence) to measuring competencies in interpersonal relations (influencing). Additionally, Fallesen et al. (2011) found that current tendencies in Army leader development research focused on cross-cutting capabilities needed to address the full spectrum of military situations. Therefore, research focused on qualities of resilience (persistence in the face of adversity); adaptability; critical thinking; cross-cultural skills; 360-degree assessments and coaching feedback; and self-development tools (self-regulation needed to take personal responsibility to develop as a leader), per Fallesen et al. (2011). Finally, these researchers noted the developing attention being paid to situational leadership, especially understanding the different leadership requirements in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) military environment that
spans the continuum from combat to nation building (Fallesen et al., 2011). These findings were congruent with the call from Mensch and Rahschulte (2008) to highlight autonomous (self-directed) learning in military leader development to account for the growing complexity of warfare. These researchers interviewed Army officers associated with ROTC programs and validated the more complex military environment and the need for different leadership skills. Additionally, these researchers found the need for strong critical thinking skills to handle these VUCA situations, and that an increased focus on persistence and resourcefulness was needed to spur autonomous, lifelong learning (Mensch & Rahschulte, 2008).

An Army research project conducted by Cortina et al. (2004) of the Mirum Corporation had the goal of creating a leader development assistance plan that cultivated self-regulation skills required for effective personal development, and promoted additional applicable leader skills while also reducing distortion in leader self-assessments. Self-appraisal biases included such things as recalling positive self-appraisals more readily, counting negative individual qualities as inconsequential, and ascribing success to one’s own abilities but failure to external reasons. The project’s deliverable was a computer-based program with adaptable modules designed to encourage proficiencies and dispositions linked to leader self-development called the Leader Adaptability Self-Training System (LAST), per Cortina et al. (2004). LAST provided education, practice exercises, and response feedback on the following key leader adaptability attributes: critical thinking in complex situations, metacognitive thinking, adaptive problem solving (sense-making and sense-giving, generating and implementing solutions, monitoring progress), and team leadership in dynamic contexts (Cortina et al. 2004). Interestingly, LAST might be helpful in encouraging leader self and means efficacy (LSME)
described earlier, which Hannah et al. (2012) suggested is a key driver of leadership success in a challenging and complex environment.

In a related study, Hannah, Jennings, and Nobel (2010) used a three-staged study and critical incident technique during interviews of experienced combat leaders to discern the various functions, duties, abilities, and characteristics that are illustrative of expert tactical military leaders. They identified five key roles (intelligence manager, tactical warfighter and commander, diplomat and negotiator, nation-builder, and troop and unit leader), and each role has numerous sub-roles. For example, the unit leader had to develop, train, and motivate; ensure unit cohesion; and safeguard unit welfare and discipline (Hannah et al. 2010). Additionally, a list of behavioral inventories was proposed to support each sub-role. Finally, seven meta-leadership knowledge and skills (role modeling; performance management; delegating; influencing; problem solving/making decisions; situational awareness and supporting), and nine cognitive and affective meta-leadership attributes (hardiness; leadership efficacy; courage; hope/optimism/resiliency/confidence; positive affectivity; self-regulation; metacognitive ability; emotional control; and motivation to lead) surfaced as themes during the interviews (Hannah et al. 2010). The authors suggested that the roles and meta-leadership attributes emerging from the study can be used in designing future leader development training and education programs.

Ward et al. (2008) highlighted the similarity between sports psychology research and military decision training of perceptual-cognitive skills (decision skills; situational awareness; critical thinking; stress-exposure; event-based approach; and cognitive engineering based upon expert skill). Both disciplines operate in complex dynamic environments; employ cognitive, perceptual and motor skills; involve gaining a tactical advantage over an adversary; require performing with incomplete information; entail working successfully individually and as a team;
and functioning under stressful conditions (Ward et al. 2008). The authors, while applauding military training as innovative, found that many of the military studies did not include key best practice research methods such as objective assessments of performance; pre and post-testing to quantify skill or competency achievement; transfer tests to gauge performance improvement; or control or placebo groups to substantiate the success of the intervention (Ward et al. 2008). All of these methods have come to be used in sports research to measure program effectiveness. The authors suggested a mutual exchange of viewpoints between the two disciplines to design a program that is valid and engages participants in situation-specific, purposeful practice actions (Ward et al. 2008).

Shanan Gibson (2005) examined 176 U.S. Marines (officers and enlisted) to gauge background factors and leadership prototypes, especially the degree to which these variables vary by gender and experience level. While she found general agreement on the characteristics of an effective leader (i.e., wisdom; sets goal; honest; intelligent; disciplined; confident; attractive; masculine), among others, a one-way analysis of variance showed that “approximately twenty-three percent of the leader characteristics were found to be differently applied to leaders based on either their gender, tenure, or both characteristics of the target” (Gibson, 2005, p. 9); and in all of these instances female leaders received the less positive characterization. Gibson (2005) does not offer a solution to these perceptions, but she does note that females comprise only 4% of the Marine officer population and, therefore, the perceptual handicap will persist.

In their study of noncommissioned officers (NCOs) in U.S. defense forces, Zacher, McKenna, Rooney, and Gold (2015) operationalize military wisdom as “expert knowledge and judgment concerning in extremis military operations” (p. 142). Noting that wisdom may be a requirement for authentic and ethical leadership, Zacher et al. (2015) suggested that selecting
leaders based on a general wisdom test is an option in the promotion process. Alternatively, practitioners could design interventions that engender “self-distancing and related abilities such as self-reflection and empathy” (Zacher et al. 2015, p. 151), which have been linked by research to produce wise decisions, citing Kross and Grossmann, (2012).

Page and Miller (2002) used semi-structured interviews and a survey to assess the substance of leadership training and education for officers and enlisted Marines and found that leadership education, while adequate, could be improved by helping students develop and acquire leadership skills and values. Further, they felt that program content could be better aligned with contemporary leadership theories. Of particular importance to this research study, these researchers concluded that Professional Military Education (PME) leadership development fell short of meeting the expectations of Marine officers, especially captains and majors, who said they learned leadership by watching senior officers or by on-the-job experiences (Page & Miller, 2002). This finding is similar to Kelly’s (2014) contention that the Navy believes leadership happens by watching senior leaders. The authors recommend skill-development in “communications, counseling, and other people-related skills” as enhancements to Marine leadership training (Page & Miller, 2002, p. 73).

Eriksen (2004) described his Kolb-inspired experiential learning approach to encourage U.S. Coast Guard Academy students to cultivate proactive reflection skills required to “become leaders of character who are life-long learners” (p. 61). This leadership exploration involves using Dugal and Eriksen’s (2004) Felt-Experience Exercise. The task helps students articulate the experience, including emotions and feelings from within; generate tentative interpretations of the experience (often with classmates); pose questions about the experience that move from concrete to abstract understanding; and lastly, produce a synthesis of the experience that
develops abstract concepts and generalizations which will be used in future leadership experiences.

An examination of the officer development programs of the U.S. Naval Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy was performed by Volpe (2003), which focused on leader and character education and development. Using interviews and focus groups of students and faculty at both institutions, Volpe (2003) found that respondents defined leadership as an influence process, that it is learned via academics and experience (although students privilege experience), and that “character is about doing the right thing… and personal character and integrity are the cornerstones of moral leadership and need to be nurtured for proper officer development” (p. 60-61). One of Volpe’s (2003) major findings was that the Naval Academy’s leadership and character programs needed more academic credit hours and leadership faculty should have higher academic qualifications: “this comparison is in concert with the lack of overall commitment to graduate education within the Naval Service” (p. 80). This finding may have some relevance to, or association with, the tradition of the culture of the Navy privileging fleet service over formal in-residence coursework as mentioned earlier in this narrative.

The focus on leadership competencies and predicting superior performance is not limited to the U.S. military. Young and Dulewicz (2009) studied 261 British Royal Navy officers and ratings using the occupational personality questionnaire (OPQ), the leadership dimensions questionnaire (LDQ), and the Royal Navy’s own performance appraisal system. Results identified four “supra-competency” clusters related to high performing leaders and managers: conceptualize (obtain and share a vision of what needs to be accomplished by developing a viewpoint; using critical thinking, wisdom, and innovation, to help team members focus on the objective); align (be responsible for transforming plans into actions, remain reliable and set an
example; delegate, empower and develop subordinates); interact (operate with and via other people, remain responsive to the need for influence and courses of action, make successful decisions, communicate and motivate teams toward effective performance); and create success (consistently deliver positive results by marrying personal strengths and team abilities with accessible organizational resources), per Young and Dulewicz (2009). Finding that effective performers were both good leaders and managers, Young and Dulewicz (2009) also found that those leaders that can most correctly judge their own performance were also more emotionally self-aware; and that these self-aware individuals implement the most appropriate leadership style for a given context. Citing Young (2005b) and Young and Dulewicz (2006), results reinforced the “well established military leadership tradition that you have to be able to lead yourself before you can lead others effectively” (Young & Dulewicz, 2009, p. 813). Young and Dulewicz (2009) reported that the Royal Navy has endorsed the supra competency clusters-based method of leadership and management selection and training, and that the research has produced an attitude that highly rates products of critical thinking.

Reinforcing the research on self-awareness, character development, and officer competency in military leadership, Boe and Holth (2015); Boe (2015a); and Boe (2015b) conducted several studies at the Norwegian Military Academy. The first was an exploratory, descriptive study of 26 cadets using the Developmental Leadership Questionnaire (DLQ), which they say was developed by Larsen et al. (2003) as part of an all-inclusive technique for leader evaluation and development. These researchers concluded that students with a high degree of developmental leadership had a high degree of self-awareness also tend “to underscore themselves on positive sides of leadership and over-score themselves on negative sides” (Boe & Holth, 2015, p. 839). In Boe’s (2015a) first follow-up article, the concept of a new officer
development program during the three-year Norwegian Military Academy program that focused on character development was promulgated linked to officer proficiencies. In his second follow-up installation, Boe (2015b) expounded on the three triangular pyramids of officer competencies needed to meet uncertain military leadership situations: self-proficiency, subject matter proficiency, and social proficiency. The goal of Norwegian officer leader development is to advance expertise as a squad leader, educational planner, and resource manager so as to develop “confident, independent, and authentic officers when meeting the unforeseen” (Boe, 2015a, p. 498). The character and competency of Norwegian officers is supported by developing the three skills: self-proficiency involves one’s personality, personal skills, abilities, and personality characteristics; subject matter proficiency involves the ability to approach problems with a critical concentration and a willingness to learn; while social proficiency entails the ability to communicate and relate well to others and engender trust (Boe, 2015a). The Norwegian framework appears to align with producing officers with “expert knowledge and judgment” or military wisdom, per Zacher et al. (2015, p. 142). Additionally, the focus on character in personal, subject matter, and social proficiency suggested by Boe (2015a), would seem to parallel the U.S. Navy’s focus on competence and character.

**U.S. Navy Leadership Development**

The U.S. Navy has been interested in leadership development for centuries and actually conducted leader development research prior to the Army studies referenced earlier. Interest in McClelland's concept of leadership motive acquisition (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982) and McBer and Company’s work on leadership competencies, led the Navy to employ McBer from 1973 to the mid-1980s. These efforts led to the design of a large-scale Navy ten-day Leadership and Management Education and Training (LMET) course for prospective commanding officers.
and prospective executive officers to be delivered in Little Creek, Colorado (McBer and Company, 1983). Internal Navy personnel issues of low retention; alcohol and drug abuse; high absenteeism; and low command climate in the late 1960s and 1970s, which were linked to ineffective leadership and management, were also cited as the rationale for the leadership program by Vandover and Villarosa (1981). The course was based on in-depth research of relevant competencies required for senior officers in the Navy which used behavioral event interviews (capturing actions and thoughts) and critical-incident technique to identify the “motives, values, and mental processes—as well as the visible behaviors—that are part of competent performance” (McBer, 1983, pp. 1–35). The LMET course research sample included 51 sailors (30 superior and 21 average performers) from the Pacific Fleet and 78 (38 superior and 40 average performers) from the Atlantic Fleet (Winter, 1979).

McBer (1983) considered competencies to be personal qualities that contribute to effectiveness, such as experience, wisdom, ability, drive, or value; and that these qualities distinguish exceptional from average performers. Analysis and cross-validation of the behavioral interview results at key position levels in the Navy produced the following competencies as clustered and categorized for LMET instruction:
Winter’s (1979) research described the 10-day in-residence LMET course which typically had 20–24 students. The course content was tailored to the respective Navy position requirements, but all courses “focus on concrete, realistic problems and issues that concern the students” (Winter, 1979, p. 9), subscribing to the latest adult learning principles. Classroom activities included traditional lectures and readings; small and large group discussions; group exercises; standardized LMET self-assessments; case studies; simulation exercises (role-playing, oral presentations); instructional and general films; and preparation of a personal all-inclusive life and career plan (Winter, 1979, p. 11). A unique requirement of the LMET course was a personal student log, which recorded the LMET experience and covered students’ “self-
assessment, life situations, and goals” which were described in terms of the competencies and linked to superior Navy leadership performance (Winter, 1979, p. 12).

Subsequent refinements to the LMET course utilizing the McBer approach identified eleven competencies for the Navy officer leadership development model: 1) sense of responsibility; 2) positive expectations; 3) informed judgment; 4) conceptualization (considering complex causal connections); 5) use of multiple influence strategies; 6) command influence (using symbolism, showing interest); 7) conscientious use of discipline (carefully using their power); 8) effective communication; 9) planning; 10) taking initiative (introducing new ideas or procedures); and 11) monitoring for results, per McBer (1983). This Navy leadership competency model, developed using the results of the McBer research, suggested that a different combination of competencies was required for different Navy situations and leadership levels. The McBer (1983) report submitted to the Navy contained many explanations and participant quotes to describe the essence of the leader-follower context and related competencies, as well as a description of the research methodology.

Vandover and Villarosa (1981), of the Naval Postgraduate School, conducted a pilot program evaluation study of LMET using interviews of 51 graduates, and their supervisors and subordinates. Respondents found the training program to be a useful, positive experience and program strengths were identified as increased awareness, meeting students’ educational needs in leadership/management, and developing a constructive framework for healthy teamwork (Vandover & Villarosa, 1981); while concerns were raised regarding communication requirements for disciplining or rewarding, setting objectives and performance criteria, providing proper performance feedback, and using the LMET student journal.
Teresa Cissell and David Polley (1987) conducted research on LMET’s relationship to shipboard effectiveness and readiness, to determine if the leadership training could be related to Navy measures of effectiveness (MOEs), such as inspection and exercise scores, status and identity reports, combat readiness ratings and personnel retention. While the authors found several relationships between leadership training and fleet MOEs on the 285 surface ships studied, the associations were not consistent among different fleets and were jumbled and/or counterintuitive in some instances. For example, the Atlantic fleet ships, which had more recent LMET officer graduates, received better maintenance scores; but in the Pacific fleet officer attendance at LMET was actually related to a decrease in the percentage of time a ship was classified as combat ready (Cissell & Polley, 1987). These and other incongruent findings caused the authors to conclude that no strong relationships between the leadership training and fleet effectiveness measures could be claimed.

In 1996, the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) began offering a course to Navy and Marine Corps students assigned to the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) leading to an M.S. in Leadership and Human Resource Development. The program was available only to students selected as Company Officers, who would later be responsible for USNA midshipmen. In her early evaluation of this Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) program, Jo Anne Cunningham (1999) used in-depth interviews to gauge the program’s impact on the first class of 11 Navy Lieutenants four months after graduation. She found that graduates were very satisfied with curriculum content (management fundamentals; evaluating and improving group performance; motivating subordinates; evaluating and improving individual performance; being a role model for subordinates; and managing the educational process), and “the mixture of classroom instruction and discussion, reflection, and contact with military and civilian leaders
through the speaker series provided the graduates with an excellent basis” for future responsibilities (Cunningham, 1999, p. 75).

A few years later, Zaleski (2003) used semi-structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires to study 27 LEAD graduates’ perceptions of the program. The one-year joint venture between the USNA and the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey, CA, was designed partly in response to noteworthy scandals of cheating and dealing drugs by midshipmen in the early 1990s. Upon graduation, these officers would then fill the position of Company Officer at the USNA for two succeeding years before returning to the fleet (Zaleski, 2003). Overall, graduates were positive about LEAD, saying that it adequately prepared them for the company officer position and for subsequent responsibilities in the Navy (Zaleski, 2003). The bond formed between classmates was cited as a program strength, while the biggest negative was the insufficient depth of topic coverage/time allowed, which “didn’t allow for internalizing the material” (Zaleski, 2003, p. 47).

Al Harbi (1995) examined the U.S. Navy’s definitions of leadership, its leadership training model for officers (the McBer-designed LMET and the NPS/USNA-designed NAVLEAD programs), as well as certain popular theories of leadership. Findings revealed that the leadership LMET/NAVLEAD core curriculum was not strongly consistent with selected leadership theories (great man; Likert’s; situational leadership; contingency; path-goal; multiple linkage; role; transactional; transformational; theory X and Y; and Blade), but more focused on behavioral competencies rather than trait or situational theories of leadership. In contrast, Navy definitions of leadership were found to be generally convergent with these leadership theories, especially “who the leader is, what the leader does, and where leadership takes place” (Al Harbi, 1995, p. 103). His recommendation was that both LMET and NAVLEAD programs should be
comprehensively evaluated so that the proper leadership topics are covered; which would include teaching leadership theories, including situational aspects and transformational processes. Moreover, Al Harbi (1995) suggests tying individual officer leadership potential and progress to the Navy’s Fitness Report system, thereby forcing the organization to place as much emphasis on leader development as it does on technical development in a Navy community. In making these recommendations, the researcher seems to reinforce the self-developmental nature of effective leadership growth while acknowledging the responsibility for officer leadership development which resides in the Navy writ large.

Lohmeyer (1999), investigated the Navy’s Intermediate Officer Leadership Training Course (IOLTC) for department heads or officers at the mid-career point at the Naval Leader Training Unit Coronado. She used a post-course survey of 69 graduates to gauge the curriculum’s influence, and found that the course succeeded in providing a foundation for “the concepts, philosophies, elements, tools, and practices of effective leadership” (Lohmeyer, 1999, p. 24). However, respondents scored several topics as needing more emphasis in the curriculum, including evaluation and counseling, and ethics and the Navy Core Values (Lohmeyer, 1999).

Navy Lieutenant Commander Robert Blackwell (2008) analyzed the Navy’s in-person officer leader development course (Department Head Leadership Course) for surface warfare officers (SWOs) and the online Army’s Captain’s Career Course using the Navy’s Leadership Competency Model as an organizing framework. The Navy model includes five core competencies: leading people, working with people, resource stewardship, leading change, and accomplishing the mission; as well as 25 related sub-competencies (Blackwell, 2008). While different in delivery method and when the course is taken, a syllabi analysis identified similar leadership topics and lesson time requirements for the courses pitched to officers with related
leadership needs by their respective Service. Results of an online survey (n=45), designed to measure the effectiveness of the course and model’s competencies, showed that Navy and Army means were similar on four of five competencies, but lower for the Navy in resource stewardship (financial management, leveraging technology, and human resource management); which seems to be a function of prior training and experience, per Blackwell (2008). An interesting Navy-only finding related to the commissioning source of Navy officers. Although the sample was small, Navy officers who were commissioned through college or a service academy scored higher on working with people (influencing/negotiating, partnering, political awareness, oral and written communications) compared to those commissioned through Officer Candidate School (who originated from enlisted ranks or direct commissioning), while OCS officers scored higher in resource stewardship (Blackwell, 2008). The researcher suggests these differences are due to the leadership, communication, and negotiation drills of midshipmen by their instructors at college or the Academy; while OCS officers have experience working with Supply Officers in obtaining repair parts and provisions (resources) required by their division.

Horey and Fallesen (2003) examined a number of military leadership competency models in their paper at the 45th Annual Conference of the International Military Testing Association. The study examined key constructs for all five U.S. armed services and the Executive Core Qualifications, used for civilians in the federal government. These researchers found that the leadership frameworks are often in a state of flux, and that those in use intermingle functions and features, have underlying contradictions, and may be baffling to professionals and practitioners alike (Horey & Fallesen, 2003). Trying to reconcile the 24 Coast Guard components on one end of the continuum with the 34 components of the Navy on the other was difficult, and the fact that only the Air Force and Army used a consistent depiction of the labels across the components,
meant that Horey and Fallesen (2003) could only identify 15 constructs that have some consensus across the six models. These constructs were: executing the mission, problem-solving, managing human resources, process improvement, motivating people, negotiating, communicating, teamwork, building partnerships, interpersonal relations, accountability, motivation, learning, adaptability, and technical proficiency (Horey & Fallesen, 2003, p. 726). Preferring leadership competencies specified in concise behavioral phrases to personal qualities, these authors suggest a key consideration in their leadership construction is “how they [competencies] will be used to influence leadership assessment, selection, development, and performance management processes” (Horey & Fallesen, 2003, p. 731). In this regard, the authors proposed that the competency development process begins with the end state in mind.

Gay (2008) analyzed leadership core competencies of the U.S. Army, Air Force, and Navy since competencies serve as both requirements and performance expectations for the respective Service; and they also assist in enhancing individual and organizational performance. Using the Army’s leadership framework (leads others; extends influence beyond the chain of command; leads by example; communicates; creates a positive environment; prepares self; develops others; and gets results), Gay (2008) aligns the various leadership sub-competencies of these military organizations concluding that, although each Service has developed competencies based upon its unique mission requirements, the different approaches lead to a similar conception of the requirements for leader development. For example, the Navy, while not emphasizing leadership development in the classroom, has historically provided practical advice for would-be leaders and commanders via its “Wheel Books” series and continues this practice with its publication of *Naval Leadership* and *Naval Command* booklets from the U.S. Naval Institute. Included in the former are topics related to moral courage and moral leadership development.
Berardi (2015) investigated the association between authentic leadership, as measured by the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), and emotional intelligence (EI), using the Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso’s Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) on a sample of 168 Navy SEALs. Interestingly, both correlation and regression analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between the constructs, although intuitively there would seem to be a link between authentic leadership and emotional intelligence; and Berardi (2015) cites several authors who propose a relationship between authentic leadership and EI (Triola, 2007) or between EI and leadership in general (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001). He suggested that the results support the proposition that “emotional intelligence is more of a skill set and authentic leadership a potential characteristic of its use,” referencing Cummings’ (2012) belief that emotional intelligence is morally neutral (Berardi, 2015, p. 112).

Moral and Ethical Leader Development and Related Issues

Several Navy guiding documents, in addition to the Naval Institute’s Wheel Books series mentioned above by Gay (2008), highlight the need for officer self-awareness, critical thinking, ethical standards and behavior, good leader-follower interactions, teamwork, and lifelong learning. These include Principles of Naval Leadership (n.d.) and the first Navy Leader Development Framework (NLDF) issued in 2017 among others. For example, the NLDF proposes a devotion to growth throughout a career that embraces the Navy’s core values of honor, courage, and commitment, stating that effective Navy leaders:

- Behave with integrity, accountability, initiative and toughness. Navy leaders commit to improving the competence and character of themselves and their teams. They inspire their teams to learn so as to achieve their best possible performance. In our Navy, leaders can take advantage of a rich combination of formal schools, structured on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education. (NLDF, 2017, p. 1)
In 2018, the CNO issued an updated version of the guidance (NLDF, 2018) to encourage Navy leaders to serve as advocates for those they mentor; to emphasize the “One Navy Team” concept, and to renew the charge of command; in addition to reinforcing the themes of improving competence and character. Despite the apparent inclusion of accountability and ethical considerations in military leadership competency development, Gibbons’ (2007) research highlighted the relative frequency of unethical behavior in military workplaces and educational institutions; supporting Thomas’ (n.d.) contention that the moral element of leadership is often ignored. In the interview portion of his research on a similar student population that this study used, Gibbons (2007) found that intermediate-level officers/students at the USNWC indicated that submitting false reports was the most common unethical behavior (60%), while exaggerated personnel evaluations (40%), and infidelity (20%) also made the list. Senior-level officer/students cited adultery (60%), false reporting (40%), exaggerated employee evaluations (40%), and fraternization (20%) in Gibbons’ study (2007). In a related study, Dimmock (2013) analyzed the annual removal rate of Naval Officers in command leadership positions from January 1, 2003, through March 31, 2013; finding that 174 officers were removed and that the annual rate of removal doubled between 2008 and 2012 (0.856% to 1.731). Moreover, ordinary least squares regression found that Commanding Officers were “significantly more likely to be dismissed from their positions due to acts of personal misconduct” (alcohol-related incidents, inappropriate sexual relationships/fraternization, and infractions of an ethical nature), rather than professional shortcomings (poor command climate, substandard command performance, or a significant event, such as running a ship aground), per Dimmock (2013, p. 27). Finally, analysis of variance found that male officers were significantly more likely to be removed from their leadership positions than female officers, as their removal was not proportional to their presence.
in the Navy officer population (Dimmock, 2013). The author cited problems with the Navy’s officer selection process (absence of promotion interviews, increased use of waivers, reliance on supervisor feedback) and the lack of rigor in the Department of Defense hiring process (no psychological evaluations or polygraph tests) as possible causes for the increase in enterprise risk due to poor leaders (Dimmock, 2013).

Shawn Pickett (2003) raised an interesting leadership development conundrum given today’s reliance on technology, information sharing and networking, and complex fighting situations. He warned of the proclivity of top strategic leaders to resort to micromanaging (extreme detailed management) the operational and tactical fight due to the capability that advances in information technology provide (Pickett, 2003). He relates case studies in Kosovo and Afghanistan where micromanagement “will develop ineffective operational leaders by creating a restrictive learning environment where the required characteristics or skills cannot be attained or developed through experience” (Pickett, 2003, p.13). The author’s argument is micromanaging leaders suffocate creativity, innovation, and the expansion of decision-making skills required for junior officers to learn and develop as leaders (Pickett, 2003). Interestingly, the *Principles of Naval Leadership* (n.d.) cited earlier specifically warns against the impulse to micromanage in the section on developing subordinates.

While the Navy traditionally identifies and removes bad leaders in a public fashion, the Army discovered the incidence of toxic leadership among the force in the Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL). John Steele’s (2011) report presented the occurrence, gravity, and aftereffects of toxic leaders who exhibited the following categories of behaviors: micromanaging; mean-spirited/aggressive; rigid/poor decision-making; poor attitude; narcissistic; inconsistent; interfering with work processes; unreachable; and
incompetent. Data showed that roughly “20% of 2010 CASAL respondents saw their superior as toxic and unethical” and that toxic leaders negatively affect “Soldier well-being, retention, and mission accomplishment” (Steele, 2011, pp. 2–12). Moreover, an investigation of the command climate of good leaders showed that the environmental and performance metrics for “constructive/authentic leaders are opposite of toxic leaders,” as authentic leaders:

Encourage frank and free-flowing idea discussion, implement good ideas, encourage creativity and innovation, and solve problems by examining the root cause … [Moreover] there was a strong relationship between constructive leadership and behaving ethically…. and the majority of constructive leaders is [sic] expected to receive more leadership responsibility and is [sic] emulated. Unfortunately, 50% of toxic leaders are also expected to achieve a higher level of leadership responsibility, and are still emulated by 18% of their subordinates. (Steele, 2011, pp. 14–20, emphasis in original)

The researcher did suggest potential solutions, including better selection and promotion procedures, embracing a competency model for leader development which focuses more on developing others versus getting results; better leader self-assessment and feedback (i.e., 360-degree assessments); programs designed to improve civility, respect, and engagement in the workplace; and encouraging subordinates not to emulate toxic leaders (Steele, 2011).

Michael Hallett (2016) proposed cultivating a culture of sailor ethical fitness by moving beyond simple compliance. Ethical fitness is a competency that informs daily decisions in any situation; one that “consists of effective orientation, observation, decision, and action; with full cognizance of the risks; in accordance with Navy core values; applied in a violent, uncertain, extreme world” (Hallett, 2016, p. 99). Bearing in mind the earlier-mentioned concepts of power stress (Boyatzis et al., 2006), resource depletion (Joosten et al. 2014), fragility (Moss et al., 2009), and Thomas’ (n.d.) criticism of military leadership not focusing on a moral component, plus the recent Marine Corps nude photo scandal (Schogol & deGrandpre, 2017) and Navy’s Fat Leonard bribery scandal (Cavas, 2015), it is possible that authentic leadership with a strong
moral component may be an antidote to these concerns; or at least a way to reinforce the core values of the military Services.

The Navy outlined the career progression or path for officers in the updated NLDF issued in 2018; it is reprinted Appendix A. As shown in the graphic, the journey to acquire competence and character involves the three Navy articulated methods of leader development: on-the-job training (OTJ) and experience, formal schooling (commissioning, division officer leadership course, department head leadership course, command training, JPME I/Master’s program and JPME II/War College, major command training and leadership education, etc.), and self-guided learning (reading, professional societies, online lectures/courses, etc.). Interestingly, executive coaching does not appear until after an officer has been selected for flag rank (admiral), which typically equates to over 28 years in service. It should be noted that recently, the USNWC has been tasked with running leadership and ethics courses for two-star and three-star admirals.

**Summary of Literature Review**

Most investigations of leader development initiatives have suggested that experimental leadership interventions did make a constructive difference. For example, it was discovered that in 67% of the studies examined by Avolio et al. (2005) in their leadership intervention research for the Gallup Leadership Institute, there was a positive difference made by leadership interventions, but little difference was based on the leadership model used. In a later study, (Avolio, Reichard, et al., 2009) found that leadership theories that concentrate on behavioral change generally have a greater impact than those that highlight cognitive or emotional change. These researchers also found that effect sizes were usually higher for manipulations using scenario, role play/actor, than training or development approaches; that interventions had greater impact on lower level leaders compared to middle and higher echelon leaders; and that military
organizational settings had larger effect sizes than not-for-profit and for-profit organizations (Avolio, Reichard, et al., 2009). Several studies investigated leadership development in military settings such as Baker (2015), Day et al. (2009), Gibbons (2007), Hayes (2008), Lohmeyer (1999), Tertychny (2013), and Yukl and Van Fleet (1982); but few focus on the way military officers develop as leaders. Moreover, Vitello-Cicciu et al. (2014), Day (2011), Avolio, Reichard, et al. (2009), and Riggio (2008) mention a lack of research on leader development programs.

Research efforts on Navy leadership development in particular (LMET/NAVLEAD) were conducted in the 1980s. The foci of this research were on short duration programs (LMET) or the M.S. designed for USNA Company Officers. Research concerning the current Navy leader development efforts is just beginning, and published guidance such as the Navy Leader Development Strategy or the 2018 Navy Leader Development Framework, are still being absorbed by sailors in the Service. An initial review of this research literature disclosed little information as to how the Navy currently produces leaders among its intermediate-level and senior-level student/officers. Indeed, scholars and practitioners such as Hayes (2008), Kelley (2014), and K. P. Kelly and Johnson-Freese (2013) pointed out shortcomings in the Navy’s PME system. However, the Leader Development Model by Van Velsor et al. (2010) which entails developmental experiences and developmental processes, may be applicable, as may the work of Day, Harrison, and Halpin (2009). Moreover, the Authentic Leader Development Model suggested by Luthans and Avolio (2003) and Gardner et al. (2005) and the related efforts to address the Moral Component of Authentic Leadership by May et al. (2003) subscribe to the constructionist philosophy that leadership can be developed, and that core foundational experiences (trigger events) are key pieces of information that feed the authentic leadership
process. Authentic leaders “seek to develop authentic followers” and this generates the positive follower outcomes of trust, engagement, and well-being, per Gardner, et al. (2005, p. 364). The positive authentic leadership model proposed by Luthans and Avolio (2003) suggests that leaders’ personal capacities (competencies) can be enhanced. These authentic leadership models appear to align nicely with the goal of the Navy’s leader development framework to produce world-class leaders with competence and character, through education, on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided learning (NLDF, 2017). Moreover, the authentic leadership model attends to the development of both leaders and followers in a way that also enlarges their moral reasoning and moral behavior (Gardner et al., 2005). In these models, trigger events are the primary antecedents of authentic leadership. Trigger events serve as information by which adult learners shape their authentic leadership competencies (Aguirre, 2015). Moreover, Aguirre (2015) states that “gaining insight, understanding, and identifying both planned and unplanned trigger events that develop a deeper and more positive sense of self-awareness, resulting in change through self-regulation, which ultimately builds greater authentic leadership remains empirically unexplored” (p. 75). This study added to the authentic leadership literature.

An examination of Navy leader development in a larger context is arguably warranted. Employing the theoretical framework of authentic leadership theory, while focusing on the most important experiences (trigger events) that promote positive authentic leadership development in Navy officers, and gaining a better understanding of the way these experiences connect with Navy programs and methods of leadership development (education, on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided learning), would seem to be associated with any such inquiry. The need to address this gap in the leadership literature seems apparent. This is especially true given the recent guidance found in the *Navy Leader Development Framework 1.0 version*, published in
early 2017 and the new 2.0 version published in 2018; the Chief of Naval Operations’ 2016 issuance of *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority* (U.S. Navy, 2018a), which contains strategic leadership development objectives; and the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff’s Instruction related to *Officer Professional Military Education Policy* (OPMEP) update issued in May 2015, that articulates new Professional Military Education (PME) leadership outcomes. These considerations were incorporated into this study.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative, intrinsic case study was to explore and understand the most important leadership experiences that Navy officers have had in the Service, and how these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs and methods; especially the role of formal education, on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education.

Authentic leadership, proposed by Walumbwa et al. (2008), is a multi-dimensional construct involving self-awareness and self-regulation (the latter of which involves relational transparency, balanced processing, and an internalized moral or ethical perspective); that combine to produce authentic leaders who behave in consonance with their true self. This study probed into the learnings, appreciations, and understandings of leadership developed by intermediate-level and senior-level student/officers who participated in the USNWC’s master’s degree programs. By virtue of their career positions, these officers should be following the leadership guidance specified in the *Navy Leader Development Strategy* (NLDS, 2013) and the two *Navy Leader Development Framework* documents (NLDF, 2017, 2018); designed to produce world-class leaders of competence and character. Authentic leadership would appear to align well with this goal.

The focus of most of the Navy research conducted to date has been on early leader development programs of short duration offered decades ago. There has been an absence of information that has investigated the leadership experiences of this career level of Navy officers; especially studies using an authentic leadership framework. Merriam (2008) recommended using a qualitative approach to learn how subjects translate experiences, and Creswell (2013) suggested that a qualitative interpretive framework assists in understanding the meaning participants ascribe to a problem, such as their own leadership development. Yin (2014)
believed that case study is the favored method to address research questions of the “how” or “why” variety, while Stake (1995) recommends case studies to facilitate and enhance understanding. Baxter and Jack (2008) suggested that one’s reality is not absolute, but a function of one’s perspective, and a case study method would facilitate the understanding of these important leadership experiences and different developmental perspectives. This study used a single intrinsic case study method to explore and better understand how Navy officers develop as (authentic) leaders by examining the most important experiences, those that contributed significantly to their leadership development. Additionally, the research sought to discover how these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs and framework; especially the three articulated methods of leader development.

A variety of motives pointed to the essential need to address the aforementioned gap in the leadership development literature and in the overall preparation of Navy leaders. Among these are the leader development mission of the USNWC; the continued public instances of ethical and moral failures of Navy officers (Cavas, 2015; Watson, 2017); leadership failures relating to safely operating ships at sea (Larter, 2017a, 2017b); the recent publication of Navy strategic guidance on leadership development (NLDF, 2017, 2018; NLDS, 2013), and the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction regarding officer professional military educational leadership outcomes (2015).

This chapter reiterates the research questions; describes the study purpose; preliminary study design; data collection, storage, management and proposed analysis; participants’ rights and involvement; and the protocols to be taken to ensure trustworthy data and participant confidentiality.
General Research Questions

This research study attempts to answer the following questions by asking:

1) **What are the core foundational experiences that promote leadership development in Navy officers?**

2) **How do these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework?**

Preliminary Study Design

Research Paradigm

Riegler (2012) described the interpretive research paradigm or “constructivist approaches” as the way an individual’s “mental world—or the experienced reality—is actively constructed” (p. 237). The constructivist framework is in harmony with the proposition that leader identity and leader development is a process fashioned through social interactions over time. The interpretive philosophical assumption of the present study attempted to understand the subjective meaning of Navy officer leader development experiences, accounting for the complexity of views (various interpretations) formed through social interactions with classmates, mentors, superiors, followers, and others; as well as prior leadership experiences (Creswell, 2013). This focus on making sense of various interpretations (sense-making) is the process by which individuals “create their social worlds and identities” (Bettis & Mills, 2006, p. 59). The interpretive-constructivist approach is also consonant with adult learning which is present in the research setting and professional military practice environment. Knowles et al. (2015) stated that the constructivist perspective emphasizes that “all knowledge is context-bound, and that individuals make personal meaning of their learning experiences” (p. 177).
Merriam (2008) recommended using a qualitative approach to learn how subjects make sense of a situation, how they translate experiences, and how they construct their domains. Creswell (2013) stated that: “qualitative research begins with the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 44). As Merriam (1998) stipulated, the essential characteristics of qualitative research are a focus on meaning-making (interpretation); the primary data collection instrument and data analysis method is the researcher him or herself; the research is conducted in the field in naturalistic settings; the procedure is primarily inductive; and the final report includes rich descriptions that capture the participants’ voice and perspective. Stake (1995) stipulated that “the epistemology of qualitative researchers is existential (nondeterminist) and constructivist” (p. 43). Anfara and Mertz (2014) cite Crotty (1998) who suggested that a researcher’s theory of knowledge or epistemology (constructivism) is rooted in his or her theoretical perspective (interpretivism) and that these philosophical orientations lead to research methods (case study) and methodologies (interviews and document reviews).

This present study used a social constructivist interpretive framework as described by Ponterotto (2005) to explore how Navy officers develop as (authentic) leaders. Consistent with adult learning, constructivists believe that learning is a process of fashioning meaning from experience (Anfara & Mertz, 2014) and that “truth is relative and that it is dependent on one’s perspective” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545). Mezirow’s (1991) transformational learning theory and Kolb’s (2015) experiential learning cycle, mentioned earlier in this narrative, are both examples where reflective learning/observation (assessment and reassessment of assumptions and experience), plays a key role in the dialogue of sense-making. “To the extent that adult education strives to foster reflective learning, its goal becomes one of either conformation or
transformation of ways of interpreting experience” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 6). Ponterotto (2005) suggested that this reflection can be intensified through the researcher-participant discourse which co-creates findings, and that the goals of constructivism-interpretivism are both idiographic (individual) and emic (actions or ideas are not generalizable to populations). Stake (1995) suggested that qualitative case studies can help refine understanding (petite generalizations), but they really focus on “particularization” or understanding the case itself.

**Methodology: Case Study**

Creswell (2012) stated that three factors are important to consider in determining a research approach: 1) matching the method with the research problem; 2) fitting the approach to the requirements of the audience; and 3) relating the method to the researcher’s education and experience. This study utilized a qualitative single intrinsic case study to answer the research questions. Yin (2014) suggested that case study is the preferred method if the primary research questions are “how” or “why” questions, the focus of the current research is on a present-day activity, and the investigator has little to no influence over interactions. Stake (1995) would consider this an intrinsic case study as the objective is to research intermediate-level and senior-level Navy student/officers’ leadership development experiences. Shamir (2011) proposed an inductive approach where researchers investigate and describe the leadership process as it evolves over time. Zainal (2007) highlighted the advantages of case studies in that the investigation can be performed in the context of the research situation, the various approaches allow for qualitative and quantitative data assessment, and that qualitative descriptions “help explain the complexities of real-life situations” (p. 4). Stake (1995) referenced Parlett and Hamilton’s (1972) progressive focusing process in studying complex learning environments where the researcher moves through the stages of observation, renewed inquiry, and explanation.
This inquiry took a quasi-longitudinal perspective and asked participants how they developed as leaders in the Navy by recalling the most important experiences (significant occasions or trigger events) that fostered their (authentic) leadership development; and whether the experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or methods (i.e., formal education, on-the-job experiences, and self-guided learning). The research was open to the possibility that some experiences and the Navy’s articulated programs or methods of leadership development may not promote positive authentic leaders.

In sum, there was good alignment between the research problem and the proposed case study methodology. Moreover, the prospective audience, who are likely to be leadership scholars, military and civilian faculty at PME institutions, Navy sailors, and USNWC administrators, would appreciate the benefits of the evidentiary process used to collect case study data. Yin (2014) argued that a case study’s distinct advantage is that a full assortment of evidence can be employed, and that while case studies can’t produce statistical generalizations, they can expand and generalize theories (analytic generalizations). Lessons learned may apply to other similar leadership development contexts. Stake (1995) suggested that individual researchers need to discover the research methods that best work for them after practice and reflection. The researcher, as an inside scholar-practitioner charged with conducting institutional assessments at the USNWC, related the case study approach to personal education and experience. This approach is reflective of the three factors that Creswell (2012) articulates in determining which research method is most appropriate and justifies the case study method.

Setting and Case Boundary

Creswell (2013) suggested that a case study is both an object of investigation as well as a product of inquiry conducted within a real-life, bounded, contemporary setting. The resident
student/officers taking the intermediate-level and senior-level master’s degree programs, with leadership components, at the USNWC are excellent candidates for such an investigation. The research was situated in a contemporary, real-world setting in a context bounded by place and time. Since leadership is an evolving process, and leader identity is constructed over time, some of the inquiry, by necessity, involved participants’ prior leadership experience and learning (a longitudinal perspective). Thus, from a Yinian (2014) perspective, the boundaries between the leadership phenomenon and contextual setting may not always be obvious.

The sample size of a qualitative case study, one geared to answer “why?” and “how?” questions of complex interactions and one’s experience in such a situation, is much different than that of a quantitative study, which attempts to test a hypothesis and produce results that are generalizable (Marshall, 1996). In general, quantitative studies, especially those employing survey procedures, may involve hundreds of respondents (i.e., a representative sample), while qualitative studies comprise far fewer (i.e., a purposeful sample), per Beyea and Nicoll (1997), Bock and Sergeant (2002), Marshall (1996); and Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). Qualitative researchers often employ a purposeful sample as the most productive one to gather data, and this, therefore, necessitates a more flexible sample approach as Marshall (1996) suggested: “An appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question” (p. 523). Crouch and McKenzie (2006) provided a rationale for small samples in interview-based studies which builds on the researcher-participant relationship to produce a “fine-grained, in-depth inquiry in naturalistic settings” (p. 483), while Creswell (2013) suggested a sample size of 4–5 cases in a single case study research. Nyberg and Sveningsson (2014) conducted in-depth interviews with three managers to understand how the leaders use the construction of self as an authentic leader. Aguirre (2015) conducted 10 interviews in her study
of authentic leader’s lived experiences, while Zaleski (2003) interviewed 11 graduates of the Navy’s LMET program. Baker’s (2015) narrative inquiry of the Navy’s Senior Enlisted Academy included interviewing eight graduates; Tertychny (2013) conducted eight semi-structured student interviews on leadership development at the Virginia Military Institute; and Gibbons (2007) interviewed five students from each of four student subgroups, including intermediate-level and senior-level USNWC student/officers for his College honor code study. Some researchers also used surveys, small focus groups, and document reviews as part of their study protocol. This case study targeted a larger sample than Creswell suggests to ensure saturation by recruiting intermediate-level and senior-level Navy student/officers for a total of ten (10) participants.

The researcher was an inside researcher at the U.S. Naval War College. Rooney (2005) references Robson (2002) in describing an inside researcher as an individual with direct engagement with the specific research setting. Several benefits of being an inside researcher are noted by Unluer (2012); including knowing the language, comprehending organizational values and culture; recognizing the official and unofficial power arrangements; and having the ability to gain access to records and study participants. Creswell (2013) noted “to study one’s own workplace, for example, raises questions about whether good data can be collected when the act of data collection may introduce a power imbalance” (p. 151). Since the researcher had no input on an individual students’ academic record, it is unlikely that a power differential was created. However, the researcher was mindful of this possibility. As a civilian working in a military college, the researcher was also conscious of the different cultures and sub-cultures at play and make allowances for the “other” perspective to surface, per Carlton Parsons (2008).
Naval officers come to the USNWC from the fleet and matriculate in their respective degree program, which can run from 10 to 13 months, depending on the time of entry. New student cohorts arrive in August, November, and February to meet the Navy’s fleet operating schedules. Participant recruitment for this study began in early 2018. Research questions were reviewed (pretested) by two USNWC faculty members and a student prior to the study. The initial interview validated questions and study procedures. Overall, a total of ten (10) in-depth interviews were conducted.

The researcher’s participation in ongoing College assessment efforts, and an ad hoc group looking into operationalizing the Navy Leadership Development Strategy (NLDS), positioned the researcher in a boundary spanner role. Therefore, he was someone operating in a complex adaptive system who was interested in bridging the academic and practice domains as outlined by Zaghab and Rodriguez de Bittner (2013) in their reconceptualization of practice-based research. Results of this research study will add to the authentic leadership literature, and inform Navy and other stakeholders interested in military leader development.

**Research Process**

The research process proposed for this study is outlined in Figure 3.1. Yin (2014, p. 1) explained that conducting case study research is a “linear but iterative process.” After the initial faculty/student question reviews (pretest), the progression for this study entailed: 1) Implementing the interview protocol and recruiting participants after identification of those that meet the study criteria (specified below). An initial analysis of Navy leadership guidance documents was begun at this time. 2) Ensuring participants understand the informed consent form prior to the in-person interviews, conducting a successful initial interview, and having professional transcriptions produced was done next. 3) Conducting the remaining in-person
interviews, having the transcripts produced and verified by participants via a member-checking process was the third phase; and this activity was ongoing. As Merriam (1998) suggested, data collection and data analysis should occur simultaneously. 4) Therefore, phase four entailed coding and analysis of concepts and themes derived from the data using a variety of coding techniques (outlined in the data analysis section), as well as tools (i.e., data triangulation table, in-case analysis), and ensuring data trustworthiness and confirmability by reviewing results with the principal investigator/dissertation advisor (inter-rater reliability). 5) Phase five synthesized the evidence by analyzing participants’ responses to the research questions with concept matching and the literature on leadership development and authentic leadership. Contact summary forms, interview field notes, interview transcripts, and data extractions with analytic memos were also analyzed. 6) Finally, interpretations and conclusions were developed informed by theoretical insights, as well as implications for practice and future research.

Figure 3.1. Study Research Process.
Participant Selection

Student participants in the study were a purposeful selection of Navy officers attending the USNWC and taking the intermediate-level and senior-level master’s degree, with embedded leadership modules; the formal education component of the Navy’s Leader Development Framework for these career levels. Participant recruitment was accomplished with the assistance of the USNWC’s Dean of Students Office. Participant recruitment involved explaining the study purpose and objectives in an email/flyer; gaining informed consent; and explaining participant privacy, confidentiality, and protections. A purposeful sampling approach was used to recruit ten (10) total students. While all Navy student/officers in attendance at USNWC were invited, individuals both with and without command experience participated to allow for an embedded case study design. Additionally, a small number of self-selected Navy students enroll in leadership-related elective courses, so including them in the study provided additional data for comparison purposes. Desired student/officer participant characteristics included:

- Intermediate-level and senior-level Navy students only;
- Both pre-command and post-command; and
- Involve participant(s) from the leadership elective courses.

Data Collection Procedures

In Yin’s (2014) view, a case study should be used to explain, describe, illustrate, and enlighten. For this qualitative study, data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews with students, from a review of relevant Navy leader development guiding documents, and from USNWC institutional assessment reports related to officer leader development (anonymous group-level data).
Miles et al. (2014) stated that the researcher’s role in qualitative inquiry is to gain a holistic comprehension of the situation under study, and the researcher is “essentially the main instrument of the study...most of the analysis is done with words...[and] many interpretations are possible” (p. 9). Further, insights into how Navy officers develop, or fail to develop as authentic leaders; their experiences and reflections about leadership; how they became more self-aware, develop character and ethics; and the leadership challenges they faced in the Navy, emerged.

**Student Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted among the group of students constituting the sample in order to better explore and understand the core foundational experiences that promoted their leadership development; and how these experiences connected with the Navy’s programs or framework of leadership development. Interviews provided the researcher, as well as Navy leaders, academic planners, and military mentors, with a rich portrayal of how Navy officers learn how to lead. Participants’ experiences and perspectives were better understood using the framework of Kolb’s (2015) experiential learning theory (ELT), mentioned earlier, which explains how experience is transformed into learning through a process that cycles through concrete experiences (CE), reflective observations (RO), abstract concepts (AC), and active experimentation (AE). The refined definition of authentic leadership is:

A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, and internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 94)

It is a multi-dimensional and multilevel construct that, according to Gardner et al. (2005), involves possessing one’s own experiences and behaving in a fashion congruent with one’s true self. George (2003) suggested that authentic leaders “have a deep sense of purpose and are true
to their core values” (p. 5). The four key constructs comprising authentic leadership were incorporated into this study by means of the interview questions. As shown in Table 3.1, there were two key research questions in the study and six (6) interview questions and related sub-questions/probes designed to answer the key research questions. The interview questions are mapped to the literature on authentic leadership and the Navy’s leadership development texts.

Table 3.1

| Research and Interview Questions Linked to Authentic Leadership Literature and Navy Guiding Documents |
|---|---|
| **Interview Questions** | **Key Research Question: Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa’s (2005) authentic leadership model posits personal history and trigger events as antecedents or catalysts to authentic leadership because they serve to heighten self-awareness.** |
| What are the core foundational experiences that promote leadership development in Navy officers? | How do these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework? |
| **Interview questions: Related to Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation (self-determination)** | **Interview questions: Related to Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation: Relational Transparency** |
| 1) What was your motivation to join the Navy? Probe: Does your service to the Navy align with your personal goals? | May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio (2003) suggest that authentic leaders know their motivations and goals as part of self-awareness. (Self-Awareness) |
| 2) What leadership development experiences, assignments, or programs in the Navy were most important or helpful to your overall leadership development? Probe: How did these experiences develop you as a leader? Why? | Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa’s (2005) authentic leadership model posits personal history and trigger events as antecedents or catalysts to authentic leadership because they serve to heighten self-awareness. (Self-Awareness) |
| 3) What experiences have you had in the Navy that enabled you to become more self-aware? Probe: Describe the experience and how it changed you. How did you use this feedback information? Have you had a mentor? If so, in what ways did your mentor influence your leadership development? | DeRue and Wellman (2009) suggest that the availability of feedback is key in developing leaders by experience. Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa’s (2005) suggest that unbiased or balanced processing of self-related information informs self-development, it is a self-regulatory process. (Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation: Relational Transparency) |
| 4) How would you describe yourself as a leader? How would others describe you as a leader? Probe: Would they say you are open to listening to their (others) ideas or suggestions before making a decision? Can you cite an example? Do you routinely | Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa’s (2005) authentic leadership model poses leader self-awareness; while having accurate self-knowledge from others would involve balanced processing of self-related information; part of self-regulation. Stech (2008) suggests focusing leader development on self-awareness/self-identity, and being mindful of the influence an |
solicit opinions of superiors/subordinates? Please explain.

individual has on others. *(Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation: Balanced Processing)*

5) How have you personally developed your leadership capacity? Probe: What was your motivation to improve? What role did: a) formal schooling play? b) experience and training on-the-job play? and c) self-guided learning play? What are your future leadership plans?

The Navy Leadership Development Framework (NLDF), states that “leaders can still take advantage of a rich combination of formal schools, structured on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education” (NLDF, 2017, p. 1; NLDF, 2018).

Gardner, Cogliser, Davis and Dickens (2011), describe authenticity as an assortment of interactive and intellectual steps that make clear how individuals ascertain and build a core identity. *(Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation)*

6) The CNO and Navy Leadership Development Framework talks about moral and ethical character development. How do these perspectives influence your actions or decisions as a leader? Can you cite an example? Do the Navy’s core values play a role? Probe: Do you share your values with others? How so? Is the Navy culture conducive to character or ethical development of its officers? Is there anything you would like to add about leadership development in the Navy?

May et al. (2003) suggest that developing the moral component of authentic leadership involves self-awareness of one’s values, identity, emotions and motives and self-regulation of an internalized moral perspective. The Navy’s goal is for “leader development that encourages lifelong learning, and shapes and enhances character and integrity” (NLDS, 2013, p. 4). The CNO focuses on character and the Navy core values of honor, courage and commitment (Richardson, 2016). Maxwell (2007) believes that leaders need to be trusted to influence others; demonstrating “competence, connection and character” builds leadership trust (p. 63). *(Self-Regulation: Internalized Ethical/Moral Perspective)*

Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa’s (2005) authentic leadership model also posits an inclusive, strengths-based, caring, and ethical organizational climate.

Documents

The documents collected and analyzed for this study included published guiding doctrine related to Navy leadership development (i.e., *Navy Leader Development Strategy, Officer Professional Military Education Policy, and Navy Leader Development Frameworks* and institutional assessment reports, inclusive of group-level leadership outcomes student self-assessments (Appendix I).

Data Storage and Management

All data collected was securely stored in a password-protected computer, and all documents, audio-recordings, analytic memos, interview notes, and the researcher’s recruitment process journal was preserved in a locked file drawer. Digital data was backed-up on the student researcher’s personal USB flash drive, which was stored in a locked file drawer at the researcher’s home, as well as cloud storage (Dropbox). Data will be retained and destroyed in
accordance with NEU guidelines. Participant confidentiality was protected. There were no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with study participation, but since prior leadership experiences can be both positive and negative, care was taken as participants recalled their narratives. Participants may have actually benefited from the study as it could encourage focus and reflection on their individual leader development process, per Day et al. (2009).

All participants were offered the opportunity to review the data collected and check interview transcriptions via member checks. To ensure proper understanding of the study, all participants received an electronic consent form and research questions before the interview; and permission to record the interview was secured before commencing.

**Proposed Data Analysis**

Rubin and Rubin (2012) proposed that the researcher’s role in responsive qualitative interviewing is “to gather narratives, descriptions, and interpretations from an array of conversational partners and put them together in a reasoned way that re-creates a culture or describes a process or set of events in a way that participants would recognize as real” (p. 7). This approach required flexibility in design and a willingness to “listen, balance, and analyze” participants’ interpretation and construction of events (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 10). Merriam (1998) suggested that good data analysis is done in combination with data collection; analyzing data “is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation” (p. 178). Miles et al. (2014) suggested that study design decisions, “a sort of anticipatory data condensation,” are unique to a study and must remain flexible as initial designs may require modification (p. 19). This study followed these recommendations.
The classic practice and sequence for qualitative analysis outlined by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014, p. 10) formed the foundation for approaching the data:

- Assigning codes or themes to a set of field notes, interview transcripts, or documents.
- Sorting and sifting through these coded materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, categories, distinct differences between subgroups and common sequences.
- Isolating these patterns and processes, and commonalities and differences, and taking them out to the field in the next wave of data collection.
- Noting reflections or remarks in jottings, journals and analytic memos.
- Gradually elaborating a small set of assertions, propositions, and generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the database.
- Comparing those generalizations with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories.

The next section describes the coding of the interview transcripts in greater detail.

Concurrent with data collection, coding was done using NVivo, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), which facilitates data manipulation, configuration, and management (Yin, 2014). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined coding as “assigning some sort of short-hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data” (p. 199, italics in original). Miles et al. (2014) said codes are applied to “assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (p. 91). Gläser and Laudel (2013), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Saldaña (2013) all wrote about the feasibility of co-occurrence coding or multiple-coding when applying more than one code to the same passage or text. This is facilitated by various CAQDAS, including NVivo.
Saldaña (2013) stated that initial coding in the first cycle coding process can be literal (in-vivo) coding, which is appropriate to virtually all qualitative research studies. Initial coding can utilize a microanalysis or “splitting” of each line in the body of the data derived from interviews; but Saldaña (2013) also suggested that study leads and direction can emerge from searching for the process of “participants actions that have antecedents, causes, consequences, and a sense of temporality” (p. 103). This initial coding approach facilitated understanding of individual leader development, especially trigger events and other experiences that spurred self-awareness, per May et al. (2003) and Aguirre, (2015).

A review of the research procedures and research results (i.e., examination of coding themes, data triangulation, etc.) was done between the student researcher and the dissertation advisor (Principal Investigator) to enhance confirmability of data results and to increase trustworthiness. This process is discussed in Chapter 4.

A form of values coding was used to obtain a better understanding of participants’ viewpoints regarding the Navy’s core values of honor, courage, and commitment; and whether the organization’s climate fosters good ethical character development. Data was also collected on how these perspectives (values) influenced participants’ actions as a leader, how they related to their own personal leadership development, and whether the constructs of authentic leadership theory and its moral and ethical foundation surfaced in participants’ leadership narratives.

Saldaña explained that a value is the significance an individual ascribes to something (concept, item, another person, or oneself) and that “the greater the personal meaning [of something to someone], the greater the personal payoff; the greater the personal payoff, the greater the personal value” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 111). Values may have been internalized by participants as part of their leader identity formation process. Saldaña (2013) suggested that
values coding is particularly important for investigating cultural values, identity formation, interpersonal and intra-personal participant experiences, and behavior in case studies. Moreover, Saldaña (2013) asserted that provisional value codes (Navy’s core values) can be created a priori, and using them for both interviews and field notes, as referenced by LeCompte and Preissle (1993), enhances the trustworthiness of the results.

The transition from first cycle coding to second cycle coding was facilitated by using code mapping (mind map). Saldaña (2013, p. 194) cited Anfara (2008) in describing how the analysis proceeds “to bring meaning, structure, and order to the data” through using this data presentation strategy (p. 932). Second cycle coding benefitted from applying longitudinal coding, which reviews the body of the data categorically, thematically, and comparatively over time to examine change and development (Saldaña, 2013). During the course of the student interviews, participants were asked to recount their personal leadership development in the Navy. Officers typically explained their leadership development chronologically by Navy assignment, so some longitudinal data was collected.

Interview questions were shared with two USNWC faculty members (one former Navy and one former Army member) and a Navy student as part of a pretest review process. This resulted in slight modifications before use. Final questions were also provided to study volunteers prior to conducting the interview. This enabled participants to reflect on them in advance and to recall important milestones related to individual leadership development experienced during their professional careers in the Navy.

During the interview process, participants completed a background form which collected basic demographic information used to generate the attributes/demographics. The researcher kept field notes in addition to having the interviews transcribed by a professional transcription
company (Rev.com). Following the suggestion of Miles and Huberman (1994), a contact summary form was produced for each interview from the field notes. This recorded initial macro-level take-a-ways (main issues, summary of answers, salient points, follow-on questions). Throughout the recruitment and interview process it became necessary to create a tracking matrix form suggested by Baker (2015) to document the progress of each individual participant in the study. The form was updated periodically as needed.

Glaser and Laudel (2013) suggested that researchers identify and structure the relevant raw data in qualitative research; and they proposed extracting content as a primary method to connect empirical information to research questions. Glaser and Laudel (2013) also proposed that single case studies perform “in-case comparisons” to explore variance in the data. These suggestions were followed in this study.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posited that qualitative data analysis is principally “inductive and comparative” and they suggested that researchers create an inventory of the entire data set for practical reasons (p. 201, italics in original). For this study, that accounting included the following: 1) interview field notes; 2) participant backgrounder form; 3) contact summary form; 4) interview recordings and transcripts (hard copy and NVivo); 5) researcher’s participant recruiting journal; 6) analytical summary extraction of the interviews questions and participants’ answers (in-case comparisons); 7) Navy guiding documents on leadership development; and 8) USNWC student leadership development assessments. Figure 3.2 depicts the study inventory data set and analysis process graphically. Since coding and data analysis was ongoing and iterative, a recursive cycle appears in the center of the process.
Participants Rights and Treatment

All study participants were treated in accordance with the ethical research rules articulated in the guidelines of the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board. During recruitment and again prior to initiating the study, the researcher reviewed with each participant, the study’s purpose and objectives; explained participant privacy, confidentiality, and related protections; outlined the potential benefits and risks; and acquired the required informed consent. The informed consent form included the aforementioned items as well as researcher contact information to address questions, and an opt-out statement. Study participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw without prejudice at any time. Each participant selected a pseudonym to ensure anonymity.
Researcher Preconceptions/Biases

The researcher became personally interested in learning more about Navy leader development after securing employment at the U.S. Naval War College (USNWC), the organization charged with fostering Navy leadership development. This interest was also a function of twenty-five plus years of leadership and experience in assessing organizations in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sector; including several institutions of higher education. The researcher’s participation in a USNWC cross-functional team looking into the operationalization of the Navy’s Leader Development Strategy, and ongoing institutional assessment of student learning, also informed this study. A respect for ethical considerations and the avoidance of potential researcher biases (by noting preconceptions), was embedded in the study. This was done to facilitate results that were as value-neutral as possible.

The researcher’s preconceptions included the following:

• Every individual has the capacity to set and reach their goals by applying sufficient effort.

• Humans never stop learning, but some individuals have the ability to learn from experience faster than others. Learning is viewed as a tension-filled process between the individual and her/his environment that involves experience, observation and reflection, and taking action, per Kolb (2015).

• Leaders can create resonance or dissonance in an organization. Some high-level leaders lose their moral footing and make spectacular mistakes that make national and international news and cause significant organizational and personal harm.

• Leadership is typically learned on-the-job, but it can be enhanced by programs that facilitate awareness, self-reflection, developmental challenge, and feedback.
Fostering an internalized ethical/moral perspective and behaving morally is also part of leader development. Additionally, leaders give and receive feedback, and this assessment communicates progress toward, or regression from, individual and organizational goals.

- The world in general, and the military environment in particular, is becoming more complex. Command and control structures often will not work in a volatile, unstructured, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) military environment; different leadership skills are required.

- The military bureaucracy must co-exist with the responsibilities of the Profession of Arms in a VUCA environment. Good leaders need to skillfully work within both environments to be successful.

Steps to ensure that trustworthy data were collected and that researcher bias was properly addressed are outlined next.

**Protocols to Ensure Trustworthy Data**

The researcher, as an insider, designed steps to ensure the collection of trustworthy data that is not biased. These actions were included in the study design: triangulation of results from multiple sources of data (interviews and documents); an examination of research procedures, coding themes developed from the interviews, reviewing research results with the PI; conducting member checks; and stating researcher positionality/bias. Merriam (1998) suggested that these steps address internal validity. Creating a data inventory (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and providing a thick, rich description of the research findings also enhanced external validity (Merriam, 1998). The researcher was mindful of the problems Unluer (2012) identified for inside researchers such as role duality, missing routine organizational behaviors, failure to seek
clarification of the meaning of events (making assumptions about participant’s perspectives) and recognizing that participants may assume the researcher knows what they know.

Limitations and Scope

Cases studies can have shortcomings related to all phases of a research study. For example, Creswell (2013) suggested that there are inherent challenges in case identification, sampling strategy, and data gathering. The fact that not all Navy officers take the resident master’s program at Newport, RI, means results may not be generalizable beyond the research setting and student level. For example, distance education students, and non-Navy students were excluded from participation. Thus, the main limitation of this study was likely gathering data about leadership experiences of these officer levels in the research setting via interviews. Additionally, formal schooling may be overemphasized as a leader development method due to the case study site and classes, and/or the Navy’s desire to emphasize schooling in its leadership development documents. However, interview data was supplemented by other data sources (assessment research reports, Navy leadership guidance, and related documents), and collection was not limited to one officer level or graduating class to enhance validity and reliability. Results were obtained via semi-structured interviews with a purposeful sample of students; with questions and sub-questions designed to elicit participants’ responses about core foundational experiences that promoted individual leadership development in the Navy (Creswell, 2013).

Another limitation of this study was potential researcher bias resulting from the role of an inside researcher. Because the researcher is a staff member of the College from which the study participants were recruited, it might be argued that there was some favorable predisposition for the current design of the formal leader development education. Additionally, as an inside researcher whose job it is to conduct assessment research, care must be exercised not to allow
other research activities to unduly influence the approach to or interpretation of the study. In order to address these concerns, the suggestions of Rooney (2005) and Unluer (2012) guided these efforts. A review of the research procedures, coding analysis, and results with the principal investigator increased confirmability. Despite these concerns, Miles et al. (2014) asserted that qualitative data is flexible as it focuses on “naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings” that allows for discovering meanings participants assign to their “lived experiences” in the “social world” (p. 12). Moreover, Miles et al. (2014) indicated that qualitative data can be complemented and substantiated with quantitative data gathered from the same research situation; thus, improving confidence in the results. This gathering of data was done by examining institutional assessment report sections on officer leader development learning outcomes. While Merriam (1998) advised that some documents may have shortcomings because they were designed for another purpose; all study documents reviewed here relates to Navy leadership development.

**Summary of Methodology**

This chapter outlined the rigorous process used to collect data that was designed to “give voice” to participants’ key leadership developmental experiences and processes, to better understand individual Navy officers’ leadership development. This study employed an intrinsic, single case study method and the theoretical framework of authentic leadership theory to explore the research questions. Additionally, this chapter addressed the research paradigm; methodology; case boundary; participant selection; data collection, storage, and analysis; as well as participant rights and protocols to ensure trustworthy data; researcher bias/predispositions; and study limitations.
Chapter 4: Results

This chapter focuses on the results of the participants’ leadership development experiences in the Navy using the lens of authentic leadership theory. The primary purpose of this qualitative, intrinsic case study was to understand and explore the experiences of intermediate-level and senior-level Navy officers that contributed significantly to their leadership development. The objective was to uncover the significant or core foundational experiences, learnings, and understandings of leadership acquired by officers at these career levels in the Navy, and how the experiences connect with Navy’s leadership development programs or framework.

Since the Navy’s leader development framework is a lifelong learning continuum that seeks to foster competence and character in officers/leaders at key career milestones, studying the experiences of mid-career officers at the U.S. Naval War College was an excellent opportunity to better understand the development process.

Figure 4.1. depicts the key research questions and the four multi-dimensional constructs of authentic leadership per Gardner et al. (2005): self-awareness (a leader’s understanding of their individual assets and limitations, how he/she is viewed by others and how leaders can influence them); relational transparency (staying open to the ideas and opinions of others); balanced processing (seeking out other’s views prior to rendering an important decision, including self-relevant information); and authentic moral behavior/internalized moral perspective (having and following lofty moral and ethical guidelines). It also shows the Navy’s three methods for promoting leadership development (formal education, on-the-job experience and training, and self-guided learning), which are articulated in its published leader development framework (NLDF, 2017).
Attributes and Demographics of Participants

Ten Navy officer/students volunteered to participate in the study. Table 4.1 provides a picture of the study participants. The research objective was to achieve a mix among the sample of participants that was purposeful in nature, and that goal was achieved. As Navy leaders and officers, participants served in a variety of Navy communities at various positions, have achieved different ranks (from Lieutenant – LT to Captain – CAPT), and have accrued a variety of years of service (from 7.5 to 19 years). In general, an officer’s rank is related to time in service, and several participants have had major command positions (COM), although virtually all have led subordinates in some capacity during their Navy career. Table 4.1 shows that, as mentioned in the methods section, both student levels volunteered: five participants were assigned to the College of Naval Command and Staff (CNC&S) and followed the intermediate-level program and five were assigned to the College of Naval Warfare and followed the senior-level program.
Seven participants were attending USNWC classes, two were recent graduates, and one had yet to begin the program. Two participants were female officers, four have held major command, three have taken one or more leadership elective courses at the College, and one taught at the Navy Leadership and Ethics Center (NLEC) prior to attending USNWC. The key targeted Navy communities were represented (Aviation, Surface Warfare, Submarine) and others; overall, eight participants were active duty officers and two were serving in the reserves. They are listed and described by pseudonym.

Table 4.1

Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Participant/ Pseudonym</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Yrs</th>
<th>L&amp;E Class</th>
<th>Major Com</th>
<th>NWC Level</th>
<th>Navy Community</th>
<th>Motivation to Join Navy</th>
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<td>Samantha</td>
<td>LT</td>
<td>Asian/Mixed</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>CNC&amp;S</td>
<td>Surface Warfare</td>
<td>Career stepping-stone to DOS/travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>LCDR</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>CNC&amp;S</td>
<td>JAG</td>
<td>Serve others and my country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gleason</td>
<td>LCDR</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>CNC&amp;S</td>
<td>Aviation</td>
<td>Navy aligned with personality; Navy officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jake (Reservist)</td>
<td>LCDR</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>CNC&amp;S</td>
<td>Aviation</td>
<td>Leave small town/see the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Savanna (Reservist)</td>
<td>CDR</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>CNW</td>
<td>Supply Corps</td>
<td>Career/follow husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>CAPT</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>CNW</td>
<td>Medical Service Corps</td>
<td>Career, Navy officer, travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cheng</td>
<td>CDR</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>CNC&amp;S</td>
<td>Surface Warfare</td>
<td>Serve Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>CDR</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>N; NLEC</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>CNW</td>
<td>Surface Warfare</td>
<td>Serve Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>CDR</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>CNW</td>
<td>Surface Warfare</td>
<td>USNA; post college opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>CDR</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>CNW</td>
<td>Submariner</td>
<td>Interesting opportunity; do something bigger than a desk job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Explication of Participant’s Leadership Development Experiences

Participant Profiles

Participant 1 – Samantha: Scared SWO. The youngest officer in the study, Samantha had huge leadership struggles in her first few years of service and decided to seek an external life coach and therapist to work through issues she had had since childhood. Her negative peer-to-peer interactions with other Surface Warfare Officers (SWO) have tarnished her perception of that Navy community: “SWO’s eat their young.” Armed with a strong Jesuit undergraduate ethics and philosophical foundation, Samantha described herself as a servant leader who cares for her people. Her positive experience at the USNWC with caring instructors was juxtaposed against the negative command climate in the SWO community [self-serving leaders] and the anticipation of a follow-on course at the Surface Warfare Officer School that focused on teaching management, not leadership. Samantha has a Navy mentor, and he has helped to keep her positive and self-aware of her affirmative leadership traits, which will be useful as she advances in the Navy. She is conscious of being a sensitive female leading both genders; interested in evolutionary biology to better understand the gender differences.

Participant 2 – Ivan: Intense and serious JAG. The second Jesuit-educated participant, Ivan, went to law school after college in the Northeast. His desire to serve other people evolved over time. He had a family history of military service and strong patriotism, but seeing the Navy through the eyes of a girlfriend’s father who was stationed in San Diego “made it [serving in the Navy] real.” Ivan developed the habit of thinking about leadership in the Boy Scouts as a troop leader. He observed both good and bad leaders on his first assignment as a legal branch officer in the Navy, realizing that being a good leader required real effort and genuine interest, while bad leaders were often lazy; more interested in going shopping. This was
a time of self-discovery and reflection. A great boss on a carrier provided good leadership examples and helped him learn and grow. She eventually became a mentor and even shared her 360-degree feedback results with Ivan, spurring him to reflect on how he may be perceived. Describing the Navy’s leadership development programs as rigid, administrative, and overly-bureaucratic, Ivan offered that: “the Navy is not good at valuing reflection or genuine mentorship.” Ivan believes in taking care of your people and suggests that the Navy look at the ends (objectives), ways (courses of action) and means (methods by which ends can be attained) of leadership development.

**Participant 3 – Gleason: The Accidental Aviator.** With no money or grades for college, Gleason began his Navy career as an enlisted sailor with an interest in the Seabees, hoping to serve his country and see the world. The Navy aligned with his personality. After doing well on a nuclear power test, Gleason was picked up for ROTC and attended university in Colorado. Upon graduation, he knew he wanted to be an officer, and he became a Naval Aviator: helicopter pilot. Gleason attended petty officer school, basic officer school, and department head school; but most of this covered policy, procedures, and Navy communities. His development as a leader was formed by operational experience, especially in small teams where he was the Officer in Charge (OIC) and got to know all of his subordinates in a 30-member detachment operating helicopters on small ships. He drew his leadership style from experiences, sea stories, articles, and reports from operations. Interestingly, Gleason has taken the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) three times and found the feedback/debrief at the USNWC the most beneficial. He wished that he had come across the leadership case studies and techniques covered in the Theater Security Decision Making course earlier in his career. During his 17-year career he has had many bosses, both positive and negative; and had two mentors for
career advice. Gleason believes that ethics have been a constant underlying thread in daily life and it has improved as he has been promoted: “There are plenty of opportunities to build character; enhance ethical development.” He uses morals and ethics as foundations for decision-making. Interestingly, he disdains the Navy’s time-based approach to promotion and thinks: “compared to my peers, I’m not as intellectually strong; lots of bright individuals, they can walk into a situation and already understand it without getting those inputs from people. That’s not me.” Perhaps, as a result, Gleason described his style as a collaborative leader, one who seeks other’s opinions, and builds a trust relationship face-to-face.

**Participant 4 – Jake: Entrepreneurial Aviator.** Jake had a strong ROTC leadership background at a state college, the number two person in charge of 200 people, which was a big difference from his 50-person high school class. Jake initially served in the Air Force for six deployments moving fighters across the ocean and desert and back. He described this as a complex and demanding job. Jake said that personal and family goals led to the reserves, but his chance to get back into aviation was in the Naval reserves; so, he switched Services. His military service motivation was “to do something bigger than myself,” and his formative military leadership event (trigger event) was becoming an Air Force squadron instructor, which presented an opportunity to lead people and serve as a subject matter expert in planning missions. Jake said that during his 14-years of service he felt that “the military was a safe space to try leadership” and “most leadership development is direct mentorship of other sailors.” Earlier leadership courses were “more networking kind of thing; structured Power-Point slides with all communities.” He took the Self-Awareness for Leaders class at USNWC and believes all military officers should take it. Self-described as extroverted, intelligent, flexible, approachable and someone who likes experimentation, Jake has several business start-ups to his credit
including a technology company selling a device that helps pilot safety. He actively focuses on self-awareness, communications, and self-actualization in leadership development and applies learning to work situations; including being involved in other leadership studies at USNWC. His values helped him re-balance his civilian career and military service. He says, “you constantly have moral tests” and that “you should serve a higher purpose; do the right thing.”

**Participant 5: Savanna – Supply CO.** Savanna says she was groomed to be a commanding officer (CO), and has always pushed herself during her 16-years of service as a reserve officer. She selected the Naval Reserves because her husband was also in the Navy and it allowed her to always find a position near him; but also “play at active duty.” Savanna, who has deployed to Africa and Iraq and served in the Pentagon, has “observed both good and bad leaders and seen a lot of toxic leaders in the deployed environment.” Regarding her personal leadership development, she had no plan, but always challenged herself and took advantage of classes, on-the-job experiences, and deployments to develop herself as a leader. Her husband serves as her mentor, but she also sought feedback from superiors to help mentor subordinates. Self-described as a fair, open leader who likes to communicate and explain why, Savanna believes senior officers lead by example. Stating that “leadership is all about character,” she feels that “if you follow the Navy core values you don’t get into trouble, don’t become a toxic leader.” Believing that the Navy and Supply Corps lacks ethical doctrine and standards, Savanna suggested that it is right to focus on ethics, Joint Professional Military Education, and professional development as war winds down: “treating all sailors with respect.” She suggested that the Navy needs to do more on leadership and ethics: “It is too late in deployment to learn this.”
Participant 6: Steve – Medical Service Manager. Steve was attracted by the “whole meal ticket” of military service, including the structure of the Navy, the wide appeal of being an officer, and traveling the world. Additionally, the Navy offered a career in his field which reduced the stress of getting a job upon graduation. Steve, is a self-described introvert who was shocked at receiving lack of eye contact feedback in his command climate survey results during his shore command. He believes that “the Navy does not create leaders; [they] throw a bunch of people out, give them tools to become better managers; the ones who are naturally inclined to be good managers, [the] ones that interact positively, the good leaders float to the top…There are plenty of bad leaders. Just because you are a senior officer does not mean you are a good leader.” Steve felt that we throw the leadership term around too much; good leaders are charismatic and born that way. He considers himself a good manager, not a charismatic leader.

Participant 7: Cheng – Patriotic, Grizzly SWO Navigator. Cheng wanted to learn the art of sailing ships since he was an adolescent; to be an officer and to serve his country following the course of his father, uncle, and grandfather. ROTC training in college helped establish his leadership framework, but the Damage Control Assistant School in Norfolk, VA best prepared him for leadership aboard ship. It gave him the competence framework, knowledge base, and authoritative resources to “know what right looks like” and the confidence to lead others with more experience afloat. Earlier, as a division officer, “there was [sic] a lot of times that [we] were fumbling around in the dark with a dim flashlight.” Most of Cheng’s leadership development has been on-the-job experiences observing and emulating good leaders while avoiding replication of the actions of bad leaders. He survived a “caustic” work environment with the aid of a senior officer who became his mentor. Stating that “the Navy, as a system,
doesn’t put a whole lot of thought or effort into matching talent for task,” Cheng feels many of today’s younger sailors join the Navy for the wrong reasons; they are in it for themselves.

**Participant 8: Sam – Shipdriving SWO.** A U.S. Merchant Marine Academy graduate, Sam has sea expertise from his undergraduate background and leadership foundations from his Eagle Scout position and undergraduate ethics committee work. Sam joined the Navy; motivated by a service to the country perspective. Taking JPME I and his MBA at the Naval Postgraduate School, Sam has pre-commissioned several Navy ships, including overseeing 60–70 people on the USS New York. His unique background led Sam to be tapped as an instructor at the Navy Leadership and Ethics Center (NLEC) before attending the Senior Level Course at the USNWC, which included being selected for the Advanced Strategists Program. As such, he has a very mature and complex perspective on learning, personal leadership and ethics development (MBTI, Hogan, 360 debriefer at NLEC for all Navy communities), and teaching leadership and ethics to sailors. Sam is very interested in giving effective feedback and spurring reflection.

**Participant 9: Mike-Academy Athlete.** A U.S. Naval Academy graduate with a major in mechanical engineering, Mike has been in the Navy for 16-years. His leadership development was formed initially by his athletic experiences as a lacrosse player; especially being personally accountable as a teammate. On-the-job experiences being an SWO, taking personal responsibility to lead, reading history, observing good/bad leaders, and regular courses were all part of Mike’s leadership development journey. He was an instructor at Surface Warfare Officer School and took the Operational Leadership and Moral Foundations of Leadership courses at USNWC. Self-described as always being self-aware, Mike has built a habit of journaling and reflection.
Participant 10: John – Laid-Back Servant Leader. Motivated to serve something bigger than himself, John’s initial 5-year Navy plan turned into 17 and counting. A submariner whose personal goals aligned with the Navy, John said his hands-on experiences observing others were key leader development experiences; although the pre-executive officer course at NLEC was helpful as were the 360 feedback sessions, and his mentor’s suggestions and good leadership behavior. Self-described as a laid-back, John was heavily influenced by the “Leaders Eat Last” book and has embraced the philosophy of being a servant leader. John believes in living and behaving in accordance with your values and morals, including the Navy’s core values, and in sharing them. He recognized that the Navy’s bureaucratic culture is sometimes not conducive for ethical character development and that some sailors’ personal values take precedence over the Navy’s goals.

Preliminary Analysis

Etic and Emic Coding

Coding for this study was both etic and emic in nature. Etic codes were prepared a priori; drawn from the authentic leadership literature and Navy documents. Additionally, analysis also produced emic codes, which evolved from the inductive examination of the perspectives presented by participants. Interview transcripts were examined multiple times to ensure the researcher captured the voice of individual study participants as they described their development as a Navy leader.

Coding Interviews

Table 4.2 depicts the results of the officer interviews with the 16 primary codes. As presented earlier in the Study Data Inventory (Figure 3.2), sources include interview transcripts approved by the participant, interview field notes, and contact summary sheets for all
participants (three sources for each of the ten participants). The largest number of interview
codes (NVivo refers to them as nodes) were classified into the generic leadership development
code, followed by internalized moral (ethical) perspective/authentic moral behavior, self-
awareness, and Navy leadership approaches/classes (Table 4.2). The authentic leadership (AL)
codes came from the literature (Gardner et al., 2005), the leadership development (LD) methods
from Navy guiding documents (NLDF, 2017), but the emic codes were generated primarily by
employing in-vivo coding and process coding (Appendix B). Appendix C depicts NVivo nodes
compared to the number of coding references in a hierarchy chart for the interviews.

Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Code Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>The degree the leader is aware of his or her strengths, limitations, how others see him or her, and how the leader impacts others</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Relational Transparency</td>
<td>The degree the leader reinforces a level of openness with others that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges, and opinions</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Balanced Processing</td>
<td>The degree the leader solicits sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Authentic Moral Behavior/Internalized Moral Perspective</td>
<td>Part of self-regulation, the degree the leader internalizes a high standard for moral and ethical conduct and behaves in a way consistent with those standards. May include Navy core values, other personal values; participant descriptions of caring for your people, mentions of command, or competence, or character.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Leadership Development (LD)</td>
<td>Descriptions of general leadership development efforts within the Navy; also includes one of the three articulated Navy methods on-the-job experience, formal schooling and self-guided learning and feedback and communication processes.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Motivation to Join Navy</td>
<td>Descriptions of why participant joined the Navy.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>Participant describes a mentor/mentee relationship in the Navy.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>Code Count</td>
</tr>
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<td>----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>External to Navy</td>
<td>Descriptions/efforts at leadership development done external to those within the Navy.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Female Leadership</td>
<td>Participant descriptions/Issues related specifically to being a female leader in the Navy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Concerns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Navy Leadership</td>
<td>Descriptions of curricular content, method of instruction at a school or course taken in the Navy or, more generally, the way “Big Navy” does something related to education.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Approaches/Classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Critical Thinking,</td>
<td>Participant describes decision-making approach, plan or method in the context of command, leadership, mentoring or performing duties.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis, Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Participant descriptions of reflective behavior, typically in understanding an experience</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Positive Leadership</td>
<td>Participant talks about examples of good Navy leaders, their behaviors and actions.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Examples/Experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Negative/Toxic</td>
<td>Participant describes examples of negative or toxic leadership in the Navy.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Positive and Negative</td>
<td>Participant talks about examples of good leaders and bad Navy leaders; generally, in the same phrase.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Negative Moral/Ethical</td>
<td>Participant alludes to an instance where a leader, subordinate, or the culture did not align with his/her own or Navy’s ethical standards.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Behavior/Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Coding Documents**

Table 4.3 depicts the same codes employed during the interviews but uses the Navy’s guiding leadership documents and College assessment reports for the data. Results for the documents show both similarities and differences. The largest number of interview codes in the documents fell into the generic leadership development code, followed by internalized moral (ethical) perspective/authentic moral behavior; which mirrored the interviews. However, as might be expected from official published guidance, the next two most popular codes pulled from Navy documents focused on critical thinking, analysis and planning; and examples of
positive leadership. Particularly absent from the documents were mentions of self-awareness, reflection, and negative/toxic leadership experiences, among others.

Table 4.3

*Codes for Documents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>The degree the leader is aware of his or her strengths, limitations, how others see him or her, and how the leader impacts others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Relational Transparency</td>
<td>The degree the leader reinforces a level of openness with others that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges, and opinions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Balanced Processing</td>
<td>The degree the leader solicits sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Authentic Moral Behavior/Internalized Moral Perspective</td>
<td>Part of self-regulation, the degree the leader internalizes a high standard for moral and ethical conduct and behaves in a way consistent with those standards. May include Navy core values, other personal values; participant descriptions of caring for your people, mentions of command, or competence, or character.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Leadership Development (LD)</td>
<td>Descriptions of general leadership development efforts within the Navy; also includes one of the three articulated Navy methods on-the-job experience, formal schooling and self-guided learning and feedback and communication processes.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Motivation to Join Navy</td>
<td>Descriptions of why participant joined the Navy.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>Participant describes a mentor/mentee relationship in the Navy.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>External to Navy LD</td>
<td>Descriptions/efforts at leadership development done external to those within the Navy.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Female Leadership Concerns</td>
<td>Participant descriptions/issues related specifically to being a female leader in the Navy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Navy Leadership Approaches/Classes</td>
<td>Descriptions of curricular content, method of instruction at a school or course taken in the Navy or, more generally, the way “Big Navy” does something related to education.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Critical Thinking, Analysis, Planning</td>
<td>Participant describes decision-making approach, plan or method in the context of command, leadership, mentoring or performing duties.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Participant descriptions of reflective behavior, typically in understanding an experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Positive Leadership Examples/Experiences</td>
<td>Participant talks about examples of good Navy leaders, their behaviors and actions.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Single case studies examine divergence in the data via in-case comparisons. A deeper dive into the two most popular primary codes appears in Figure 4.2 with the respective number of mentions and percentage. Looking at the results for interviews by the Navy’s articulated leadership development methods and other codes shows that formal schooling was mentioned most during the interviews; on-the-job training and experience was second, and feedback and communication within the leadership development process was third. Feedback and communication was mentioned more than self-guided learning, the third Navy leadership development method. In document coding, generic leadership development was mentioned most often, followed by formal schooling. In both cases, as was noted in the limitations section, formal schooling may be overemphasized due to the case study site and context at the USNWC, and/or the Navy’s desire to emphasize schooling in its leadership development publications. This latter possibility runs counter to the Navy’s cultural practice of preferring fleet-centered learning while onboard ships.
A deeper analysis of the second most popular code, internalized moral (ethical) perspective/authentic moral behavior appears in Figure 4.3 with the respective number of mentions and percentage. It shows the preponderance of generic authentic behavior and Navy core values mentioned during the interviews; which amounted to half of the assigned sub-codes. This differs somewhat from the documents’ focus on command and competence; although both generic authentic behavior and Navy core values codes also rank high.

Figure 4.2. Leadership Development Coding Comparison.
Emergent Concepts and Categories

Analysis of the data uncovered fifteen themes grouped under two categories: 1) leadership development experiences, supported by eight themes; and 2) leadership developmental processes and practices, with seven themes (Table 4.4). Study themes are listed under the categories and prioritized by the number of coding mentions. While Merriam and Tisdell (2016) say categories should be mutually exclusive, Saldaña (2013) subscribes to Graneheim and Lundman (2003) and Dey’s (1999) contention that categories, when dealing with experiences, don’t have clear-cut boundaries. For example, when participants’ observed other leaders it was during a specific leadership development experience, so the theme seemed to belong to the experience classification. However, participants were also engaged in both a practice and a process (observing). Since many practices were linked to process, the former
often involved the latter, they were combined in this study as one category. Similarly, Graneheim and Lundman (2003) suggest themes are “threads of an underlining meaning” on an interpretive level that are “not necessarily mutually exclusive” (p. 107). A leader who exhibited internalized moral perspective/authentic moral behavior could also cut across the theme of creating a positive leadership experience. The mind map in Appendix G attempts to show this complexity.

Table 4.4

**Study Categories and Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Development Experiences</th>
<th>Leadership Development Processes and Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Navy experiences</td>
<td>Internalized moral perspective/Authentic moral behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Navy leadership classes</td>
<td>Self-awareness is foundational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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These categories and themes are explicated in more detail in the following section, which incorporates participants’ views and quotes, providing a thick and rich description of their perspectives. This chapter also presents the results of the document reviews.

**Leadership Developmental Experiences**

**Early Navy experiences.** Every participant mentioned initial duties in the Navy (or military) when covering important leadership development experiences, programs, or assignments. Not all were trigger events, but often simply day-to-day experiences. Frequently, the Navy’s decentralized operations separated supervisors and subordinates, forcing young officers to acquire and exercise leadership skills early on as Gleason discusses:
[I was] OIC – officer in charge of helicopters, I saw most of my leadership development was through experiences. The Navy has small units; officers multi-task and do collateral duties. I gained most of my leadership development through these experiences; helo [helicopter] community, 30-member detachments and collateral duty, you became an expert on the subject of your collateral duty. I was OIC twice in five detachments. I can’t narrow down leadership development to a single experience. But the small teams allowed me to practice [my] leadership styles in a small group. Mistakes make less of an impact here than if you are in charge of a larger group. We were decentralized; away from the bosses. [We] had the freedom and flexibility to practice. I got to know every single person under my command.

Mike, the athlete from the USNA, became a surface warfare officer (SWO), and said he was put in charge of a small group of sailors on his first ship and had to figure things out:

I was told, ‘You're in charge of these 15 people and you have to figure out what their contribution is to the ship's mission.’ It was an easy transition for me, and I was able to take that individual to larger unit athletic background and achieve early success in terms of connecting with my division, as well as making sure that my division were doing all the things that they were supposed to do to be successful.

Similarly, Ivan found time for self-discovery and reflection when he was assigned to his first JAG branch office where he was disconnected from his superiors. He mentioned the uncertainty and anxiety present in the branch office and that subordinates were looking to him to fill in the leadership gap between the branch office and headquarters.

Not every participant found early Navy assignments helpful in developing their leadership capacity. Samantha, the scared SWO, said: “I had to get a life coach and therapist to help me my first few years.” Poor peer-to-peer relationships with other SWO officers and a negative command climate forced her to seek leadership help outside the military environment. Chang differentiates early blunders at leading during his first division officer tour, where “there were a lot of times that I was fumbling around in the dark with a dim flashlight, it felt like,” compared to what he considered to be his most developmental experience at the Damage Control Assistant (DCA) School. At DCA School, he stated: “I felt the Navy finally provided me with
all the tools required to lead because I had the depth of knowledge required of that position” 
[damage control assistant during his second tour as division officer].

**Early Navy leadership classes.** The officer leader development path depicted in the Navy framework (Appendix A) shows that formal classes are interspersed between key assignments during a career path that can span over 28 years. When participants described the Navy methods of leadership development, formal schooling and self-guided learning clearly took a back seat to on-the-job experiences in importance. Moreover, the vast majority of participants described the experience in formal Navy leadership development classes taken prior to the War College as too managerial, rigid, over-bureaucratic, not personalized, and often coming too late in their careers. Samantha explained:

I was disheartened in the Navy leadership approach after commissioning. It was weak. Check in the box mentality … There was more leadership development in the advanced division officer’s course in SWO…They tried CD-ROMs, it did not work …. Navy leaders focus on management, not on the humans they are leading.

Similarly, Gleason could not cite an effective early leadership development class:

I don’t recall whether the petty officer leadership development course/labs had much. Basic officer course, we did not get too much leadership. [The] Department head course was pretty good lots of administration, not much leadership. OIC – officer in charge of helicopters, I saw most of my leadership development was through experiences.

Steve thought his division head school had some official structured leadership training; the “Command Leadership School was more know subordinates and rules and regulations; the programs or tools for morale…CO [commanding officer] school seems to be the most leadership training and development.” Ivan suggested that the Navy’s leadership development programs “tend to be overly rigid; not natural, focused on the administrative side of it: over-bureaucratized.” Meanwhile, Chang had high praise for a formal class in Norfolk, VA - DCA School, or the Damage Control Assistant School:
It really prepared me for the job. When I walked onboard the ship as a second tour division officer, I had the knowledge to go back to sea and fill the role of the DCA….I felt the Navy finally provided me with all the tools required to lead because I had the depth of knowledge required of that position. [It] certainly, it gave you the knowledge base…the structure there, that provides the framework for everything else, but by knowing really what your go to publications are, where to find the answer when you don't know the answer, and what right looks like and from an authority, from a schoolhouse, not a chief, not a petty officer, but an actual, subject matter authority.

John, reinforced most participants’ opinions, relating that his early Navy leadership education classes had a negligible impact on his leadership development; but his CO-XO (commanding officer – executive officer) course, later on, was beneficial:

[The] education was minor, so I thought about it, the junior officer’s tour where, I think, from all those years ... Basically, that was more hands-on experience. There was some [leadership] training prior to, in the pipeline, but I didn't find that very helpful, it's more looking at the other officers [in the command] and how they approached leadership – what’s effective and not effective to help me develop over that period. And then kind of the same as a department head. There's some leadership training in the pipeline right before you get there, but for whatever reason wasn't as helpful…i thought the CO - XO leadership course, I thought the Navy Leadership and Ethics Center (NLEC) was very helpful, just the way they used the whole curriculum. So, that kind of prepared me for going back to tour at that point, the formal schooling helped working with the CO, what he did, what his philosophy of leadership was; who he was and how he approached things was helpful and brought a lot of perspective.

Ivan felt that the formal Navy programs were likely wasteful as they came too late:

Picking up 04 and going a week in Navy Leadership and Ethics Center (NLEC) we were talking about stuff I covered as a Boy Scout when I was 10-years old; and any officer should have known from 01. I think the knowledge [education] about leadership in the Navy comes too late. Someone made a comment in semester this morning about how they wish they knew this nine years ago.

Observing other leaders. Virtually every participant had an anecdote about their observation of other Navy leaders; both good and bad ones. Observing how other Navy leaders behave in myriad situations on a day in and day out bases caused individuals to begin a process of critical thinking, self-awareness, and reflection; all phases of the leadership learning process.

This was part of the progression followers went through in their relationship with leaders.
Additionally, conversations with peers, supervisors, and mentors can assist in dissecting leadership behavior and crafting a way forward based on the experience; negative or positive.

Ivan discusses his observations:

I came to realize good intrusive leadership vice [versus] bad absent leadership. I saw that good leaders had to extend effort, be sincere, and be diligent to be a good leader. I had role models; both good and bad leaders. I began to understand that I could impact other people in my office. I identified things to watch out for. I saw good and bad examples of leaders at various levels. The bad leaders rarely came. In Afghanistan, I had a good XO [executive officer]. He only talked about ‘what is going on with you? What do your people want? What do your people want to do? How do we get them there? Here is what I’m working on.’ It was a very stark different approach. Upon reflection of these leaders, I could use more of what to avoid doing in that situation in the future.

Savanna related a similar experience explaining that she has “observed good and poor leaders and learned more from the bad. The Navy has many toxic leaders. You have to lead by example.” Sam described a personally challenging leadership failure situation when he was a young officer watching senior officers, where both the commanding officer and his executive officer were fired:

It was really a challenge from the standpoint of trying, did they lose their sight of what the end state was and what they had to accomplish? A lot of that was a lack of balance between the executive officer and the commanding officer that was a struggle. In fact, that commanding officer, part of the reason it was much more personal related than professional related; his wife, unfortunately, was an alcoholic. They had just a newborn child, and he didn't feel comfortable leaving her at home with the child, and that really strained him to the point where he wasn't as effective a commanding officer, and that's an important lesson for me as I continue to go back to command.

John described a key leadership take-away during his second department head tour as:

Not a very positive experience, only because of my two commanding officers. So, I kind of look at them and the way that their subordinates reacted to their leadership style that affected me. Cemented some of the views I had and changed some of the other views that I had. And maybe my approach has been more people-oriented than it might have been in the past. But I think that was the big one for me, kind of those negative experiences I had as a department head with the COs [commanding officers].
Cheng illustrates the observation, discussion, reflection and analysis with his “informal” mentor of a toxic leadership experience they both encountered. He focused on the post-event analysis and learning process rather than the negative environment itself:

In the command that we were at, it was a very, I'd say, caustic work environment. During that time, he [mentor] definitely was the umbrella [protection] for the shit storm for his officers under him…I think we talked a lot about that tour over the years, and dissected it and broke it down and all the leadership failures. I think in that way, certainly, there’s been some kind of [post-event analysis regarding] what was the moral or ethical way to go about that, or that situation, just in rehearsing some of those old sea stories.

Here, both Cheng and his mentor were in the role of follower observing and experiencing a toxic (possibly inauthentic) leader and the negative environment created for all those under his/her sphere of influence. Cheng’s mentor, however, was also being an authentic leader by protecting his officers from the “caustic environment” and engaging in relational transparency and balanced processing in discussing a moral approach to the leadership failure of the individual in command. In doing this, he was promoting authentic followership.

Sam discussed his efforts to help “rehabilitate” a sailor assigned to his command after a toxic leadership experience elsewhere:

It took a lot of coaching and development not only by myself but also by my executive officer to get this individual kind of right…Luckily, he had gone to another command, a commander that I respected as well that I was able to reach back to and ask a couple things about: ‘Hey, this individual is coming to our command. What should we do? In what ways does this individual excel?’ We challenged this individual by giving him [the] position [of] senior watch officer that he probably would not have had the opportunity to do. That was one of the things that to get that level of engagement, we had to almost put it on steroids and really push him past his level of comfort, which in the end did great things for the command, did great things for him, and we were able to accomplish a lot. It took a little bit of risk.

Examples of good leaders were also mentioned by interview participants, although as noted in the coding tables, not quite as often as negative examples. This is Ivan’s portrayal of a good leader and her leadership approach to him. She eventually became his mentor:
I had a good boss on an aircraft carrier, where our desks nearly touched. She was a great boss. Showed me the good side of leadership. The good qualities I had. She set the example. [She] was concerned for me, who I was, my abilities, opportunities [to grow], she helped me get there. Prepared me as a division officer. She is now my mentor. I use lessons she taught me; things she did as a leader. It started as a supervisor-subordinate relationship and grew into a mentor-mentee role. It sort of naturally resulted in a relationship that I still leverage and learn from today.

Recalling that the key outcomes of an authentic leader-follower relationship are building faith, involvement, and happiness, Ivan’s description of his mentor indicates that she is definitely an authentic leader and he is likely an authentic follower.

**Bad/toxic Navy leaders.** Savanna, Sam, Mike, Ivan, John, Cheng, and Samantha all cited developmental experiences where they observed and/or interacted with bad leaders that had a negative impact on daily operations, the ethical/moral command climate, or both. Savanna stated that she “observed good and poor leaders and learned more from the bad. The Navy has many toxic leaders. You have to lead by example … I’ve experienced very toxic leaders, especially in the deployed environment. I try not to take it personally. I care about my people.” Steve suggested that “there are plenty of people that are in positions of leading other people that are not good leaders. Having a leadership position does not mean you’re a good leader…. Just because you're a senior officer does not mean you're a good leader.”

Sam, the NLEC instructor, relayed what he thought was a “lack of balance” between his executive officer and commanding officer during an early tour in his career. The situation was exacerbated by the CO’s marital problems and eventually led to the firing of both officers. This challenging situation with his superiors caused him to say “That was probably one of the greater leadership challenges for me in understanding how our senior individuals, one, developing others, developing themselves, or have they plateaued at some point? Are they just stagnant in
where they are?” In a second tour as the executive officer on a counter-measure crew, Sam encountered another challenging situation with a commanding officer:

His ethical underpinnings weren’t quite the same as me as well, so that provides some challenges. Yeah, and how he would report things off and on. I looked at that as a challenge and tried to find the right way to re-insert that kind of accountability for him. I had to, basically, one of the things I reflected on from that 15 months was could I have presented a little bit more that we were in it together? That our success was tethered? …I think I left that one with a little bit of meat on the bones still and was something I had to resolve after I had come out of command and he had come out of command as well to really develop that professional relationship back.

Mike, the athletic SWO, relayed a story about “subpar” department heads who were “struggling with their day job which resulted in poor leadership characteristics.” John, the submariner, recounted the impact poor leadership had on him and his colleagues:

My second tour was not a very positive experience, only because of my two commanding officers. So, I kind of look at them and the way that their subordinates reacted to their leadership style that affected me. Cemented some of the views I had and changed some of the other views that I had. And maybe my approach has been more people oriented than it might have been in the past. But I think that was the big one for me, kind of those negative experiences I had as a department head with the COs.

Similarly, Cheng and his supervisor/mentor suffered through a “caustic work environment” at a command and his supervisor “during that time, he definitely was the umbrella for the shit storm for his officers under him.” Savanna equated a larger insular Navy leadership culture with the bad leadership behavior and unethical decisions related to a recent scandal:

Fat Leonard - 60 admirals [and] 480 active duty sailors [are] involved. [The] problem is [that the] culture has not changed; just layered in more rules. Bureaucratic instead of a noble change within [the] community. Senior leaders had to know about [the] ethical violations. Small ethical violations lead to big ones down the road…. There are cascading ethical problems. It is BS that senior leaders punish adultery. What about the UCMJ [Uniform Code of Military Justice]? If they are scheming on a spouse; where else are they scheming? They are not setting a good example; sailors know everything.

Cheng also weighed in on the overall command or community environmental context:

My thoughts on this was that the environment, it has to be conducive to fostering good leadership and you need to know what right looks like and what the written right versus
the reality right sometimes are different things. That's because the environment is ... It gets back to maintenance, so if your ships are always in a maintenance phase, then ... Things are not normal in a maintenance phase .... That's a scary thing, and so, I think that what can happen to our leadership or what has happened to our leadership in some cases, is that we've gotten into making so many workarounds that everyone forgets what right looks like ... They haven't seen what right looks like in a long time.

In these situations where participants in their role as followers encountered toxic, poor, or inauthentic leaders, they clearly indicated that they did not follow the bad leadership example; instead, they used it as something to avoid rather than to emulate (low identification). While none of the participants described a situation where a follower embraced the behavior of a poor, toxic, or inauthentic leader, the recent Navy “Fat Leonard” bribery scandal, which involved hundreds of sailors, is certainly one example of this negative outcome.

**Positive leadership experiences.** Participants also related examples of positive leadership experiences and/or behaviors that impacted their leadership development. As shown in the coding table above, however, positive examples were mentioned fewer times than negative ones, especially when considering that negative leadership behavior usually had a deleterious effect on the ethical or moral climate in the command. Occasionally participants mentioned the positive within the context of describing a negative situation; or some simply stated they learned from both good and bad leaders such as Ivan, Gleason, Savanna, Mike, and Sam. In cases where participants encountered positive examples of leadership in their role as follower, they would operationalize the authentic followership side of the authentic leadership model which also involves self-awareness and self-regulation; and produces positive follower outcomes (more faith, involvement, and happiness). These good (authentic) Navy leaders served as role models for followers to emulate.
In Afghanistan, Ivan said he had a good experience with his executive officer. “He only talked about what is going on with you? What do your people want? What do your people want to do? How do we get them there? Here is what I’m working on. It was a very stark different approach” [than the bad leaders]. Later, Ivan also had another good boss on an aircraft carrier who became his mentor. “She was a great boss. Showed me the good side of leadership. The good qualities I had. She set the example. Was concerned for me; who I was, my abilities, opportunities, she helped me get there. Prepared me as a division officer. She is now my mentor.” Likewise, Mike recalled that he:

Had extremely, extremely good examples of leadership in the senior division officers who were stepping up and filling the gaps that these individuals [department head mid-level leaders] were making. And a lot of those people who showed me how to do it correctly, and showed me that you can do it correctly, are still a couple years ahead of me, still serving as pretty good role models, pretty good examples of how to do everything the right way.

Sam’s leadership journey began with scouting but continued at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy where he:

Learned [the] competency of the sea, which actually correlated with a lot of leadership virtues and leadership components that I had learned earlier. That kind of carried. I served in a number of different regimental components at the Merchant Marine Academy. I had a ton of leadership conferences, so I was a part of the ethics committee there. I was a part of the Stephenson Leadership Conference, All Service Leadership Conference.

Jake, the entrepreneur aviator, said his military leadership experience was in small squadrons where he provided mentorship via interacting with sailors. He described “my leadership experience in the military was kind of a safe space; we used other’s resources and established processes.” Samantha, who went outside the Navy for leadership development help, also had a retired Navy officer who served as her mentor.
[He] showed me how that the things I was doing for morale events and volunteering with international sailors [teaching English] was vital when I’m more senior, older. He showed me how I could use my leadership style. I felt less alone. I thought something was wrong with me. I feel taking care of your people should be number one.

Mike says he has “stayed in touch with a couple officers and I definitely have officers that I would model behavior and leadership qualities after, and certainly people that I have learned from.”

**Early leadership foundations.** Participants stated that they often recalled leadership-related situations in adolescence or early adulthood (trigger events) prior to joining the Navy that resonated with them and helped to build a foundation for later leadership learning. Authentic leadership theorists call these trigger events. For example, Jake recalls undergraduate experiences in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC): “At [state college], I was the number two person in charge of a ROTC detachment of about 200 people. It was good to see how a big organization works. I developed my leadership skills [there].” Three other participants—Gleason, Cheng, and Samantha—also attended ROTC as undergraduate students; principally as a way to help with college expenses. Cheng recalls ROTC courses as being formative to his leadership development:

I think that you cannot discount the ROTC training process. Although I will say that the leadership course or the ethics course that was taught as the capstone, I don't think I got a whole lot out of that, but the whole experience, the whole teaching of regiment, discipline, taking on more than the rest of your peers with the addition of your ROTC responsibilities, I believe that that was very important to establishing that framework going on.

Other participants recalled even earlier experiences such as Sam who mentions his scouting background:

I'll take you one back even further than that. I was an Eagle Scout and a Boy Scout. I'll tell you, probably some of the best pure leadership that I learned was during those earlier periods up to about 16 or 17 years old. I spent a lot of time with youth in that capacity.
Used to work at a summer camp for Cub Scouts in Baltimore, Maryland, so I had a lot of personal interaction of establishing a lot of people's comfort with the wilderness and those other elements. Also, picking up and developing them as individuals and developing confidence. I think that's the biggest thing that I learned.

It is interesting that Sam equates leadership with developing others, not necessarily his own development. Ivan also referred to his scouting background as a troop leader as being foundational. Mike, the lacrosse player at the U.S. Naval Academy, said that his sports background formed his leadership foundation:

My athletic background certainly had a big part understanding your role as a team member and your accountability to your peers, and how if you don't do the task assigned to you, the whole team breaks down. That was a huge part. As well as the personal accountability that develops into team accountability and team success… I was definitely a leader on the defense, and we played very much a team style of defense, so to minimize individual skills and talents and maximize how we played as a unit; that definitely carried over.

**Female Leadership Approaches and Concerns.** A common theme among the two female officers who participated in the study was the difficulty of being a female officer in the military. Savanna said that she initially thought that leading females would be easier than men, but she discovered through experience that she had to account for the emotions of the female sailors in her charge:

Leading females I thought would be easy... a guy is a lot easier; lot of stuff females go through [a] female is more sensitive to emotion. Females, some were the hardest working because [they want to feel] that proud, that encouragement. E3 guys [are] more immature than females. On-the-job experience was the best leadership training for me; learning how to deal with emotions and stuff, being more sensitive so I can understand. Even as a sensitive female [when at work] I’m in business mode. You don’t realize how you come off.

Samantha, on the other hand, used self-regulation, exercise, and some well-timed procrastination to account for her own emotions when trying to make better decisions as a commanding officer. She felt that women can be successful Navy leaders, but saw “a lack of opportunity for women in the military. [There are] no female mentors or female leaders. This is
a problem for recruiting strong females. There is a lack of female role models. Females are exiting the Service, not staying.”

**USNWC leadership classes.** While early Navy leadership classes were generally unsuccessful in developing leadership skills in officers, the USNWC leadership sub-course, core courses, and leadership electives received much more favorable mentions from participants. Recall that three officers took elective classes from the leadership elective track such as Self-Awareness for Leaders and/or Moral Decision Making and a fourth taught at the Naval Leadership and Ethics Center. In reflecting on his leadership development in the Navy, Gleason said: “I wish I would have had the leadership techniques and case studies in TSDM [Theater Security Decision Making class at USNWC] before I was an OIC or department head.” Jake highlighted learning from his Self-Awareness for Leaders elective class at USNWC, which helped him identify his need for self-actualization; and the wish “to serve a higher purpose.” He said:

First thing you do if you’re going to lead others, is that you have to know yourself better. I typed strongly as an extrovert. Really like interacting in personal communication; may not be a preferred approach for others. Understanding how others perceive me was a hard thing to do; something that went a long way towards developing my leadership. You can retroactively look at situations or people you’ve dealt with [for analysis]. I’ve taken Leadership Strategies [class] and will use it to build teams [in my civilian job].

Jake, the entrepreneurial aviator in the Naval reserves, continued to work on his leadership development at the USNWC by participating in a cognitive complexity study conducted by the College of Leadership and Ethics. Samantha said: “I loved the ethics program at USNWC. First, identify ethical problems. More awareness; understand [the] ethical dilemmas people go through.” Mike, who taught leadership at the Surface Warfare Officer’s School (SWOS), also liked the USNWC leadership and ethics program:
I happen to enjoy the leadership course here, that I know some of my classmates thought that it didn't fit, that it felt shoehorned in and didn't really understand what we were talking about. But then again, I had gone through enough self-guided study, where I was able to use the formal leadership instruction as self-guided study. At that point for me, it was dove-tailing ... I was familiar with Navy leadership and ethics course[s], how they approach teaching leadership, so I enjoyed it.

Steve, the Medical Service manager, took the opposite perspective: no amount of education, training or self-guided reading can produce a leader. He believes that good leaders are born with charisma and imbued with natural talents and they “percolate to the top.” Moreover, he suggested that the Navy’s pedagogical approach to leadership is all wrong.

Things that we do in career progression that we call leadership, is [not] leadership…. Reading a good leadership book does not make one a good leader; nor does attending a class … [The] Navy doesn’t provide the opportunity to acquire the proven skills for leadership or people management. [The] Army’s approach to teaching leadership skills - practical application [is better]. If you can't present yourself well, you come off as looking nervous or like you're not confident in yourself, that right there creates an impression of whether you're a good leader or not. Proper leadership training in practical presentation skills would have saved me pain; made it easier to engender trust and show my level of competence.

Steve acknowledged, however, that classes, readings, and on-the-job experiences could help someone become a better leader or “have some leadership transition to it;” but it seems he has difficulty making the connection unless it is very explicit or applied. In a related situation, Mike, our SWOS leadership instructor, struggled with bridging the education–experience gap in a sailor’s background:

I saw how hard it was both to teach prior to experience, leadership prior to experience, ethics prior to experience, morals prior to experience, but as well as how it's an individual journey, in my mind. That led me to pursue personal development, which is then what led me to choose the electives that I took here that I would deem under the formal education [heading]. However, I sought them out as a way to enhance my personal development. Then that has led me to read, read, read, think, journaling to create the habit of reflection has sprung from that. I think that's something that can be lost, you can read a whole lot of books and get a whole lot of nothing out of it, even if you're underlining it and you're forgetting it.
Leadership Developmental Processes and Practices

**Internalized moral perspective/Authentic moral behavior.** Participants generally alluded to their own high moral standards of behavior; described the Navy core values of honor, courage, and commitment; or other personal values such as caring for your people, having a strong character and/or being competent for, and in, command situations. Steve, the medical service manager, said that developing a strong moral character is a “huge component” of his actions and decisions as a leader, “If anything, the ethics, the qualities of ethical behavior and expectations of performance, that's something that's pounded into us in the very beginning. Obviously, we still have problems. We have senior officers that have lapses in what we would say would be ethical behaviors, but I don't think there's a problem.” He goes on to describe how he incorporates ethical perspectives in his discussions with subordinates:

> Discussion of ethics and core values of Navy: Yeah. It certainly is you're in charge of other military personnel. That's a constant drumbeat theme of discussion is what is appropriate behavior? What can you do? What should you do as a representative of the United States government? Mentoring/training subordinates on possible ethical issues or scenarios. Or here. This is what happened in this case. You need to make sure you're not doing this. That's conscience. That's mentoring, I guess. That's starting to keep people out of trouble and help train them on what the expectation is now.

Clearly, Steve is engaging in authentic followership development when he communicates appropriate ethical behavior to the sailors under his command.

The Navy core values resonate for John. To him, being a good role model and behaving in a moral and ethical manner is imperative, “the most important part of any value is, and you can talk about values all they want, but people are going to observe what you do and how your actions align with those values, and your actions are going to be more important. So, I kind of think my actions [should be designed] to align with those kind of values. I think it's more important to display it than to talk about it.” Gleason, the accidental aviator, related that
“moral/ethical character development is a constant thread to pretty much all I’ve done since I’ve been commissioned.” In describing his approach to internalizing the Navy’s tenets he says, “Navy core values are always there like my personality or internal beliefs. I have standard phrases I use a lot: Always know your strengths and weaknesses; keep your strengths strong and constantly improve your weaknesses. Keep your options open.”

Savanna stated that: “Leadership is all about character; Navy core values. If you follow those values, you’ll be a successful leader in the Navy. Some lose focus and that’s why they fail or become toxic leaders. I focus on/talk about values.” She suggested that the current Navy attention on joint professional military education and ethical character development is the proper path:

There has [sic] been so many problems over the years, going back to the basics and expressing it is important to have those values. You have to focus yourself if you want to be a leader and that’s through professional development. We need to revisit professionalism; treating all sailors with respect. The whole concept with women in leadership positions; I think it is all coming together. The Navy is now trying to do more on leadership and ethics, due to issues with professionalism, lack of education, [a] lack of doctrine. Other Services have more doctrine.

For Jake, his moral and ethical character influences his Navy leadership decisions:

Yes absolutely. My favorite elective in undergrad was my philosophy class. Everyone should consider ethics; especially given our profession. I like the differing opinions here [at USNWC]; in active duty everything is stovepiped. Ethics and morality are things I think about every day. It is not religious. I’m very tied into a need to serve for a higher purpose.

Organizationally, Jake suggested that the military is now on the correct path regarding character development, although it was not always that way. “The military allows you a place to develop character because you actually have tests, moral tests and you can actually practice them and there is a lot of people. People in the military are definitely on a much higher moral and
ethical footing than the people [in the] business world.” Cheng and his mentor used the analysis of a toxic leadership situation to help them discern a moral and ethical path forward:

Yeah. I think we talked a lot about that tour over the years, and dissected it and broken it down and all the leadership failures. I think in that way, certainly, there's been some kind of what was the moral or ethical way to go about that? Or that situation, just in rehashing some of those old sea stories.

The Navy’s tradition of telling sea stories to educate officers was apparent when participants described their experiences. Jake, John, Sam, Gleason, and Cheng all mentioned the sea story term itself when relating leadership learning and character development. Sam, the NLEC instructor, related the importance in the leadership developmental processes or mentoring/educational situation for the leader to translate his/her experience to the learner’s (follower’s) situation to facilitate understanding:

I think the other component is the ability to kind of correlate the narrative or correlation is probably a bad word, be able to communicate the narrative. That means you have to be able to take your experiences and really develop that into a so-what for other folks…. Sea stories matter. I mean I think a good narrative helps people see kind of how you progress things, how you progress through things. There's also a sense of vulnerability that you have to provide that makes you human in their eyes.

Sam also explained that it was hard for him to teach leadership and ethics and morals at NLEC prior to a sailor having these experiences; which is part of the leadership learning process, “an individual journey.” Mike, the USNA athlete, differentiated between his morals (doing the right thing) and professional military ethics; stating that his morals have a stronger influence as his personal identity, beliefs, background, and religious beliefs comes into play.

Those [morals] have never really been tested. My ethics, and specifically my professional ethics, I would say have come a long way in terms of standards and instituting an ethical organization. You take something as small as rewriting a log, we're not supposed to rewrite a log, yet we rewrite logs all the time. There was a time in my career when I was way more junior, where I would've said: That's not something to worry about, that's no big deal. Now, I recognize how accepting that or encouraging that, produces an unethical organization because the organization will then choose what can be
ignored, or what can be marginalized, or what standard is not really important. My stance on professional ethics has grown a lot more rigid, and in simple terms has become a lot more compliance based. Basically … if you're following the standard, then you're following the standard.

Here, Mike recognizes the impact his ethical decisions have, not only on himself, but on his followers and the entire organization. His argument is that small ethical lapses can generate larger problems, especially when they insidiously lead to a lower standard.

Cheng suggested that, organizationally, the Navy is still in the early stage, or compliance-based phase of the development of morals and ethics within the sailor ranks. “Carrot and stick type thing. I do this, I get [x]... I do this right, I do that, and I think if we really want people to get to the next level, we got to get more of the unity of effort and sense of belonging.” Cheng mentioned a principles of naval leadership book issued by Vice ADM Rowden as a sign that:

All these things [are] not being followed, and so I think that it got to the point where you got a three star [admiral] that's putting out guidance like, ‘Here's your little book to help form your ... It could be moral compass ... To calibrate your moral compass that you need to do these things.’ I think that's just evidence of how far we've slipped.

While participants often talked about the need to develop a strong moral and ethical foundation individually, not all agreed that the Navy provides a good climate for character development and some think the Navy core values are a slogan. Samantha, Ivan, Cheng, and Mike fall into this cynical category. In a conversation representative of this view, Ivan mentioned the Army book *Lying to Ourselves* in this context and said that:

The Navy core values [are] a slogan to me. They have no cultural meaning. There is no shared cultural practice of Navy core values; what they mean or how we should implement them. The Navy culture is not conducive to ethical culture development. I think we could [have an ethical culture]. Are we? I don’t think we are.

Meanwhile, Gleason, Jake, Savanna, Steve, and Sam clearly embrace the Navy core values and think the climate in the Service is conducive to good character development; while
John is on the fence “yes and no.” For Gleason, Jake, and Sam, these decisions are all about balancing, such as safety and mission accomplishment (Gleason), military versus civilian values (Jake), or weighing the good and bad aspects of an individual value or two good values against each other (Sam). Sam explained the latter in the context of a commanding officer and NLEC teaching scenarios:

When you look at justice versus mercy, one of the components here is … there is this [option of] non-judicial punishment on a regular basis as a commanding officer, executive officer, OIC. A lot of different leadership positions, right? You finally have the say to have some kind of impact. Is it right to hold people accountable? Sure. Is it right to ensure that you're seen as a human and this is not just a machine that doesn't care about your well-being? If you're not balancing those two, how do you ever develop a trust? Because you erode or had to trust in both situations, but you've got to be careful to balance it. Rushworth Kidder [framework]. This is [sic] some of the paradigms that we use to look at scenarios, right? Because everybody wants to have a little taste of what it's going to be like when I get into these command level positions.

Cheng, who feels that the Navy should be trying to develop good character in sailors despite the difficulty, thinks that some of the ethical problems may relate to the motivation to join the Navy of younger officers and enlisted. His experience in interviewing sailors is that “the overwhelming reason why they join the Navy is for education…it’s not for the education the Navy is going to give them in a particular rate or skill, but it’s the opportunities for a degree somewhere ... you get a lot of people that are a little bit more in it for themselves.” Interestingly, three of ten study participants specifically cited career-related motivations for joining the service, while four mentioned the opportunity to serve their country (Table 4.1).

**Self-Awareness is foundational.** As indicated in the primary coding table for participant interviews, self-awareness was the third most coded theme and the second most mentioned of the authentic leadership constructs. This could be for several reasons. First, there was a specific interview question related to self-awareness, second, self-awareness is a focus of some early
USNWC educational assessments, including the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) for intermediate-level officers, and third, several leadership elective classes have a focus on the construct. These include Self Awareness for Leaders (Jake) and the Foundations of Moral Development (Ivan and Mike). Additionally, Sam’s experience teaching at the Navy Leadership and Ethics Center (NLEC) provided rich descriptions of the importance of self-awareness tools, quality debriefer feedback and communication, as well as a sophisticated understanding of moral and ethical decision-making using the Rushworth Kidder framework.

While most of the self-awareness involved individual application, Samantha lamented her experiences regarding leadership development in the Navy generally and the difficulty in fostering self-awareness, specifically, stating:

The Navy has lots of broken adults who are trying the lead. The operating tempo in the Navy leaves no time for officers to do retrospection or self-awareness. There is a loss of self-awareness.

The operating tempo difficulty may be true for some Navy communities, but Ivan’s early JAG experience allowed time for self-discovery where he began to realize that he could impact other people in his branch office. Jake cited the USNWC’s Self-Awareness for Leaders class as being important in identifying “things in my personality like self-actualization, the need to serve a higher purpose, [and that] I tend to work myself too hard.” Steve, the Medical Corps Manager credits the MBTI and 360-degree assessments with being valuable tools for better understanding self and others; and used them to guide his interactions with others:

I would hope that it had helped guide my interactions somewhat…From my own personal perspective, I came out as a pretty heavy introvert. It made me aware that, especially in command, it's not most conducive to having an introverted commanding officer.

Because of the feedback he received, Steve recognized that being in command required him to be more extroverted, to have more interactions with staff. Although this made him uncomfortable,
his self-awareness about his introversion led him to realize that to be a successful leader he needed “to get out and do it.” Sam, the ship-driving SWO who taught at NLEC, suggested that: “the fundamental component of good self-awareness is much more in the feedback, and how do you receive it; and how do you reflect on it? How do you develop it so that you can not only [use it] for yourself but also develop others underneath you?” He goes on to describe an experience in his own leadership journey where a colleague failed to grasp the significance of her 360-degree feedback results, and that misconnection may have led to problems later in her career:

I had an individual that went before me to get their 360 [evaluation] when I did my initial one for command. I asked her, I said, ‘Hey, what'd you take away from that?’ She said, ‘The same thing it always says, I'm dragging people behind me,’ and what I took away from that interaction was she had not internalized that feedback and she was able to discount that. I had to ask myself, how has that happened? Because she was a very capable commander at the time, and later was fired for some pretty remarkable things.

Interestingly, Cheng related feedback from an enlisted sailor about a situation regarding fraternization with his subordinates that may have prevented subsequent problems in his professional career:

Afterwards, the Chief pulled me aside. ‘Come on sir, let's go take a walk,’ and said, ‘What you're doing is not wrong, but at the same time, be careful because you're an officer. You're not one of them, and if you get too buddy-buddy, too chummy, then that could lead to problems later on.’ That was the first self-awareness type event and I thought that … That stuck with me for a long time on that, and it frustrates me. It frustrates me when I see other junior officers out there that are doing things, the same things I did as a young officer, and I'm like where are their Chiefs to give them that conversation?

**Mentors as career guides.** With the exception of a few (Ivan and John), almost all participants described their relationship with their Navy mentor as informal, someone to consult regarding promotion and career progression; not for leadership guidance. Ivan said, “I’m not part of a formal mentoring program or contract; I use her feedback [my mentor’s] when I’m
looking at future jobs or career progression; we’ve been doing it so long I feel like there is a two-way street; an opportunity to discuss [something] for both our benefit.” Gleason, the accidental aviator, said he has had two “mentors; but not career long. I still keep up, but not much. I used mentors for career decisions. Their input and experience, [they were] OIC’s in the detachment, one was CO in another unit; they were 2–3 years ahead of me.” Cheng said his mentors:

Have been of the informal variety, and one was a former department head who really took it upon himself to keep in touch with me, and I would say for the most part, has been a good sounding board for career decisions…For the most part, it’s been how you should manage your career and where you should go and that sort of thing.

John found his mentor in 2016, a commodore in his post department head submarine squadron tour, who assisted in career-related decisions, but also serves as an exemplar of a good leader:

So, most of the career based, they... Because I was kind of off the CO track, so what could I do? Is this a good job or not a good job? Should I pick this good job? What do you think? What should I make sure is in my FITREP [fitness report] to increase my chances for screening for commander or just [stay the course?].... I would say, yeah. He was [also] leader development, as well. Modeling. I thought that he was a very good leader, highly effective as a leader, just looking at the way he approached problems and approached people and treated people and interacted with everyone on a day to day basis, definitely provided [leadership development].... He discussed his philosophy and why he was doing things the way he did on a very regular basis.

Not all mentor–mentee relationships are productive. Sam said the acquisition community issued him a mentor who provided poor professional development advice:

Because there wasn't a close relationship or understanding of those individuals, in fact, I felt turned off by the acquisition community, by the individual that was in that conversation because one of the things I got in feedback was: ‘you don't need education. You just needed the job experience.’ That was very counter to a lot of the things that I had been doing at NLEC for so long. I was like, you got to be kidding me?

Reflection. Virtually all participants spoke about how they reflected on feedback and used feedback from superiors, mentors, subordinates, self-awareness tools and just from observing other leaders in their individual leadership development journey. Depending on their
role in the situation described, participants may have reflected on the information provided as a follower or as a leader trying to impart information and develop a follower. Ivan, the JAG, learned from a good executive officer in Afghanistan and also from bad leaders he had earlier in his career who were virtually absent. “Upon reflection of these leaders, I could use more of what to avoid doing in that situation in the future.” However, he credits his Boy Scout experience, not the Navy, with instilling the inclination for reflection:

I’m generally pretty reflective, but largely because of the Boy Scouts; all the way up through Eagle Scout. I was assistant patrol leader then patrol leader. From [those leadership positions] I think I got into the habit of thinking about leadership. [I] had good troop leaders who understood the development process; helped me figure out why things weren’t going well.

Jake recalled a conversation with his mentor that was helpful in rebalancing his military and civilian life “My main military mentor encouraged the Naval War College. He just went here last year. [It] allowed a pause for self-reflection in his life. Thinking about how we could still fit Service into our civilian lives. We had lots of long talks; his mentorship changes the way I look [at things].” Meanwhile, Sam realized after teaching at NLEC that he wanted to develop professional reflection, not just leadership reflection. He emphasized reading, oral and written communication, and finding time for reflection; especially focusing on the link between experience and teaching morals, ethics, and leadership. That focus:

Led me to pursue personal development, which is then what led me to choose the electives that I took here that I would deem under the formal education [heading]; however, I sought them out as a way to enhance my personal development. Then that has led me to read, read, read, think, journaling to create the habit of reflection has sprung from that.

Similarly, Jake related his interest in reading books about “people who persevere,” and in practicing yoga, meditating, journaling and “those self-care things. Reflection. Our attention spans are decreasing; people don’t have time for deep thought. I give myself time to do that more
often. It has been really helpful.” Despite the importance of reflection, there is often very little
time for it because of the Navy’s operating tempo; and this extends to its delivery of education.

“I don’t think the Navy is good at facilitating reflection, about valuing reflection or genuine
mentorship,” said Ivan. This perspective is seconded by Samantha: “The operating tempo in the
Navy leaves no time for officers to do retrospection or self-awareness.”

Mike makes the larger case that often in educating Navy officers in the classroom, not
only is there no time for reflection, but that there is often insufficient time for the adequate
coverage of important leadership topics:

Then the other aspect is with the large amount of technical and operational information
that has to be delivered to students, we tend to shoehorn leadership, ethics, all of that; and it
appears as an afterthought. Then you put on some other requirements like, if they fail
the test, there has to be a remediation and a chance. And what you have is, we do the
leadership portion; that is after all the requirements have been met. The students, you
can't blame them, are getting ready to move; getting ready to go to the next [Navy
assignment]... and we've also signaled that the meat of this course is done because you've
passed all the tests, you're just waiting to graduate. You can see how that produces a - I
don't really have to listen to what you have to say [student attitude].

Feedback and Communication. A key area of commonality among study participants
and their leadership development process was the importance of feedback, communication, and
the subsequent cognitive thinking and reflection about the feedback received. This came in a
variety of different contexts, from supervisors (leaders), peers, and subordinates (followers). In
the case of receiving feedback from their boss, participants were in the role of a follower, but in
cases where the feedback came from a subordinate, the participant was in the leadership role.
For Mike, early individual and group feedback on the initial successes of his small SWO team
that he led helped to form the connective tissue between his group’s actions and roles and the
mission of the ship. Mike defined this as a “virtuous cycle” which helped to convince him that
he “could probably do this leadership stuff.” In an entirely different context, Ivan provided input
for his mentor’s 360-degree review, and later when she shared her results with him, he reflected on what it might mean about others’ perceptions of him. He related that: “she was sharing feedback she got on being intense. I did not share that impression of her, but used her feedback as an opportunity to reflect – I could be similarly intense with her; [that] probably means that people think I’m intense.” Interestingly, Ivan may have identified a “blind spot” relative to his personality via giving/receiving feedback that not only increased self-awareness and encouraged reflection, but the experience also likely affected his future behavior and relations with others.

Interestingly, Ivan also said:

I don’t think the Navy is good at facilitating reflection, about valuing reflection or genuine mentorship…. [The] Navy says everybody needs to reflect on this stuff; but in my experience we’re better at saying than doing; taking a step back and talk about ways ends and means. We’re not very good in non-kinetic environments. Not good at emphasizing behaviors that will lead to reflection in a meaningful way. [It is] lost among the rhetoric.

Sam, the NLEC teacher and 360-degree assessment debriefer, indicated that the Navy requires a 360 assessment prior to going to command for all communities. He is passionate about the need for a good feedback of the results:

The 360s themselves are an effective tool when you actually sit down and you really get feedback. Rarely do we know who to pick and who's going to provide us the constructive feedback….It's not good enough to just do the competency or do the individual self-awareness tool without a good debrief. A good, solid debrief…. You're much more defensive when you receive feedback. That's the problem, I think, that you especially see as seniors continue to progress and progress is if it's not a new tool or they finally have the aha moment and then they say, ‘you know what, I really wish I would've had this so much earlier in my career,’ because I think that's really one of the fundamental components as you look at leadership is how do we give and receive feedback?

Ivan talked about feedback he has received in the Navy in the context of making decisions that fosters balanced processing and relational transparency, but his approach also facilitated critical thinking that is going to spur subsequent discussion and interaction:
I’ve gotten some feedback [on my leadership] hopefully not overly optimistic; I tend to be communicative, trying to talk through the way and soliciting inputs or thoughts on how we can get there before coming to a solution or making a decision on a step forward. I have a quote I put on a whiteboard, something like: ‘I demand a descending opinion always.’

Savanna said that she actively seeks out feedback on how she can be a better leader from subordinates and superiors alike. She asks questions related to what she can do better, and wants to know what she is doing that may be wrong. Her feedback-seeking and active communication style is part of her mentoring and teaching approach with subordinates to ensure they are on course. Additionally, feedback and encouragement from her Navy mentor helped in improving communications with subordinates: [You] “can’t give up. You have to keep working with ‘em.”

Gleason indicated that he had taken the MBTI three times. First, in college, but he did not get the importance of understanding “how you interact with others or how people perceive you.” He took it again after commissioning (basic officer leadership course), and still did not get much out of it. He said: “I had the best debrief here at USNWC; my personality did not change. Probably more of a maturity and age thing; [I] understand it better.” As noted, the quality of the assessment feedback is important for officers to properly reflect, internalize, and think about leadership implications.

Participants’ leadership self-descriptions. As noted earlier, military leadership typically requires officers to know themselves’ well before leading others, and self-awareness is often the first mentioned construct in the authentic leadership literature. Therefore, the student researcher extracted a list of individual leadership descriptions mentioned by study participants from the interview transcripts. Because the nature of a Navy officers’ job involves making decisions, participants often spoke within a context of solving a problem or seeking a solution to one. Therefore, communications-related activities such as seeking input, information, and
opinions peppered the accounts; especially for those involved in teamwork and interested in building trusting relationships. While officers describe themselves as demanding, passionate and intense; they balance this with showing care and compassion for their people, and being fair and flexible. In relating self-relevant information about their leadership style, participants implicitly alluded to follower development efforts. This tapped into both sides of the authentic leadership model as leaders influenced followers and followers influenced leaders.

Participant 1 – Samantha: Leadership self-description.

• Very fair
• Care for my people; we have each other’s back
• Always try to find a solution
• I want subordinates to trust me
• Open to listening to others
• Servant leader

Participant 2 – Ivan: Leadership self-description.

• Intense
• Serious
• I go to the rule/regulations first, then move from there on options
• Research the foundations before stepping off
• I walk to subordinates’ [location]; make it a home game for them
• I demand a dissenting opinion always


• I’m a listener before I decide; a collaborator
• I like to get as much information as I can in a timely manner before deciding
• I typically draw in people to bring their inputs
• I’m good at providing a compromise solution; don’t go to one extreme or another
• Very face-to-face person
• Don’t like phone calls or emails as much as walking around and speaking directly to people; building more of a trust relationship
• I’m probably not as intellectually strong [as other Navy officers]


• I love looking at large scale problems; love asking why
• I do well interacting with people; leading and giving mentorship [empowering others]
• Innovative; Flexible
• A connector; social connector
• Genuine and caring
• Hard to get to know
• I’m open to listening to others
• I like to be working on new, big ideas, innovating the next big thing; not getting mired down in details and wrapping a job up


• Fair and honest
• Big on communication, even too much
• A teamwork atmosphere is most beneficial
• Caring, flexible, but a demanding leader
• I care about them [subordinates]
• I ask questions of what I can do better
• I don’t make decisions right away [non-critical ones]; to avoid emotions. Exercise
  helps me think and balance emotions; make better decisions

Participant 6 – Steve: Leadership self-description.
• Hard to describe myself as a leader
• Very good at functional responsibilities of business management
• I know I can manage…Not a good leader yet, still need to work on it
• Direct
• Demanding
• I don’t inspire
• Always trying to balance that I want my staff to know that I’ve taken their
  consideration [into account when making a decision]

Participant 7 – Cheng: Leadership self-description.
• Fair
• Try to give people the opportunities to succeed or fail
• I think I can be a bit hard at first…grizzly
• I’ve had a lot of experiences on ships [likes to get ahead of problems]
• I try to get the buy-in and I try to get people to see it [the need for them to come up
  with a proactive plan], and at least if they [do] that they had an opportunity to
  execute their plan
Participant 8 – Sam: Leadership self-description.

- Passionate
- Compassion
- There’s a certain group that’s going to connect with you as a leader based off just showing a want and desire to be part of an organization or to be part of a profession. I think that’s a huge element to my leadership style
- Sense of humor
- Vulnerability, a sense of vulnerability that you have to provide that makes you human in their [subordinates] eyes…[without it] they’re going to really struggle with seeing you as an individual that cares…to ensure their development and growth
- Communicate the narrative. That means you have to be able to take your experiences and really develop that into a “so-what” for other folks.

Participant 9 – Mike: Leadership self-description.

- Passionate
- Outspoken
- I personally cannot separate myself from my leadership style
- I try to communicate through actions and how I approach being a leader as well as doing my job
- I try to build consensus
- I work hard to get as many opinions and as much information from as many people as possible, so everyone feels part of the decision
- I try to be transparent through verbal communication, a lot of discussion
**Participant 10 – John: Leadership self-description.**

- Very approachable
- Very hands-off [laid-back]
- Servant leader
- [On soliciting opinions and making decisions] I may say hey, here’s option A, B, C. Here’s the constraints. And here’s what needs to be accomplished. What would you recommend?

**Critical thinking: Figuring it out.** A Navy officer’s job, indeed leadership itself, typically involves making decisions. Participants often spoke within a context of solving a problem or seeking a solution to one. Savanna mentioned the “scenarios you get in [the] SWO community from subordinates are crazy—security clearance, bankruptcy, pregnant wives, tough on their marriage, etc.—you have to figure that out for them. Because it affects how they are working for me.” So, assisting subordinates in their problems makes the ship run smoother. But she also related an experience where her department head let her down. [It was] “frustrating; he lacked a lot of leadership bone. I was expecting some guidance. I had to figure it out for myself.” New assignments also present leadership challenges and require critical thinking. Mike recalled that on his first ship he was put in charge of sailors and he had to figure out how his team would perform. I was told, “You're in charge of these 15 people and you have to figure out what their contribution is to the ship's mission.” Cheng described his team-based planning approach to fostering critical thinking and interactions among his subordinates in a decision he had to make:

The whole idea of coming up with a plan is because I want to get buy-in from that Chief or that Division Officer, and usually, it's a team, a Chief Petty Officer or NCO equivalent in the other services, and a Division Officer, and so you're talking to two people and
you're saying, Okay, now get me the plan. Hopefully, what that's doing is that's getting that Chief and that division officer to talk because the Chief's got to tell the division officer, ‘Okay, this is how I think we should do it. This is what the tech manual says or whatever, these are the materials that we require, this is the time frame we require,’ and then have the Division Officer come present that plan. In a perfect world, that's how that would work. Now, I've gotten buy-in from both of them, because they've come up with that plan. It's a lot easier if you can get them to basically look at the calendar and look at the time frame and look at the requirements and come up with it on their own and say, ‘You know what, Cheng, we got it. We got to do [it] this next port visit, it's the only time,’ and then, you say to yourself, ‘I'm glad you realized this and figured it out.’

Jake said his War College attendance was about trying to obtain the intangible things that his mentor gained here; and much of it related to solving problems:

Time with family, returning to academics, mental stretch, quality of life, [a] different way of thinking.... If I hit a roadblock, I'll attack the problem, find a way to get through that... [My participation in another USNWC research study] helped me look at the way I think about problems. [Interactions] here with classmates, different viewpoints, introducing biases; I made a pretty conscious effort to try to float opposing viewpoints. I gain something; see why they are thinking it.

Savanna explained that she does not make decisions right away, especially if they are non-critical ones. She postpones decisions if possible to avoid emotions and to think about alternative courses of action during physical exercise, to get a better outcome. “Look at it tomorrow with a fresh look. Exercise helps me think and balance emotions; make better decisions.”

**In-Case Analysis**

Two special NVivo data analyses were performed on the interview material to determine whether participants who have had command were more or less likely to mention authentic leadership constructs when describing their leadership development experiences/efforts compared to those who have not had command. A similar analysis was performed to determine whether students who had participated in the USNWC’s leadership and ethics electives, or had NLEC experience as an instructor, were more or less likely to mention the authentic leadership
constructs when describing their leadership development experiences/efforts. Participants who have had command had a slightly higher percentage of their interview-related material coded to the integrated moral perspective/authentic moral behavior construct than those without command (15.46% vs. 12.79%). However, those with command have a similar percentage coded to self-awareness (14.69% vs. 14.41%) as those without command. When analyzing participants with leadership and ethics elective classes at USNWC or NLEC teaching experience, those with these educational involvements had a slightly higher percentage coverage related to the integrated moral perspective/authentic moral behavior and self-awareness code (14.30% vs. 13.06% and 14.99% vs. 13.99%, respectively).

While it is possible that leaders employed these two constructs slightly more than followers, the distribution of authentic leadership constructs was very similar among all groups regardless of classification; with self-awareness and integrated moral perspective/authentic moral behavior being coded three to five times more than relational transparency and balanced processing: roughly in the 13%–15% range versus the 2.5%–4.4% range, respectively (Appendix D). All participants appeared to value behaving in a moral manner, having a strong internalized moral view, and being self-aware. These findings are consistent with the results presented in Table 4.2.

**Leadership Development Assessments**

One of the advantages of utilizing a case study is that quantitative data can be incorporated into the effort. USNWC has officers self-assess their ability on articulated military leadership learning objectives (outcomes) at the start of the program and again at the end of the program to gauge growth. This is done by matching individual student pre/post scores and employing the Wilcoxon Sign Test for statistical significance. A review of the leadership
development results from the College’s June 2018 Graduation Perceptions Survey reveals statistically significant growth for both student levels (Appendix E).

Intermediate-level officers (CNC&S) registered a 40.92% growth in the global objective of understanding and analyzing joint operational leadership and the Profession of Arms, with the range of growth among the sub-items standing between 28.73% and 42.11%. Similarly, senior-level (CNW) officers registered a 51.81% growth in the global item of the capability to evaluate strategic leadership and the Profession of Arms, with sub-item growth ranging between 37.35% and 49.09%. While CNW leadership outcomes are more strategic and CNC&S leadership outcomes are more operational in nature, both learning outcome statements use common terms such as professionalism, critical thinking, ethics, trust, planning, character, ethical climate, communication, and decision making.

These articulated outcomes are highly consistent with the leadership development descriptions made by study participants presented earlier; indicating alignment of intended goals as well as some relationship to authentic leadership theory. CNC&S students, for example, come in with a relatively low understanding of the application of Mission Command in a joint environment through trust, empowerment, and understanding (3.868), but improve the most in this sub-item (42.11%). Operational leadership built on trust, empowerment, and understanding arguably aligns well with the positive constructs of authentic leadership.

Similarly, CNW students arrive with a lower grasp of evaluating the historical and contemporary applications of Mission Command elements (3.720) made by strategic leaders, but their improvement in the item is quite high (47.38%), the second highest growth level. An examination of the constructs in this and other sub-items also appear to align well with authentic leadership theory.
Linking Leadership Learning to Authentic Leadership

Findings from the interviews surfaced participants’ cognitive and affective processing of experiences and individual officer leadership learning and development based on the authentic leadership constructs of self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency and internalized moral perspective/authentic moral behavior. A review of the College’s leadership assessment report sections shows “statistically significant” improvement in all articulated leadership development outcomes; many of which encompass key authentic leadership concepts or constructs. This Navy officer leadership learning process followed the general pattern of 1) encountering an experience and/or making a leadership observation; 2) engaging in critical thinking and reflection about the situation experienced/observed, its outcomes, and the impact it had on the command in general and individual units in particular; 3) determining whether the observed leadership action or approach was successful or not, and whether it should be embraced or avoided in some future situation; and 4) applying this experiential/observational learning and decision-making to new situations, implicitly experimenting with approaches that were consonant with their own values, identity, and personality.

Figure 4.4 depicts this four-phased leadership development learning process situating the constructs of authentic leadership theory near the related developmental phase; although an exact match is not always possible between phase and construct. Since learning and development is ongoing, the phases are not purely linear; but an experience seems required to initiate leadership learning and development. Subsequent Navy experiences or observations build on earlier ones, so the developmental cycle repeats: new experiences are encountered, thinking/reflection is performed, and decisions are made regarding future actions.
Triangulation of the Data: Research Question Response

Triangulation of the data was performed to ensure that research results were supported by an appropriate amount of evidence. For example, a theme required support from several data sources (interviews and/or several documents) before validation. Substantiation of a theme occurred when at least two discrete data sources confirmed its presence. Participant quotes are included as well as text from the guiding Navy leadership development documents reviewed as part of this case study triangulation analysis. As noted in the document coding (Table 4.3), most of the publications focused on constructs related to leadership development, and internalized moral perspective/authentic moral behavior; although critical thinking and positive leadership examples/experiences also surfaced, among others. Triangulation of the data appears in Appendix F.
Summary

This chapter presented the results of an intrinsic case study concentrated on mid-career Naval officers and the key experiences that led to their leadership development in the Service. Two research questions guided this study: What are the core foundational experiences that promote leadership development in Navy officers? How do these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework? Ten USNWC student/officers participated in the in-depth interviews regarding their leadership development experiences in the Navy.

As a result of coding, data analysis, and triangulation of data sources (interviews and documents), it surfaced that participants principally learned about Navy leadership through on-the-job experiences and that this learning was augmented by individual and group leadership development processes and practices. In general, early Navy leadership development courses and programs fell short of being useful in individual professional leadership development; instead, they were described as being too administrative, bureaucratic, and rigid. Later Navy leadership development classes provided more individualized leadership learning, but officers often wished that they had received this education earlier in their careers. Officers’ descriptions of their leadership development in the Navy focused on self-awareness and internalized moral perspectives/authentic moral behavior, but the other constructs of authentic leadership of relational transparency and balanced processing also surfaced, as did situations of authentic followership development. While all participants felt that the Navy should try to improve sailors’ character (morals and professional ethics), mixed opinions surfaced regarding the Navy’s ability to do so. For some, the lack of shared core values, numerous examples of toxic
leadership, and a preference for individual versus organizational goals, make for a difficult climate and culture to realize these objectives.

Chapter 5 will examine these discoveries in the context of the leadership development literature review and authentic leadership theory framework. Implications for practice and future research suggestions are presented.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter begins with a reprise of the study’s purpose and methodology, and then an examination of the key findings is offered in the context of the theoretical framework and related literature. Next, study conclusions are stated, followed up by suggestions for future research and practice. Finally, this chapter closes with a summary and reflection section.

Study Overview

The purpose of this qualitative, intrinsic case study was to explore and better understand the experiences of intermediate-level and senior-level Navy officers that contributed significantly to their leadership development. The study was designed to address the following research questions: 1) What are the core foundational experiences that promote leadership development in Navy officers? and 2) How do these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or frameworks? Basically, the study inquired into the most important leadership experiences these officers have had in the Navy, and whether these experiences connect with the Navy’s articulated leadership development methods: formal schooling, on-the-job training and experience, and self-guided education.

Study Findings

The research findings support the utilization of the conceptual framework of authentic leadership and that experiences are the core foundational leadership learning method for Navy officers. The six major conclusions that emerged from this study are:

1) **On-the-job experience is the most important leadership development method.**

   Participants acquired leadership learning and advanced their developmental practices by doing their Navy job. Indeed, of the three articulated Navy leadership development methods, formal schooling, on the job training and experience, and self-
guided learning, officers clearly said that experiences in their assignments were the most important contribution to their leadership development. Formal schooling and self-guided learning, while mentioned as adding to the process, clearly did not have as much impact as daily experiences (experiential learning). In addition, several participants stressed leadership learning experiences before Navy commissioning related to college ROTC programs (Gleason, Cheng, Jake, and Samantha), while Sam and Ivan mention scouting as being formative.

2) **Observing good and bad Navy leaders is key to developing a personal leadership style or approach; knowing and modeling what right looks like is important.**

Navy officers use both good and bad leaders to inform their individual leadership approach. Good leaders serve as exemplars (role models) while bad leaders serve as cautionary tales of what not to do. Engaging in conversations about these experiences (sea stories) with peers, supervisors, and subordinates often led to “after action reviews” and thinking about what went right/wrong; and how future situations might be handled. Participants related more toxic leadership stories and the subsequent negative impacts these had on the command than positive ones; but they also learned from both types of incidents. Female officers lamented the paucity of senior female leaders in the Navy to serve as exemplars.

3) **Early Navy leadership development programs or courses are too managerial, rigid, bureaucratic, and impersonal. Individually-focused leadership development often comes too late in an officer’s career.** Participants clearly felt that the early Navy leadership development courses they attended were insufficient in helping them personally to develop as leaders. Although the Navy has articulated and
depicted a leadership development progression that includes formal leadership classes with fleet and shore assignments, classes were described as focused on management, being impersonal and rigid. Both intermediate and senior-level officers felt these early classes missed their mark. As young Naval officers in the role of followers, this failure may have slowed down the process of self-awareness and self-regulation; impeding authentic followership, and by extension, these officers’ individual leadership development.

4) While self-awareness and reflection are key to authentic leadership development, the Navy’s OPTEMPO (operational tempo) and tradition of prioritizing sea service over education limits opportunities for these important activities.

Participants recognized the foundational benefit of knowing themselves well, their strengths and weaknesses; their values, attitudes and beliefs; and the benefit of integrating these aspects into their daily experiences to build a strong leader identity. They also were keenly aware of the impacts they had on others, particularly subordinates (followers) and their responsibility to develop them as leaders. A few participants have built in time in their daily schedules for reflection and journaling to promote leadership development and learning. However, the Navy’s OPTEMPO (operating tempo) often leaves little time for these important cognitive activities. Moreover, even when officers are ashore taking early career leadership courses, content generally focuses on managerial or bureaucratic areas and not personal or professional leadership development topics. When self-assessment tools are employed, the feedback provided during the debrief phase is often insufficient. Additionally, leadership development content is sometimes relegated to the end of the
course, telegraphing that it is less important than other topics. This occurs while students are often preoccupied with moving to their next assignment.

5) **Participants employed all of the constructs of authentic leadership.** In the description of their own leadership approaches and practices, participants applied each of the four constructs delineated in the authentic leadership literature: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective/authentic moral behavior. Accounts of authentic internalized moral perspective/moral behavior and self-awareness were mentioned much more often than the other two constructs; but officers employed all four authentic leadership concepts without being knowledgeable about the theory.

6) **Officers’ implicitly developed a moral compass (personal value system) as part of their leadership learning. The Navy core values resonate with some, but others think they are hollow slogans.** Participants tacitly implied that they had developed an internal moral compass during their time in the Service (or before) and referenced it often in making decisions. However, they were clearly split on the efficacy of the Navy’s core values of honor, courage, and commitment; although most felt that the Service should promote strong character development among all sailors. For about half of the officers, the core values or versions of them, are clearly personally important to them and their leadership actions. However, the others, while following high ethical/moral standards themselves, suggest that the guidelines are Navy “propaganda” or that the organizations pays them “lip service.”
Findings in Relation to Theoretical Framework

This study employed the theoretical framework of authentic leadership theory (Gardner et al., 2005; George, 2003; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; May et al., 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2008), which is consonant with the Navy’s aspirational leadership development goals of enhancing individual officers’ operational competence and ethical/moral character (NLDF, 2017, 2018). Authentic leadership also serves to advance organizational leadership objectives by addressing both the individual and the larger organization; an approach supported by Boyatzis (2008) and Hopkins et al. (2008). Recall that the revised definition of authentic leadership is:

A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, and internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 94)

While student/officers came from different Navy communities and had different career experiences and assignments, there were patterns of consistency as they narrated the incidents and experiences relative to their leadership development in the Service. In their leadership descriptions, they engaged in each of the four major constructs/activities of authentic leadership theory: self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective/authentic moral behavior. These experiences included development as both a leader and a follower, depending on their role in the incident cited.

**Self-awareness.** Self-awareness is the degree to which an individual is aware of different aspects of identity and the extent to which self-perceptions are integrated internally and compatible with the way others perceive the individual, per Day et al. (2009 citing Hall, 2004). Avolio et al. (2007), in their development of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), consider self-awareness to be the extent to which the leader knows his/her personal strong points
and limitations, exactly how others perceive him/her, and how the leader impacts others.

Research results in this study reinforced the “well established military leadership tradition that you have to be able to lead yourself before you can lead others effectively” cited by Young and Dulewicz in their study (2009, p. 813). Indeed, Jake said: “First thing you do, if you’re going to lead others is that you have to know yourself better…. Understanding how others perceive me was a hard thing to do; something that went a long way towards developing my leadership.”

Ivan’s description of his early Navy legal assignment relates his self-discovery experience where he realized that he could begin to have a positive impact on other people in his command. In some cases, self-assessment instruments like the MBTI, or 360-degree feedback tests, and/or USNWC or NLEC leadership development classes fostered better self-awareness, especially for Samantha, Gleason, Ivan, Jake, Steve, Sam, and John. Mike says he has always been self-aware, which is likely a function of his athletic background. He links self-awareness to daily events in the Navy: “Experience really comes to the forefront of how you achieve self-awareness.”

Further evidence of participants’ self-awareness appears in the individual self-descriptions of their leadership style discussed earlier. These often included their opinions of others’ perceptions of them as leaders, per Boe and Holth (2015) and Taylor (2010). For example, Samantha has a mentor who has helped her to keep upbeat and self-aware of her positive leadership traits. These interactions added to her “personal insight” as a leader; and the resultant introspection likely involved examining her identity, values, emotions, motives, and goals, which are sub-constructs of self-awareness in the model of authentic leadership (Gardner et al., 2005).

**Balanced processing.** Balanced processing per Avolio et al. (2007) is the degree the leader solicits sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions. One of several self-regulation constructs in authentic leadership, balanced processing helps leaders build
bridges and trust among subordinates and often involves them in important decisions that affect the welfare of the command, or at least the immediate (micro) work environment. Because the nature of a Navy officer’s job involves making decisions, participants often spoke within the context of solving problems or seeking a solution to one in their leadership self-descriptions; and this was linked to their leadership style. Accounts of being: “open to listening to others” (Samantha), “always demanding a dissenting opinion” (Ivan), “I typically draw in people to bring their inputs” (Gleason), “always trying to balance that I want my staff to know that I’ve taken their [input into] consideration” (Steve), or “I work hard to get as many opinions and as much information as possible, so everyone feels part of the decision” (Mike); all attest to the care and attention participants’ give to soliciting the viewpoints and recommendations from others. Gardner et al. (2005) reference Kernis (2003) when discussing the balanced processing of authentic leaders as they are more objective (less biased) when knowing their individual strengths and weaknesses, and in processing information and making good decisions. These findings are consistent with the competencies of informed judgment, conceptualization, and communication identified in the early Navy research (McBer, 1983), inquiring and thinking competencies (Horey & Fallesen, 2003), critical thinking (Fischer et al., 2008), and meta-cognitive knowledge structures cited by Hannah et al. (2010), among others. Perhaps this is a function of military operations in general and the emphasis on different courses of action, possibilities, and likely resultant outcomes. Despite its genesis, the solicitous approach aligns nicely with authentic leadership theory.

**Relational transparency.** Relational Transparency refers to the extent the leader reinforces a level of openness with others that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges, and opinions, per Avolio et al. (2007), Day et al.
Another self-regulatory mechanism within authentic leadership, relational transparency is closely related to balanced processing, but it extends the situational context beyond simple decision-making to include the opportunity for the authentic leader to be clear in all interactions with followers, and this, taken with the other constructs of authentic leadership, fosters positive self-development, per Walumbwa et al. (2008). Participants often referenced this construct when describing their leadership style in dealing with followers, their decision-making approach, and when characterizing their close relationships with leaders and followers, per Gardner et al. (2005); who suggest that authentic leaders strive to achieve “openness and truthfulness” in these situations. For example, Steve discusses applying his commanding officers’ ethical experiences, emulating their good leadership qualities, and their practice of using key sayings to help share ethical values and standards:

Some of it is based on what was the situation, who was your boss in the past? Did they press on certain qualities of ethics to you that maybe my peers had a different experience? For me, I can think of some COs [commanding officers] that I had that they all had their own phrases or whatever, sayings that they came up with. Slogans. That became the mantra of what was considered ethical behavior. One of them … was like, one of his things was like, tell the truth. Basic things to think about. That's honor, courage, and commitment, but he ties it to honor of telling the truth. You take the [Navy] core values, and you just derive your own.

Mike recognized that a weakness he has to work on is improving his own relational transparency skills in order to enhance his career progression. “Professionally, one of the things that I know I need to work on…is my ability to reach out and form lasting relationships with senior officers that could fill the role as mentor.” Meanwhile, Sam recounts his experience with a commanding officer whose “ethical underpinnings weren't quite the same [as his]” and the challenge he had in finding “the right way to re-insert that kind of accountability” for his boss.
While not completely successful at the time, Sam indicated that he was able to repair or “develop that professional relationship back” once both individuals were out of that command.

**Integrated moral perspective/authentic moral behavior.** Participants generally spoke about behaving morally and ethically in their descriptions of positive leadership experiences and identified the opposite in descriptions of negative or toxic leadership situations. Implied, but often not explicitly stated, were the inherent foundational aspects of an “ethical/moral component” or foundation in their leadership suggested by Avolio and Gardner (2005), who reference Luthans and A vilio (2003) and May et al. (2003). These authors relate the ability of authentic leaders to tap into a cache of “moral capacity, efficacy, courage, and resiliency” to tackle ethical dilemmas and to consistently behave morally in a variety of situations (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 324). Indeed, Avolio and Gardner’s (2005) view of a positive moral perspective within authentic leadership is different from other authors who consider it outside the theory; they specifically mention the differing views of Cooper et al. (2005), Sparrowe (2005), and Shamir (2011). Since the interview participants did not often explicitly differentiate between authentic moral behavior and an integrated moral perspective, the fact that the new definition of authentic leadership focuses on moral behavior, and since the Navy guiding documents emphasizes explicit moral behavior (character), these two constructs were combined during the coding process. While sustainable authentic moral behavior is the desired outcome of the moral component of authentic leadership model proposed by May et al. (2003, p. 245), the decision-making process is likely to “apply moral principles and virtues to the situation to make sense of what actions to take;” hence, an integrated moral perspective is presumed. Participants described a wide variety of moral and ethical experiences and frameworks that ranged from pure compliance to a more sophisticated understanding of the nuances of behaving morally. For
example, Cheng suggests the Navy is focused on the compliance side of the continuum. “Where do we stand at the development of morals and ethics and development within the ranks? I think that we’re really at those early stages of rewards based or compliance based. Carrot and stick type thing. I do this, I get [x] .... And I think if we really want people to get to the next ... level, we got to get more of the unity of effort and sense of belonging.” Savanna believes that “leadership is all about character; Navy core values. If you follow those values, you’ll be a successful leader in the Navy. Some lose focus and that’s why they fail or become toxic leaders. I focus on [and] talk about values.” Here she is modeling good leader-follower relations in communicating organizational values with subordinates. At the other end of the spectrum is the authentic moral decision-making process described by Sam, who had moved beyond the pure compliance approach to employ ethical decision-making frameworks:

Rushworth-Kidder’s paradigms, truth versus loyalty, short term versus long term. How do you weigh the short term versus the long term? That is the fundamental issue a lot of times in the military. Am I getting through this assessment? This deployment? This thing? Or am I looking to the long-term goals of this organization? What is my revisit of those two elements to make sure that I’m not unbalanced? What is my organization saying that’s good? Individual versus community. Is it right to do right by the individual? Are there times that you’re going to have to do right by the community? Individual versus unit. That’s a tough piece, right? Uphold all those other things of well, do you ever respect that you could potentially destroy that individual and destroy their contribution to the community? ... I think there was one other paradigm that I’m forgetting here. Truth versus loyalty, short term versus long term, justice versus mercy is the final piece.

Sam suggested that authentic Navy leaders “have developed the ability to see their role as including an ethical responsibility to their stakeholders, having the level of moral perspective to recognize and evaluate ethical issues, and having learned from past experiences how they might best deal with moral dilemmas at work,” per May et al. (2003, p. 247). Moreover, Sam
combined relational transparency and an authentic moral perspective to help his students develop by displaying vulnerability saying:

I think a good narrative helps people see kind of how you progress things, how you progress through things. There's also a sense of vulnerability that you have to provide that makes you human in their eyes. Vulnerability is a dirty word in a lot of different arenas, professional arenas, but understanding that…[followers have] to be able to connect. Because if it doesn't then they're going to really struggle. They're going to really struggle with seeing you as an individual that cares once [sic] to ensure their development and growth.

This is in keeping with the admonition from George and Sims (2007) that the true goal of leaders is to empower others to lead, not to get others to follow them. It also aligns with Maxwell (2007) who suggests that credibility between leader and follower is developed when the leader demonstrates that he or she “genuinely care[s] and want[s] to help them [followers]” (p. 116).

**Findings in Relation to Literature Review**

The examination of the scholarly writing related to leadership development provided evidence that most leadership interventions generally made a positive difference, in particular, the 100-year review of leadership intervention research for the Gallup Leadership Institute (Avolio et al., 2005). However, leadership interventions are only one side of the equation. Leaders themselves have to be willing to learn; to become self-aware and reflective of their own and others’ experiences; they need to focus on developmental processes, including thinking and relating openly to others; and they should establish a core moral identity and consistently make decisions consonant with their values and ethics. Moreover, leaders should encourage followers to develop themselves promoting a positive organizational climate (Day & Dragoni, 2015; DeRue & Wellman, 2009; Eriksen, 2004; Gardner et al., 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2016; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; and May et al., 2003). Subsequently, followers develop as authentic followers (and eventually as leaders themselves) through self-awareness and self-regulation, which
produces higher levels of trust, greater engagement, and workplace happiness resulting in a better organizational climate and higher performance (Gardner et al., 2005). This section considers the findings of this study in light of these literature themes.

**Learning leadership.** Kouzes and Posner (2016) make the case that people can become better leaders if they have self-confidence, aim high, challenge themselves to develop, attract the assistance of others, and purposely groom themselves. Indeed, implicit in the entire enterprise of leadership development is a growth mindset that presupposes the motivation to better align “self-views” such as “current goals and possible selves” described by Gardner et al. (2005). DeRue and Wellman (2009) refer to this as a learning orientation. The perspective is consistent with Vice Admiral Stockdale’s (1982) fifth principle of leadership: that “every man [person] can be more than he [she] is” (p. 26).

As noted earlier, the leadership learning related by study participants typically involved a developmental experience and/or an observation; some thinking, evaluation and reflection of the situation; a determination of whether to follow or avoid the observed behavior; and finally, a testing out of “approved” leadership actions while assiduously avoiding actions considered “unapproved.” This cycle is similar to Kolb’s (2015) experiential learning sequence and, since it involves workplace experiences, the leadership learning might be described as informal, per Eraut (2004). Reflection is described as the internal transformation of experience into learning along a continuum that includes imagining, reflecting and analyzing (Kolb, 2015).

While this is in keeping with Gardner et al.’s (2005) suggestion that personal history and trigger events serve as stimuli to authentic leadership development, especially self-awareness, it also involves everyday leadership experiences. This is consistent with adult learning (Ashton, 2010), learning from one’s life story (George et al. 2007), meta-cognition of experiential learning
(Kolb & Kolb, 2009), learning from defining situations (Karp, 2012), and incidental learning (Marsick & Watkins, 2001). Basically, Navy officers learn about leadership through day-to-day interactions on-the-job, whether ashore or onboard a ship. These incidents, linked to individual career assignments in the Service, led to ongoing thinking (critical thinking and reflection) and, over the course of time, this informal and experiential learning shaped officers’ individual leadership behavior and style. This developmental process for leadership experience(s) was depicted in Figure 4.4: Leadership Learning and Authentic Leadership Constructs. A more macro-level view of Navy Officer Leadership Development is portrayed in Appendix G using the NVivo mind map (code mapping) functionality. It marries participants’ experiences and authentic leadership learning processes and practices (self-awareness and self-regulation) from the interview data. Additionally, a Longitudinal Participant Career Summary Matrix Table related to study questions and leadership learning is shown in Appendix H. It depicts evidence of key individual leadership milestones from the data extraction process. Overall, evidence from participants not only support their application of authentic leadership constructs, but participants also exhibit what Ashton (2010) describes as authentic learners; adult learners who are “open, present in their being and approach learning in an attitude of care” (p.16). Indeed, authentic learners are self-aware; true to their innermost values and attitudes; behave in a manner that is in keeping with their ethical and moral standards in learning situations; take responsibility for thoughts, emotions, and actions as “be-in-the-world-learners;” and present a caring mindset towards others (Ashton, 2010, p. 16). This is consistent with the descriptions of leader-subordinate learning relations among participants, especially Samantha, Savanna, Sam, and Ivan.

**Developmental challenge.** Participants described the leadership challenges they had in the Navy and the core foundational experiences that contributed to their development as officers
in charge of sailors. Early decentralized assignments (Ivan, Gleason, and John) often allowed participants to practice leadership and to try out new leadership ideas in a small unit away from supervisors. Van Velsor et al. (2010) propose that developmental experiences contain assessment, challenge, and support, and that experiential challenges serve as motivational resources. Several participants alluded to being thrust into a new situation and having to “figure things out” without much guidance, including Samantha, Ivan, Sam, Mike, and Cheng. Occasionally, this challenge was related to helping subordinates develop a plan or way forward in their day jobs as sailors assigned to the command (security clearances, scheduling work tasks, etc.); or it related to assisting them in their personal lives (marriages, divorces, bankruptcy, etc.). Eraut (2004) found that engaging in challenging tasks in the workplace was one of the four key methods that regularly stimulated on-the-job learning; it also provided incentive and self-confidence for learners. Research by DeRue and Wellman (2009) suggests that leadership skill development is a related to the type of experience, the individual, and the specific work setting; and that developmental challenge could reach a point of diminishing returns, after some optimum level. Moreover, these researchers found that the pattern of dwindling growth was most noticeable for interpersonal (social perception and persuasion) and business leadership skills (resource allocation, operational analysis), and less so for cognitive (active listening and learning, critical thinking, and information gathering) and strategic leadership skills (visioning, problem solving, and a systems perspective), per DeRue and Wellman (2009). The fact that the USNWC’s courses focus on developing leaders via active learning, critical thinking, strategic and operational decision-making, and other habits of mind needed for future assignments, align with these cognitive and strategic competencies (DeRue & Wellman, 2009). While linked more with the academic environment than fleet-centered workplace challenge, Samantha, Ivan,
Gleason, Jake, Savanna, Sam, and Mike specifically cited aspects of the College’s program as beneficial to their personal leadership development. Day et al. (2014, p. 79) suggested that leader development is not the result of successive programs or interventions, but that true growth occurs in the “so-called white space” sandwiched between leader development activities. Although academically challenging, the USNWC experience may be considered “white space” (time relatively free from operating obligations) that allows Navy officers the opportunity to receive feedback and reflect on their personal leadership development before heading back to the hectic operational fleet environment.

**Feedback and reflection.** Participants consistently recalled Navy experiences, observations, and receiving feedback from others in their leadership learning. In an educational situation, feedback is normally given by instructors. In the Navy operating environment, study participants indicated that feedback was provided by peers, subordinates, supervisors, mentors, and leaders. Depending on their role in a specific situation, participants may be either a leader or a follower when receiving/giving feedback. In a true authentic relationship, both sides impact each other. DeRue and Wellman (2009) suggest that the availability of feedback (context) is key in developing leaders by experience. Gardner et al. (2005) suggest that unbiased or balanced processing of self-related information informs self-development; it is a self-regulatory process. Additionally, leadership theories, such as authentic leadership, can contribute to this growth process, and progress can be measured by examining “experiences, skills, personality, self-development, social mechanisms, 360-degree feedback, self-other agreement, and self-narratives,” and aligning leadership practices with existing developmental requirements of the leader in an efficient and effective manner (Day et al., 2014, p. 79). The recently issued an
updated NLDF (2018) describes good leaders as those who “routinely seek out feedback, and are ready to be shown their errors in the interest of learning and getting better” (p. 3).

Recall that Cheng related the experience of receiving feedback from an enlisted Chief, who warned him about becoming too friendly with the enlisted personnel under his charge. Ivan had the positive experience of having two very good leaders who provided good feedback and leadership examples, one in Afghanistan: “He only talked about what is going on with you [me]? What do your people want?…How do we get them there?” and a second on an aircraft carrier who “was a great boss. Showed me the good side of leadership.” Van Velsor et al. (2010) equate feedback to assessments, saying that the information can be formal (360-degree appraisals, job performance appraisals, or personality assessment results), or they can be informal (feedback from a colleague or individual self-reflection); all of which provide current information and help the individual gauge progress toward a desired end-state. Savanna, for example, mentioned that she constantly seeks out feedback from supervisors and subordinates alike. Van Velsor et al. (2010) suggests that feedback plays a role in motivating people to close the distance between the current self and ideal self. Steele (2011) suggested improving self-assessment and feedback by employing 360-degree assessments. While nearly all participants used mentor feedback to improve their chances for promotion; several mentioned the utility of the MBTI and 360-degree instruments, including Ivan, Gleason, Jake, Steve, Sam, and John. Sam, who was an NLEC instructor, linked good assessment feedback (360-degree debriefs) with leadership reflection. This is similar to the importance DeRue et al. (2012) ascribe to after-event reviews in promoting leadership development. Eriksen (2004) promoted “active reflection” among his students at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy; and cites Seibert and Daudelin’s (1999) definition of reflection “as the mental activity managers use to try to make sense of experience”
Eriksen (2004) differentiates reflection in action (active reflection while in the experience) from proactive reflection (intentional contemplation of a past experience). Cheng illustrated the observation, feedback, discussion, reflection and analysis process used with his “informal” mentor after a toxic leadership experience they both encountered. He focused on the post-event analysis (proactive reflection) and the leadership learning process:

In the command that we were at, it was a very, I'd say, caustic work environment. During that time, he [mentor] definitely was the umbrella [protection] for the shit storm for his officers under him … I think we talked a lot about that tour over the years, and dissected it and broke it down and all the leadership failures. I think in that way, certainly, there's been some kind of [post-event analysis and reflection regarding] what was the moral or ethical way to go about that, or that situation, just in rehashing some of those old sea stories.

These findings accentuate the importance of providing a continuum of challenging experiences for Navy leadership development coupled with quality feedback, time for reflection, and fostering a habit of intentional reflection on that experience. However, it also highlights the more inter-personal or social aspect of leadership development involving supervisors, peers, subordinates, mentors, etc., versus the more intra-personal focus when self-awareness is the primary objective. It also is a rare example of using a mentor as a facilitator of leadership development. Surprisingly, most participants did not employ mentors that way.

Leader identity. Day et al. (2009, p. 57) described a military member’s identity or self-concept as “the culmination of an individual’s attributes, values, knowledge, experiences, and self-perceptions.” Study participants recognized the foundational benefits of knowing themselves well, their strengths and weaknesses; their values, attitudes and beliefs; morals and ethics; and the advantage of integrating these aspects into their daily experiences to build a strong leader identity. This is consistent with the authentic leadership model proposed by Gardener et al. (2005) who suggest that “authentic leaders build understanding and a sense of
self for their decisions and actions … they continuously ask themselves, ‘Who am I?’” (p. 347). While not all authentic followers become authentic leaders, the authentic leadership model posits that becoming one is a desirable goal. Leaders are constantly in a state of becoming, striving to reduce the gap between their ideal self and real self. Illeris (2014) would call this transformative learning, where learning implies adjustments in the identity of the learner. Illeris (2014, p. 580), differentiated between an ordinary accommodation (where the learner comprehends something in a novel way) and transformative accommodation (where the learning involves a change in the learner’s perspective or behavior); the latter is equated to transformative learning, which can be progressive or regressive. When a follower becomes a leader, their identity and perspective change.

Gleason said he “always wanted to be an officer” and Cheng said his “commission in the Navy and becoming an officer” aligned with his personal goals, while Steve was motivated to join the Navy to be an officer. Sam became a Surface Warfare Officer because of the “leadership components in that being a division officer on a four-year-old steamship with 20 to 30 personnel underneath my care; that was a pretty good experience.” Ivan talks about wearing the JAG collar with pride and Steve equates the officer in charge with leadership: “I think I’ve always recognized that part of my responsibility as an officer is I’m going to be in charge of people.” Steve has married his identity as an officer with ethical expectations stating: “I have a pretty good grasp on saying, well, that would be an unethical thing for me to do as an officer.”

Gardner et al. (2011), in their review of the literature, portrayed authenticity as a collection of interactive and intellectual advances that make apparent exactly how leaders establish and build a core identity, and how this self-identity is sustained over time and changing situations. Gardner et al. (2005) suggested that authenticity entails owning one’s personal
experiences and acting in accordance with one’s true self. Similarly, George (2003) proposed that authentic leaders “have a deep sense of purpose and are true to their core values.” (p. 5). Day et al. (2009) proposed that identity development accelerates important leadership behaviors, and that “effective leader development is the differentiation and integration of leadership and personal experiences, values and confidence” (p. 64). Cheng equated an ethical leader identity with time in Service, suggesting that: “If you're a lieutenant or a lieutenant commander with 12, 13 years of experience or you're a chief petty officer, senior chief petty officer, with 12, 13 years of experience, and you haven't figured out which way the moral compass points, then you don't need to be in the organization anymore.”

Since observing leaders and following a leader’s example is so pervasive in Navy leadership development, a number of participants, especially those who have held command, stressed acting ethically, suggesting that actions speak louder than words. Mike exemplified this sentiment when he said: “I think that most of my leadership, most of my command philosophy, leadership philosophy, I try to communicate that through actions and how I approach being a leader as well as doing my job.” John seconded this perspective when he described his approach to Navy values: “people are going to observe what you do and how your actions align with those values, and your actions are going to be more important. So, I kind of think my actions [should be designed] to align with those kind of values.” A strong authentic leader demonstrates a consistent moral compass even though identity may change as new competencies are mastered to help meet challenging professional situations. Gardner et al. (2005) posited, as a central proposition of their theory, that authentic leaders “continuously model for followers through their words and deeds high levels of self-awareness, balanced processing, [relational] transparency, and authentic behavior” (p. 347).
Being a Naval officer appealed to all participants, and it became part of their identity; including recognizing that at times they would be in charge of people. Being placed in charge of people seemed to be the transition point between self-identifying as a follower or a leader. Several talked about being proficient in holding the “collar” associated with a specific Navy community (JAG, submariner, aviator, etc.,) and this related to a level of competency necessary if one is to become a trusted leader, per Boe (2015 b). Samantha stated that she “wants subordinates to trust me as a leader” and Gleason built trust using face-to-face interactions, while Steve felt that showing his competence helps build trust among subordinates. Speaking of subordinates, Moss et al. (2009) made the case that weaknesses in followers can be mediated by authentic moral leadership; as the leader’s deeds are inspired by their own core beliefs, which builds trust with followers and thus increases the likelihood that subordinates will model the leader’s ethical/moral actions. Caldwell (2009) said “identity and self-awareness are closely related constructs, with one’s identity being influenced by how one perceives duties and roles related to stakeholders and society” (p. 395), referencing Stets and Burke (2000). Larsson et al. (2006) found that military leader development is a social interaction process where a favorable outcome is “feeling secure, being able to flexibly adapt their overt behavior on an underdistanced-overdistanced continuum according to situational demands, and have a firm professional identity” (p. S70). May et al. (2003) proposed that authentic leaders view their position (identity or role) as incorporating an “ethical responsibility to their stakeholders, having the level of moral perspective to recognize and evaluate ethical issues, and having learned from past experience how they might best deal with moral dilemmas at work” (p. 247). This is consonant with Thomas’ (n.d.) moral ambition construct, the fourth (and highest) stage of moral development of military leaders; involving an “active rather than passive pursuit of virtuous
behavior” in both leader and follower, that “demands reflection, willingness, courage, and
constancy of purpose” (p. 6). Among study participants, Sam explicitly referenced a more
sophisticated understanding of military leader moral development with the Rushworth Kidder
paradigms:

When you look at attributes, when you look at behavior, humility is good, right? Too
much humility is seen as insecurity. Too little humility is seen as basically being
arrogant. You don't want to be either of those, but you've got to be able to balance them.
That's why I keep going back to this conversation of balancing, because what I see in
these situations, like I said before, honor. What is the peak of honor? What is the
downside of honor too? Right? Having a realistic and honest conversation of where you
are is much more of a conversation of self-awareness than perhaps [using]… all those
different assessments that are out there. I've been trained in the majority of them.

Sam’s mature moral perspective is likely due to his leadership learning from scouting, the
Merchant Marine Academy, command assignments as a Navy Surface Warfare Officer, time as
an instructor at the Navy Leadership and Ethics Center (NLEC), and his experience at the
USNWC. The early portion of his journey is similar to Yeager and Callahan’s (2016) finding of
a dynamic interaction process of leader identity development, which surfaced the “importance of
relationships, leading by example, authenticity, and motivation to lead for younger adults (p.
286). Sam, specifically mentioned that his plan at the College was to continue to develop in the
areas of leadership reflection, reading, and communicating; especially writing. Like other study
participants who have had command in the Navy, his leadership descriptions highlight self-
awareness and an integrated moral perspective/authentic moral behavior; key authentic
leadership constructs.

Conclusions and Interpretations

Based on the findings of this research, three noteworthy conclusions were obtained
related to leadership learning, Navy leadership programs, and authentic leadership as a viable
framework. These suppositions and their implications for Navy manpower planners and academics are discussed below:

1). Leadership learning was mediated by interactions with peers, subordinates, supervisors, and mentors. When interacting with supervisors or mentors, participants were generally in the followership role; but when relating to subordinates, participants were mostly in the role of leader. Perhaps due to the importance of on-the-job experience, and the volatile, uncertain, complex adaptive system (VUCA) that is characteristic of a military environment, participants provided rich descriptions (sea stories) of their growing leadership learning in the Navy. However, these stories were not limited to leader-follower interactions alone; they were much more varied in nature and occurred with individuals at different organizational levels, per Hopkins et al. (2008) and Boyatzis (2008). Indeed, some leaders were influenced by lower-ranking sailors, as posited by authentic leadership theory. Cheng, for example, related the experience of receiving feedback from an enlisted Chief, who warned him about becoming too friendly with the enlisted personnel under his charge. Samantha related her anxiety in the SWO community: “that you can’t get along with your peers or there’s a lot of people intentionally making you miserable. [It is] hard to ignore it when you live where you work.” John talked about his leadership learning interactions from a relational transparency perspective: “In my limited experience, people wanna know why. Why the decision was made. It may not align with the way they thought the decision should've been made. And it helps them appreciate and respect the decision that was made when they know why.” A more traditional experience of leader-follower learning was described by Ivan. He had the very positive experience of having two very good leaders (bosses), one in Afghanistan focused on the needs of Ivan’s people and the second, a female officer on an aircraft carrier, who demonstrated the “good side of
leadership.” She became his mentor; one of the few mentors to double as a career advisor and a leadership coach. Maxwell (2007) suggested that as the follower observes a “leader’s effective modeling of the vision [that observational experience] makes the picture come alive” (p. 159).

Participants spoke about learning from both interpersonal experiences with others and in an intrapersonal way by individual reflection, introspection and processing feedback. They also learned by observing or encountering examples of both good and toxic leadership during their Navy assignments. Karp (2013, p. 136) suggests that effective leaders engage in “deep processes” that enhance self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, and the ability to tap into resources in the environment necessary to take action in a complex organizational situation. Interestingly, most study participants did not employ mentors to help foster leadership learning; instead preferring to treat them as career advisors. This may be a waste of a precious environmental resource or an underutilization of the resource. It certainly is a unique finding, as a “going-in assumption” was that Navy mentors would facilitate leadership learning.

2). Early formal Navy leadership development schooling is not providing sufficient individual officer leader development opportunities. A gap clearly exists between what study participants expected from their early Navy leadership development courses or programs and what was provided. Ivan said Navy leadership development programs are “overly rigid, not natural, focused on administrative side of it; over-bureaucratized” while Samantha was disheartened by the basic division officer class and post-commissioning leadership development efforts, describing it as a “weak check in the box mentality;” and Gleason described early programs as “administrative” in nature, not leadership. Indeed, well-designed and delivered individually-focused leadership development efforts often come well into an officer’s career at pre-command school or War College. This approach is not supported by leadership research that
showed that interventions had a greater impact on lower level leaders (Avolio, Reichard, et al., 2009). Mike, who taught leadership at SWOS, posited that early leadership class concepts need to link with an individual’s Navy experience: “it’s that growth, it's that recognizing that you have to match experience with learning and that you have to start the habits at the beginning of the [Navy] experience, but that doesn't really bear fruit until they're through some level of experience where they're open to see what you're trying to teach them.” It is apparent that there needs to be a better balance or alignment between the experiential and educational (academic) side of the equation and that more individually-focused (self-awareness, leadership theories, etc.) topics need to be taught earlier in an officer’s career. The Navy says that an education should inculcate the basic doctrines of Navy leadership that “serves to contextualize past experience to enable the application of new learning to future assignments, cultivate adaptive leader abilities, and provide methods for exploring and addressing unknowns” (NLDS, 2013, p. 8). Learning involves acknowledging accountability for one’s personal development and understanding individual strengths and weaknesses; reflecting on one’s learning process; and engendering a willingness to try novel learning methods to obtain needed competencies (Van Velsor et al., 2010).

While participants engaged in self-regulating processes as part of their leadership learning, several highlighted the difficulty in finding time for reflection in the Navy’s high-tempo operating environment. Ivan states: “I don’t think the Navy is good at facilitating reflection, about valuing reflection or genuine mentorship…. Not good at emphasizing behaviors that will lead to reflection in a meaningful way; lost among the rhetoric.” Reflection, whether individual or with others, is a key requirement for learning from experience (Eriksen, 2004; Kolb, 2015; Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Mezirow, 1991). Sam used his USNWC educational
experience to foster deeper individual reflection. “I wanted to continue to develop on not just leadership reflection, but also professional reflection…. I think there has to be a place for reflection.” Mike and Jake both utilized journaling to “create the habit of reflection.” Whatever the impetus, it is clear that more reflection time seems warranted among Navy officer leader development activities, especially as the organization attempts to promote character development among all sailors. As Maxwell (2007) stated: “true leadership begins with the inner person” (p. 17), and authentic leaders develop the capacity for accurate self-examination.

3). Participants employed the components of authentic leadership theory implicitly in their leadership development. The theory is consonant with the Navy’s effort to engender competence and character in all sailors. Authentic leadership has been defined as:

A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, and internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. (Walumbwa et al. 2008, p. 94)

Moreover, the four major constructs of the theory mentioned in the definition above were practiced implicitly by study participants without formal training or education. This provides empirical evidence that there may be an opportunity to further advance the Navy’s goals of engendering competence and character in all sailors by adding the theory to its academic toolkit and formal leadership development efforts. Generally, leadership theories do not attend to the moral development of leaders, but authentic leadership theory does (Day et al., 2009). The fact that May et al. (2003) have articulated a reinforcing model that addresses developing the moral component of authentic leadership provides additional rationale to include authentic leadership theory in Navy leadership development curriculum. Such an approach could articulate important self-awareness and self-regulation processes and actions taken by authentic leaders. It could also
serve as a possible antidote to combating the incidence, or dealing with the existence of toxic leadership in the Service. In his reaffirmation of the charge of command the CNO stated that: “Trust and confidence are the two coins of the realm that enable decentralized command and operations at sea; they are the key to our effectiveness as a force” (NLDF 2.0, 2018, p. 1).

Authentic leaders engender trust and confidence; and these attributes align well with the Navy’s values, ethical conduct, sound judgment, and trustworthy leadership outcomes specified in its leader development continuum (NLDS, 2013).

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Findings from this research study argue for additional attention to several areas where further research may benefit the field of Navy officer leadership development. While the study provided a snapshot of officer leadership development in the Navy at the mid-career level, more exploration of the entire officer population is desirable. Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumba, and Chan’s (2009) meta-analysis cited the low percentage of longitudinally-designed leader development studies as an area of concern. Five suggestions are proposed for future research.

First, expanding the scope of research to a longitudinal examination of a cohort of Navy officers from commissioning to flag level would provide a more robust picture of this important developmental process. Since the Navy’s leadership development strategy is to progress officers over a long continuum, and their advancement is tied to successfully meeting increasingly more challenging assignments requiring mastery of new leadership skills, a longitudinal examination would facilitate a deeper understanding of the required skills and competencies for key milestones. Researchers suggest that such an approach is especially important for leader development programs focusing on lasting change such as developing trust, self-concept adjustment, or other transformations (Avolio, Reichard, et al., 2009). A related area of inquiry
would be to incorporate questions related to authentic followership to address this important aspect of authentic leadership theory. Additionally, such a research protocol would allow researchers to examine and validate the key challenges and leadership/followership skills required of officers at key stages along the Navy’s leadership learning continuum and use the results to update the programs. Kirkpatrick’s (1994) four-levels of educational evaluation cited by Vitello-Cicciu, et al. (2014), Akin’s (1987) six modes of learning suggested by Popper and Lipshitz (1993), or Fleishman et al.’s (1991) taxonomy used by Orvis and Ratwani (2010) could help to examine these programs.

Second, while this study focused on Navy officers in attendance at the USNWC, the research could be expanded to include other mid-career level officers from other U.S. military services. This could provide a basis for an inter-Service comparison of leadership development programs and interventions and determine whether a Services employs a more holistic approach. Additionally, an examination of each Service’s formal leadership development continuum and the syllabi used in key classes or interventions, may extend the initial work conducted by Horey and Fallesen (2003) in their analysis of military leadership competency models. At the least, it would provide an audit of the key leadership theories employed by each military branch. Additionally, inclusion of enlisted Navy personnel in a follow-on study may provide a more complete picture of Navy leadership development in general, as officers’ learn from enlisted sailors and vice-versa.

A third suggestion is to incorporate Avolio, Gardner, and Walumbwa’s (2007) Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) into the design of a future research study. Although participants embraced the four major constructs of authentic leadership in describing their leadership development and actions as Navy leaders, employing the ALQ would afford an
opportunity to quantify the degree to which study participants actually have embraced self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and authentic moral behavior/authentic moral perspective in a validated instrument. Participants’ ALQ scores could be compared between student levels, between different Navy communities, between those that have had command and those that have not, and/or between different Services either in a cross-sectional or longitudinal design. Alternatively, the ALQ could be used in participant selection similar to Aguirre’s (2015) design to focus only on Navy leaders who have high ALQ scores. Conducting a pre/post analysis involving Avolio, Gardner, and Walumbwa’s (2007) Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) might enable researchers and educators to gauge the impact of leadership interventions (education), especially at the USNWC. Another possible utilization of the ALQ could be to employ it periodically in the longitudinal research suggestion mentioned earlier. This might allow researchers to examine the continuum of experiences and authentic leadership constructs used as an officer moves from an authentic follower to an authentic leader. It might also reveal the need for a separate, but related instrument, targeting authentic followers.

A fourth research suggestion is to design a study that examines toxic or bad Navy leaders and how followers learn from this experience, attempt to navigate the toxic leader-follower relationship, mitigate the damage of a poor leader in the command, and how followers avoid modeling poor or toxic leader behaviors. The prevalence of toxic leaders encountered by study participants suggests that learning more about the phenomenon is warranted. Kouzes and Posner (2016) state that “the best leaders bring out more than three times the amount of talent, energy, and motivation from their people compared with their counterparts at the other end of the spectrum” (p. 14). Replication of John Steele’s (2011) Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) in a Navy context could document the occurrence, gravity, and aftereffects of toxic
leaders who exhibited the identified categories of behaviors such as micromanaging, being mean-spirited/aggressive, exhibiting rigid/poor decision-making, having a poor attitude, among others. Moreover, data showed that roughly “20% of 2010 CASAL respondents saw their superior as toxic and unethical” and that toxic leaders negatively impact mission success (Steele, 2011, pp. 2–12). Such a study could also build on Dimmock’s (2013) work on the removal rate for Navy command officers.

Fifth, while the sample size was small, the two female participants introduced some gender-specific issues that female leaders have to grapple with in leading in a military context. Both female participants lamented the paucity of senior female leaders in the Navy to serve as exemplars, and expressed concern that many of the small number of current female leaders were leaving the Service. A common topic also related to dealing with the emotions of female sailors. One was the unexpected challenge of dealing with female sailors, and their feelings, under one’s command; and the second was an individual leader’s approach to mitigating the influence of her own emotions in decision-making situations by procrastination, exercise, self-regulation and reflection. Gibson’s (2005) research on female Marines might be a prototype study to replicate in the Navy environment, although obtaining a sufficient sample of female Navy officers may be challenging. At least some research should be considered about the challenges of female leaders encounter in a Navy context. The underrepresentation of women leaders is a national issue (Carli & Eagly, 2011), and there may be organizational barriers and issues surrounding leadership style. For example, males are regarded as more effective in masculine settings than females (such as military environments), while women are considered more effective than men in less male-dominated settings, such as schools and social service organizations (Carli & Eagly, 2011, p. 111). Sturm et al.’s (2014) research found that women under-predicted their bosses’
ratings [of themselves as leaders] compared to men; and that the difference was likely due to a lack of self-assurance, learned gender roles, dissimilar feedback requirements, and self-sexism. These concerns may warrant more study to better inform Navy personnel professionals, not only in better understanding female officers, but other sailors as well may bring similar pre-conceptions, especially as the Service strives to attract more diversity. The preconceptions may also impact the leadership development curriculum. Indeed, it was Samantha who expressed interest in evolutionary biology to better understand the gender differences she encountered in the Navy.

**Recommendations for Theory**

Although Luthans and Avolio (2003), Gardner et al. (2005), George (2003), and May et al. (2003) laid the foundational structure for authentic leadership theory, the development of its moral component, and its application for practitioners, much empirical work is still required to better understand how it develops (Aguirre, 2015). This case study contributes to authentic leadership theory by: 1) highlighting the importance of experiences, especially on-the-job experiences, in learning about successful leadership; 2) emphasizing the role of observation in the leadership development process, including watching and learning from both good and bad leaders while tackling new assignments; 3) stressing the necessity to actively engage in reflective practices despite the high operating tempo in the fleet, ashore, and in the schoolhouse; 4) extending authentic leadership development learning beyond the leader-follower dyad to include intra-personal and interpersonal situations, especially with peers and subordinates; 5) emphasizing the recursive and cumulative nature of authentic leadership learning from experience; and 6) suggesting that authentic moral behavior should be reintroduced into the key constructs/model and that its antecedent is an integrated moral perspective. Several of these
were included in Figure 4.4 Leadership Learning and Authentic Leadership Constructs. These contributions might inform the 2005 authentic leadership model by making these constructs more explicit in future iterations. An example is shown in Figure 5.1 with the new constructs in \textit{purple italics}. A reminder that this adaptation of the model focuses on the aspects of leadership development, not followership development. However, it is possible that the same contributions (changes) suggested here might also apply to the authentic followership side of the model. This could be studied by conducting the relevant aforementioned research suggestions.

\textbf{Figure 5.1.} Refined Authentic Leader Development Model adopted from Gardner et al. (2005) with study inputs.

As shown, day to day experiences, which can include all modes of leadership learning, are added to the antecedents listing. The internalized moral perspective construct is added to self-regulation and linked to the original authentic behavior construct. Both are necessary as an
internalized moral perspective informs moral behavior and positive authentic leader modeling for followers. Most importantly, the cyclical and ongoing process of making leadership observations and actively reflecting on experiences, is combined with self-awareness and self-regulatory processes by the leader, similar to Figure 4.4 shown earlier, which combined authentic leadership with experiential learning. This is proposed to reflect the long-term and cumulative nature of leadership development. A similar cyclical process could be proposed for followers. Indeed, study participants often involved followers in their active reflection of Navy experiences.

**Implications for Practice**

Several suggestions from the study are offered for practice. These are intended for leadership scholars and practitioners, military and civilian faculty at PME institutions, and Navy personnel responsible for designing, delivering, and assessing the Service’s leadership development continuum for officers (Appendix A). Navy officers also may find them helpful. Implications cover the areas of professional officer development noted in the continuum, especially Navy schoolhouse courses and programs related to leadership development, a new mentoring initiative and FITREP modification, and recommendations for individual officers to better integrate experiential leadership learning and active reflection in their daily routine.

The first suggestion emanates from the finding that nearly all participants found early Navy leadership development programs/courses to be ineffective in regard to advancing individual leadership development. This is disappointing as the Service devotes substantial resources to implementing the NLDF. Claims of being “too rigid and bureaucratic” or focused on “administration” not leadership were common. Since the NLDF (2017; 2018) intends for officers to follow a career continuum, it seems prudent to conduct an independent leadership development audit of the major training and education components for each Navy community
spanning from commissioning to the mid-career level or beyond. Reviewing the syllabi, lesson plans, leadership theories and topics covered, and examining respective course feedback might shed some light on why officers said these efforts are underperforming. Learning from such an effort might identify where modifications to leadership development courses should be made, and how the Navy could better to take advantage of experiential learning and adult learning research. For example, there seems to be a need to better infuse and integrate schoolhouse leadership learning with fleet-related experiential learning and training. It is possible that some successful leadership development practices could surface during such an examination and these could be shared across communities. This could spur organizational achievement towards the theoretical levels of performance; the Navy’s top priority in leader development. It is likely that a document review may be a necessary first step for practitioners, but such an examination would only cover the intent or the plan of the program. As a participant with teaching experience mentioned, even when they owned the curriculum, instructors were not always able to execute it as intended. Therefore, a follow-on exercise may be to devise a way to test the implementation by conducting on-site inspections of leadership classes.

Second, the study results clearly indicated a need to strengthen existing feedback processes (debriefs) of current self-awareness instruments employed (MBTI, 360-degree assessments, etc.) to maximize their impact on individual officer leadership development. While virtually all participants had taken a self-awareness assessment, sometimes several times in their Navy career, many were underwhelmed with the brief phase. Sam, the NLEC instructor, had 360-degree assessments in department head school, but felt his “individual feedback was poor.” He took that lesson to his assignment at NLEC and worked to ensure the Center’s debriefs were high-quality and in-depth for all sailors. Again, this may be an issue with the execution side of
the leadership development implementation plan, but it bears examination. If insufficient time is allotted to giving proper feedback to officers after instructing them to take the assessment, what kind of message does that send? If it is simply another “check in the block” item officers may come to feel that the self-examination is really not important to the Navy, and by extension neither is their professional development as leaders. Since the Service does devote significant resources to these types of instruments, ensuring appropriate feedback would increase their effectiveness as a tool.

A third suggestion arises from the finding that, without being aware of authentic leadership theory per se, all study participants described instances in their Navy leadership behavior where they employed all four key constructs of the theory. Participants did so typically in their role as leaders, but they also utilized them as followers trying to become better Naval officers and leaders. While participants did describe incidents of self-awareness and an internalized moral perspective/moral behavior more often than the other two constructs, they did employ all four. Moreover, authentic leadership theory and the related development a moral component within the theory aligns well with the Navy’s goal of enhancing officer competence and character. For these reasons, it is reasonable to consider teaching the theory in Navy training and education situations related to developing leaders. The first practice suggestion of conducting a leadership development document audit would determine if any command or community has included the theory in its educational efforts, which might prove edifying. A combined scholar-practitioner approach might fuse the work of Luthans and Avolio (2003), Gardner et al. (2005) and the practitioner George (2003). Additionally, since the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire is a validated instrument, it should be employed as a method to baseline authentic leadership and to measure an officer’s ongoing progress in building skill in all
The fourth implication for practice is to use the results of the aforementioned Navy toxic leadership study and incorporate findings in the formal leadership development curriculum in the Navy schoolhouse. Practical suggestions on identifying toxic leaders, navigating the relationship with them, learning from the challenging experience, and how to avoid becoming one via authentic leadership development may mitigate the damage of a toxic leader. Results from the toxic leader study also could inform Navy personnel administration as to the prevalence of the problem so human resource experts could determine a way forward regarding identifying, interceding, and remedying individuals deemed “fixable.” While complex, difficult, and delicate, the Service has enormous sunk cost invested in its commanders, even the toxic ones. If the organization is unwilling or unprepared to take corrective action, it could be squandering its most precious resource—its people; authentic leaders, toxic leaders, and the sailors under their care. A related action to both the study of toxic leaders and the subsequent corrective action phase would entail a detailed review of an appropriate number of toxic leader cases for trends or issues possibly missed along the officer’s career. This may reveal problems with the accession process, promotion process, the FITREP (fitness) program, mentorship problems, or a host of other related possibilities. Again, findings could inform modifications to these particular programs where deemed warranted. This suggestion is timely as the new guidance contained in *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority*, issued in December 2018, calls for a new performance-management system that “evaluates character and values merit over tenure” (p. 12).

The fifth and related suggestion is to strengthen the character development efforts or ethical fitness of officers. Hallett (2016) has several related suggestions in his article in the
Naval War College Review, including adding the concept of sailor ethical fitness to the Navy FITREP system. In the NLDF (2018), the three paths to character development are: 1) learned on-the-job in formal and informal settings discussing the importance of accountability and integrity; 2) self-guided learning where officers must be motivated to read character-related literature, attend lectures and classes, and join communities of practice; and 3) formal schooling linked to key career markers at NLEC, including “department head, commanding officer and major command courses” (p. 6). Considering the shortcomings participants related about early Navy programs and insufficient individual leadership development, and the fact that department head classes start between 7–12 years of service, there may be an opportunity to introduce this important concept of character development much earlier in an officer’s career. At least this approach would not rely solely on self-study or on-the-job training, which could be by a toxic leader. Participants often related sea stories of where decisions of expediency over proper, but more difficult, decisions are made; and the resulting pernicious impact of similar successive choices which eventually sets a new but lower standard of work. Mike was one of several participants who said the Navy was not good at developing character. Citing too many requirements and regulations, he suggested that these leaders are “making not good enough, good enough.” It is possible that Hallett’s (2016) and Al Harbi (1995) suggestion of adding ethics as a category to the Navy’s personnel system via the FITREP might provide the forcing function needed to raise awareness of the need to address character development. Encouraging authentic moral behavior and decision-making is more than simple rule compliance. Addressing it earlier in an officer’s career, including building on their experiences and covering the complexity of the topic through various frameworks, may help reduce the incidents of toxic leadership and the pressure to opt for the short-term fix in decision-making.
The sixth suggestion for practice is to expand the role of Navy mentors, whether formal or informal, to include leadership development. The fact that only a few participants said their relationship with mentors extended beyond career advice indicates that there may be untapped potential in existing relationships. Indeed, this “untapped potential” may be impeding authentic followership development and the resulting individual leadership advancement of mentees. Of course, it is quite possible that some mentors (leaders) would require additional training and education to effectively carry out this role. The Navy admits that it “may be impossible to mandate an effectual mentor program,” but it is asking its mentors to do more in becoming advocates for the protégés under their guardianship and to ensure that the individual mentor’s protégé group is diverse (NLDF, 2018, p.8). The additional mentor training and education could be inserted in the appropriate milestone of the officer leader development continuum, possibly during major command leadership course at the 22–25-year level. It is also possible that some younger leaders, possibly those identified in a revised FITREP system, may be excellent candidates for this mentor training as well. Additionally, adding mentoring as an optional leadership criteria on an officer’s FITREP may prove efficacious.

The seventh, and final suggestion for practice is to recognize that informal learning is occurring in the fleet daily for both officers and enlisted personnel. The Service has to encourage, and individual sailors need to be creative, in carving-out needed time to reflect on their observations and experiences, and integrate this learning with ongoing individual leadership development efforts. This needs to happen both intra-personally and interpersonally, as officers’ progress along the leader development path; recognizing that there will be challenges, and possibly setbacks (regressions) as well. At least two study participants exploited the tool of journaling to foster active reflection of their leadership learning and professional development.
This habit helped to set goals and use the self-regulation processes suggested by authentic leadership theory to gauge their progress.

**Chapter Summary and Reflections**

This study accomplished its objective of exploring and better understanding the experiences of intermediate-level and senior-level Navy officers that contributed significantly to their leadership development. Using an intrinsic case study method and research questions framed using the lens of authentic leadership theory, participants’ leadership journeys revealed that they principally learned about Navy leadership through on-the-job experiences, and that this learning was augmented by individual and group leadership development processes and practices. Early Navy leadership development courses were too administrative, bureaucratic, and rigid; and offered little individual development. Later Navy classes addressed this need, but this was deemed too late in an officer’s career. Participants’ descriptions of their leadership approaches used all four constructs of authentic leadership, without instruction in the theory itself. All participants felt that the Navy should try to improve sailors’ moral and professional ethics (character), but some believed the Navy’s climate and culture make it difficult to realize this objective.

This study added to the authentic leadership literature while also addressing the research gap in Navy officer leadership development. There is a need, however, to better understand this leadership journey longitudinally, and there is a related requirement to examine the current content of leadership courses in the Navy’s officer leadership development path. Both were future research suggestions. Additionally, paying more attention to followership development is recommended for future research, as is incorporating Avolio, Gardner, and Walumbwa’s (2007) Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) in future studies. Recommendations for theory
included a more explicit emphasis on the role of experience and active reflection in the authentic leadership model and recognizing the cyclical and cumulative experiential/informal leadership learning cycle in it. Suggestions for practice were offered including adding ethical fitness to the FITREP system and designing a class on dealing with toxic leaders. While the study contributed to the field of leadership development in general, and authentic leadership in particular, study results also argue for the inclusion of authentic leadership theory in the Navy’s formal leadership development programs.

Reflecting on the research process and study findings, it was surprising to discover that participants actually applied the main constructs of authentic leadership theory in describing how they carried-out their Navy jobs as leaders. Considering that authentic leadership, and its focus on moral decision-making, aligns well with the Navy’s stated goals of improving the competence and character of all sailors (NLDF, 2018), formally adding it to the leadership toolkit for officers and possibly enlisted personnel could generate dividends in the future. However, study findings also accentuate the importance of providing a continuum of challenging experiences for Navy leadership development coupled with quality feedback, and fostering the practice or habit of intentional reflection on those experiences. Just adding a new leadership theory to the mix would appear insufficient to properly address the shortcomings and challenges that surfaced in the study.

The USNWC is uniquely positioned and justifiably charged by the CNO with responsibility for working with all Navy communities in advancing the goals of the Navy’s leader development framework. It is hoped that study results can inform this effort. Nonetheless, unless study findings are tied to a larger personnel effort, “an integrated system linking assessment, career management, and advancement selection criteria, initiatives to reform
the Navy’s processes will fall out of favor as the helm is passed to the next cohort of Navy leaders” (Hayes, 2008, p. 78). Failure to address problems systematically could lead to more scandals (Cavas, 2015; Watson, 2017), chronic poor morale onboard ships (Ziezulewicz, 2017a), and other issues related to inadequately prepared Naval leaders. This would not serve the Service nor the country well. However, “when leaders are dedicated stewards and lead in an authentic manner, they build enduring organizations that do great good for people and make enormous difference in the world...leaders who lead with purpose, values, and integrity and who are good stewards of the legacy they inherited from their predecessors” (George, 2003, pp. xvii–9). These are the types of authentic leaders the Navy should attract, develop, and promote.
References


Algera, P. M., & Lips-Wiersma, M. (2012). Radical authentic leadership: Co-creating the conditions under which all members of the organization can be authentic. *The Leadership Quarterly, 23*(1), 118-131. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.11.010


The Navy Leader Development Outcomes Wheel Book (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/16/GlobalContent/wheelbook.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=cSi10NttGWFC9%2FN8SZcizDxj5yPPrYXyUlc7RiMHL7g%3D](https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/16/GlobalContent/wheelbook.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=cSi10NttGWFC9%2FN8SZcizDxj5yPPrYXyUlc7RiMHL7g%3D).


Appendix A: Officer Leadership Development Path

Officer Leader Development Path
## Appendix B: Process Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balanced processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking, analysis, planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External to Navy leadership development efforts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leadership Development**
- On-the-job experience and training; including observing other leaders
- Self-guided learning
- Formal education/schooling
- Feedback and communication

**Reflection**

**Navy leadership development approaches/classes**

**Self-Awareness**
Appendix C: Nodes Compared by Number of Coding References – Hierarchy Chart for Interviews
Appendix D: Aggregated Command vs. No Command and Leadership and Ethics Class/NLEC Comparison with NVivo Output (Column Charts Following)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Command</th>
<th>No Command</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Moral Perspective/</td>
<td>15.46%</td>
<td>12.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Moral Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Transparency</td>
<td>2.53%</td>
<td>2.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced Processing</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>14.69%</td>
<td>14.41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leadership &amp; Ethics/NLEC</th>
<th>No L&amp;E or NLEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Moral Perspective/</td>
<td>14.30%</td>
<td>13.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Moral Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Transparency</td>
<td>4.02%</td>
<td>4.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced Processing</td>
<td>2.62%</td>
<td>3.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>14.99%</td>
<td>13.99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NVivo aggregated analysis: Percentage coverage of codes related to Authentic Leadership constructs. NVivo output follows.
Appendix D: Aggregated Command vs. No Command and Leadership and Ethics Class/NLEC Comparison with NVivo Output (Column Charts Following) (Continued)
Appendix D: Aggregated Command vs. No Command and Leadership and Ethics Class/NLEC Comparison with NVivo Output (Column Charts Following) (Continued)
### Appendix E: OPMEP/JLAs

#### Joint Operational Leadership and the Profession of Arms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CNC&amp;S Objective: Joint Operational Leadership and the Profession of Arms</th>
<th>Indoc Mean</th>
<th>Grad Mean</th>
<th>Δ</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Wilcoxon Sign Test p Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand and analyze joint operational leadership and the Profession of Arms</td>
<td>3.876</td>
<td>5.462</td>
<td>1.586</td>
<td>40.92%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the role of the Profession of Arms in the contemporary environment</td>
<td>4.130</td>
<td>5.550</td>
<td>1.420</td>
<td>34.36%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehend critical thinking and decision making skills needed to anticipate and recognize change, lead transitions, and anticipate/adapt to surprise and uncertainty</td>
<td>4.267</td>
<td>5.491</td>
<td>1.223</td>
<td>28.67%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the ethical dimension of operational leadership and the challenges that it may present when considering the values of the Profession of Arms</td>
<td>4.350</td>
<td>5.600</td>
<td>1.250</td>
<td>28.73%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze the application of Mission Command (intent through trust, empowerment, and understanding) in a JIIM [joint, interagency, intergovernmental, military] environment</td>
<td>3.868</td>
<td>5.497</td>
<td>1.629</td>
<td>42.11%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate with clarity and precision</td>
<td>4.619</td>
<td>5.519</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>19.49%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze the importance of adaptation and innovation on military planning and operations</td>
<td>4.390</td>
<td>5.610</td>
<td>1.220</td>
<td>27.79%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *USNWC June 2018 CNC&S Graduation Perceptions Survey Analysis*. Scale: 1-7 where 7 is the highest score. N= 163. The highest mean at graduation is shown with a green background while the lowest is shown with a blue background.
Appendix E: OPMEP/JLAs (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CNW Objective: Joint Strategic Leadership</th>
<th>INDOC Mean</th>
<th>GRAD Mean</th>
<th>Δ</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Wilcoxon Sign Test P Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capability to evaluate strategic leadership and the Profession of Arms</td>
<td>3.727</td>
<td>5.657</td>
<td>1.931</td>
<td>51.81%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to evaluate the skills, character attributes, and behaviors needed to lead in a dynamic joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational strategic environment (JIIM)</td>
<td>3.987</td>
<td>5.476</td>
<td>1.489</td>
<td>37.35%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to evaluate historic and contemporary applications of the elements of mission command by strategic-level leaders in pursuit of national objectives</td>
<td>3.720</td>
<td>5.483</td>
<td>1.763</td>
<td>47.38%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to evaluate how strategic leaders establish and sustain an ethical climate among joint and combined forces, and develop/preserve public trust with their domestic citizenry</td>
<td>3.873</td>
<td>5.359</td>
<td>1.486</td>
<td>38.36%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to evaluate critical strategic thinking, decision making, and communication by strategic leaders</td>
<td>3.833</td>
<td>5.715</td>
<td>1.882</td>
<td>49.09%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to evaluate how strategic leaders develop innovative organizations capable of operating in dynamic, complex, and uncertain environments; anticipate change; and respond to surprise and uncertainty</td>
<td>3.873</td>
<td>5.417</td>
<td>1.543</td>
<td>39.85%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to evaluate how strategic leaders communicate a vision; challenge assumptions; and anticipate, plan, implement, and lead strategic change in complex joint or combined organizations</td>
<td>3.740</td>
<td>5.434</td>
<td>1.694</td>
<td>45.28%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to evaluate how strategic leaders foster responsibility, accountability, selflessness, and trust in complex joint or combined organizations</td>
<td>3.807</td>
<td>5.437</td>
<td>1.630</td>
<td>42.82%</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *USNWC June 2018 CNC&S Graduation Perceptions Survey Analysis*. Scale: 1-7 where 7 is the highest score. N-129. The highest mean at graduation is shown with a green background while the lowest is shown with a blue background.
Appendix F: Data Triangulation

Data triangulation for leadership development experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 1: What are the most important leadership experiences you have had in the U.S. Navy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 1: Leadership Developmental Experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Evidence</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Early Leadership Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence from Interviews</strong></td>
<td>“I think that you cannot discount the ROTC training process.” (Cheng)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I was an Eagle Scout and a Boy Scout. I'll tell you, probably some of the best pure leadership that I learned was during those earlier periods up to about 16 or 17 years old.” (Sam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence from Documents</strong></td>
<td>This theme was not addressed in the documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Understands the relationship and lives the values and sentiments articulated in the Oath of Office and Navy Core Values. Personal values are consistent with Navy Core Values.” (0-1 and 0-2 officer level: NLDS, Navy Leader Development Outcomes, 2013, p. 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 1: What are the most important leadership experiences you have had in the U.S. Navy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 1: Leadership Developmental Experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Evidence</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observing Other Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence from Interviews</strong></td>
<td>“I observed good and poor leaders and learned more from the bad. The Navy has many toxic leaders. You have to lead by example.” (Savannah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I started reading a decent amount of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Books</td>
<td>Toxic Leadership Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;historical books, that's when the personal education expanded past just on-the-job osmosis and observation.&quot; (Mike)</td>
<td>&quot;toxic leadership experience that really had a negative impact on this individual. It took a lot of coaching and development not only by myself but also by my executive officer to get this individual kind of right.&quot; (Sam)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Evidence from Documents | "Character applies in an operational setting - it’s not just for the classroom. The best leaders mention it at briefs, during execution, and during debriefs. They get out in front and avoid bad decisions. The strongest message comes through their personal example." (NLDF, 2017, p. 6) |
|-------------------------| "Leaders at all levels of our Navy must set the example by providing the purpose, direction, and motivation essential for successful mission accomplishment” (NLDS, 2013, p. 3) |
|                         | This theme was not addressed in the documents. |

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**Research Question 1: What are the most important leadership experiences you have had in the U.S. Navy?**

**Category 1: Leadership Developmental Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Evidence</th>
<th>Positive Leadership Experiences</th>
<th>Themes Female Leadership Approaches and Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence from Interviews</strong></td>
<td>&quot;I came to realize good intrusive leadership vice [versus] bad absent leadership. I saw that good leaders had to extend effort, be sincere, and be diligent to be a good leader.&quot; (Ivan)</td>
<td>&quot;There are issues and a lack of opportunity for women in the military. No female mentors or female leaders. This is a problem for recruiting strong females. There is a lack of female role models. (Savanna). “I like to understand evolutionary biology – new kick- help me understand relationship dynamics between male and female; especially current generation and technology focus – moving too fast in tech.” (Samantha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;[I] had extremely, extremely good examples of leadership in the senior division officers who were stepping up and filling the gaps that these individuals [department head mid-level leaders] were making. And a lot of those people who showed me how to do it correctly, and showed me that you can do it correctly, are still a couple years ahead of me, still serving as pretty good role models, pretty good examples of how to do everything the right way.” (Mike)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Evidence from Documents | "Leadership in the naval profession of arms demands self-reliance and independence, humility and integrity, discipline and resourcefulness, and trust and confidence. Leaders at all levels of our Navy must set the example by providing the purpose, direction, and motivation essential for successful mission accomplishment.” (NLDS, 2013, p.3) | This theme was not addressed in the documents. |
“Develops a positive command climate based on mutual trust, loyalty, and respect, resulting in unity of purpose and unparalleled esprit de corps.” (O-5 to O-6 officer level: NLDS, Navy Leader Development Outcomes, 2013, p. 6)

Research Question 1: What are the most important leadership experiences you have had in the U.S. Navy?

Category 1: Leadership Developmental Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Evidence</th>
<th>Early Navy Leadership Classes</th>
<th>Themes USNWC Leadership Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence from Interviews</td>
<td>“And then kind of the same as a department head. There's some leadership training in the pipeline right before you get there, but for whatever reason wasn't as helpful.” (John)</td>
<td>“I happen to enjoy the leadership course here, that I know some of my classmates thought that it didn't fit, that it felt shoehorned in and [they] didn't really understand what we were talking about. But then again, I had gone through enough self-guided study, where I was able to use the formal leadership instruction as self-guided study.” (Mike)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The department head classes in the Navy were basically administration.” (Jake)</td>
<td>“I loved the ethics program at NWC. First identify ethical problems. More awareness; understand ethical dilemmas people go through. How social media is going to play into my day to day interactions with people.” (Savannah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence from Documents</td>
<td>“Education inculcates the fundamental tenets of Navy leadership, broadens the understanding of the naval profession, imparts advanced knowledge, enhances critical thinking, and fosters intellectual and character development. Education also serves to contextualize past experience to enable the application of new learning to future assignments, cultivate adaptive leader abilities, and provide methods for exploring and addressing unknowns.” (NLDS, 2013, p. 7)</td>
<td>“Character development also consists of formal schools, on-the-job training and self-study. The Naval War College will support our Navy’s character education and training and helps integrate the competence and character lanes into a coherent path of leader development. The College exercises this responsibility in partnership with other parts of the Navy—including community leaders and operational commands—coordinating and supporting each in their leader development efforts. (NLDF, 2017, p. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“At each step on his or her career path, a Sailor can expect to receive a combination of formal schooling and training. Formal education at the entry levels includes recruit and officer candidate training and more-advanced A-schools and officer warfare schools. As one’s career progresses, these schools are followed by additional formal education opportunities such as C-schools, chief petty officer, department head, and command schools.” (NLDF, 2018, p. 6).</td>
<td>“The Naval War College will supplement and support each community in their community leader development, and will maintain a strategy for leader development beyond major command.” (NLDF, 2018, p.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 1: How do these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework?

Category 2: Leadership Development Processes and Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Evidence</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Awareness is Foundational</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leader Self-Descriptions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence from Interviews</strong></td>
<td>“MBTI / 360 are interesting tools for understanding self and others; used to guide interactions with others. These tests tell us about ourselves, and being able to recognize that in others, and also in my interactions with other people. I would hope that it had helped guide my interactions somewhat.” (Steve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Very approachable; very hands-off [laid-back]; a servant leader” (John)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Experience is really come the forefront of how you achieve self-awareness.” (Mike)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Passionate; compassion; showing a want and desire to be part of an organization or to be part of a profession. I think that’s a huge element to my leadership style. A sense of humor. Vulnerability, a sense of vulnerability that you have to provide that makes you human in their [subordinates] eyes…[without it] they’re going to really struggle with seeing you as an individual that cares…to ensure their development and growth. [I like to] communicate the narrative.” (Sam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence from Documents</strong></td>
<td>“As junior leaders at the beginning of the path, development is biased toward individual competence and personal character. We learn basic individual and team skills and learn to lead ourselves.” (NLDF, 2017, p. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Effective Navy leaders demonstrate a deliberate commitment to grow throughout their careers. They work from a foundation of humility, embracing our core values of honor, courage, and commitment. They behave with integrity, accountability, initiative and toughness.” (NLDF, 2017, p. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A Commander’s competence and character lead to trust and confidence.” (NLDF, 2018, p. 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 1: How do these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework?

Category 2: Leadership Development Processes and Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Evidence</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mentors as Career Guides</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence from Interviews</strong></td>
<td>“I’m very willing to listen for feedback and take feedback and act on it or not act on it. And if I’m not going to act on it, I like to tell people why I didn't do it or why I did it the way I did. Those kind of things.” (John)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“[My mentors] have been of the informal variety, and one was a former department head who really took it upon himself to keep in touch with me, and I would say for the most part, has been a good sounding board for career decisions…For the most part, it's been how you should manage your career and where you should go and that sort of thing.” (Cheng)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | “I gotten a lot of positive feedback, mostly enlisted. Because I actually talk to them, care about them. How their family is doing. I demand more from them because” | “I have two big mentors; but not career long. I
I want them to think. Feedback to subordinates is part of the teaching process.” (Savanna)

still keep up, but not much. [I] used mentors for career decisions.” (Gleason)

Evidence from Documents

“[Top Navy leaders] ceaselessly communicate, train, test, and challenge their teams. They are toughest on themselves; they routinely seek out feedback, and are ready to be shown their errors in the interest of learning and getting better.” (NLDF, 2017, p.1)

“Evaluate how strategic leaders communicate a vision; challenge assumptions; and anticipate, plan, implement and lead strategic change in complex joint or combined organizations.” (CJCSI-OPMEP, 2015, p. E-E-3)

“Mentors probe deeply into their protégé’s strengths and weaknesses, challenging them to be a more complete “whole person.” In working with their protégés, mentors also commit themselves to their growth and success. They transfer energy from within themselves to their charge. In a productive mentor-protégé relationship, development comes from the clear sense of mutual commitment - from mentor to protégé and from protégé to mentor - beyond what can happen in a teaching or coaching relationship. This can be extremely important in leader development - the farther one travels down the two-lane path, the more valuable a mentor can be. While it’s hard, maybe impossible, to mandate an effectual mentor program, it’s important to seek opportunities to be a mentor and to find a mentor. It can be decisive.” (NLDF, 2017, p. 6)

“Develops the full potential of his/her people through effective delegation of authority commensurate with the development level of the Sailor; and effective coach, counselor and mentor.” (O-3 to O-4 officer level: NLDS, Navy Leader Development Outcomes, 2013, p. 6)

Research Question 1: How do these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework?

Category 2: Leadership Development Processes and Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Evidence</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking/Figuring It Out</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence from Interviews</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think there has to be a place for reflection. What we find is that if done right, education, not training, education. This is part of reason why NLEC is not Nav Lead or CPP, right? What happened was when you attached that too much to training, you lose the reflection time.” (Sam)</td>
<td>&quot;I'm playing devil's advocate and I'm being confrontational, when I'm actually just working through the problem aloud.” (Mike)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t think the Navy is good at facilitating reflection, about valuing reflection or genuine mentorship. The leadership development programs, they tend to be overly rigid; not natural,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“One DH [department head] was kicked off mid-deployment. I had to fill a lot of gaps; make sure we held together. Frustrating; he lacked a lot of leadership bone. I was expecting some guidance. I had to figure it out for myself. (Samantha)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
focused on the administrative side of it-over-bureaucratized. Navy says everybody needs to reflect on this stuff; but in my experience we’re better at saying than doing; taking a step back and talk about ways ends and means. We’re not very good in non-kinetic environments. Not good at emphasizing behaviors that will lead to reflection in a meaningful way; lost among the rhetoric.” (Ivan)

Evidence from Documents

“Personal development focuses attention on individual strengths and weaknesses, enables personal evaluation, furthers reflection on Navy and personal values, and contributes to life-long learning, diversity of thought, and moral growth.” (NLDS, 2013, p. 8)

“Our leaders must think more clearly and learn more rapidly than our adversaries.” (NLDF, 2017, p. 1)

“Comprehend critical thinking and decision-making skills needed to anticipate and recognize change, lead transitions, and anticipate/adapt to surprise and uncertainty.” (CJCSI-OPMEP, 2015, p. E-C-3)

Research Question 1: How do these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs or framework?

Category 2: Leadership Development Processes and Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Evidence</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authentic Moral Behavior/Internalized Moral Perspective</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence from Interviews</td>
<td>“The most important part of any value is, and you can talk about values all they want, but people are going to observe what you do and how your actions align with those values, and your actions are going to be more important. So, I kind of think my actions to align with those kind of values. I think it's more important to display it than to talk about it.” (John)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“The military allows you a place to develop character because you actually have tests, moral tests and you can actually practice them and there is a lot of people. People in the military are definitely on a much higher moral and ethical footing than the people [in the] business world.” (Jake)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence from documents</td>
<td>“Comprehend the ethical dimensions of operational leadership and the challenges that it may present when considering the values of the Profession of Arms.” (CJCSI-OPMEP, 2015, p. E-C-3)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“Evaluate how strategic leaders establish and sustain an ethical climate among joint and combined forces, and develop/preserve public trust with their domestic citizenry.” (CJCSI-OPMEP, 2015, p. E-E-3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Mind Map of Navy Officer Leadership Development (Code Mapping)
## Appendix H: Longitudinal Participant Career Summary Matrix at Key Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Early LD Experiences (trigger or foundational)</th>
<th>Early Navy Experiences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>College philosophy and theology classes (Jesuit); Understand psychology of those you lead; ROTC</td>
<td>Poor peer-to-peer relations in SWO community; hired external LD coach</td>
<td>Very fair, care for my people, we have each other’s back; always try to find a solution</td>
<td>Helped keep her motivated</td>
<td>Disheartened by basic DIVO class and post-commissioning LD; it was “week check in the box mentality”</td>
<td>Loved the College’s LD educational approach; and ethics program</td>
<td>Self-awareness, On-the-job experiences; <em>No Asshole Rule</em> (book) self-guided learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ivan</td>
<td>Boy Scout patrol leader position. Undergrad Jesuit (service was implicit); law school and JAG corps (more explicit service)</td>
<td>Early JAG decentralized assignments allowed for self-discovery; observed good/bad leader role models; Navy is not good at “facilitating reflection”</td>
<td>Intense/serious; communicative; looks to rules, regulations, and research before making decisions</td>
<td>Former JAG boss was a good leader &amp; role model; she became his mentor</td>
<td>Navy LD programs are “overly rigid, not natural, focused on administrative side of it; over-bureaucratized”</td>
<td>Liked the foundations of moral development class</td>
<td>MBTI was helpful tool, pretty reflective due to scouting; observation of good/bad leaders on-the-job; seems to prefer looking at ends, ways &amp; means decision making framework</td>
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<td>Gleason</td>
<td>Enlisted initially, good test scores led to college &amp; ROTC, officer commissioning &amp; eventually to being a helicopter pilot</td>
<td>Most LD in small unit experiences as OIC. Can’t narrow down to one experience, but was separated from bosses, &amp; had freedom to experiment/practice leadership; Draw LD lessons from good &amp; bad bosses</td>
<td>Good listener &amp; collaborator before deciding; seek input &amp; information; often provides compromise solution; prefers to be very face-to-face in leadership interactions</td>
<td>Two mentors for career decisions; not LD</td>
<td>Basic officer course mostly administration; not much leadership. Early MBTI results not helpful.</td>
<td>Wished he could have had leadership techniques and TSDM case studies before he was the OIC or a Dept Head; MBTI debrief done here was the best</td>
<td>On-the-job experiences, hearing sea stories, and observations key; reads professional publications, recalls <em>Lincoln on Leadership</em> (book); MBTI and LD at USNWC helped; not as intellectually strong as some other Navy officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>College ROTC</td>
<td>Became subject</td>
<td>Loves looking at Multiple</td>
<td>Dept head class in</td>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>In addition to LD</td>
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<td>Participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Savanna</td>
<td>Accounting background and MBA</td>
<td>Navy Supply Corps (reservist); observed good and bad leaders; Navy has many toxic leaders. She used every LD opportunity to progress in the Navy; used deployed experience and backed it up with academics and management tools.</td>
<td>Fair &amp; honest; big on face to face communication; seeks feedback from subordinates and supervisors; caring, flexible but demanding. Pushes subordinates to think; gives them tools to be successful. “I care about my Navy husband serves as mentor; she believes women can lead in a “macho military environment,” but there is a lack of opportunity and female role models. Did not focus on Navy LD classes other to say she took them. Did not mention CNW classes, but thought it was a bad idea to abolish Joint Forces Command class (liked tactical wargaming and crisis management exercises). Postpones decisions, exercises to get better outcome; No formal LD plan, but takes every opportunity to develop herself. Will take senior leadership course in Sept. Says “leadership is all about character; Navy core values.”</td>
<td>Navy was “basically administration” and learning how the Navy operates. for leaders class was big; spurred self-actualization. Took leadership strategies too. Doing a cognitive complexity study to improve decision making. Took MBTI (ENTP) &amp; emotional intelligence exam.</td>
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<td>#2 in charge at large state school</td>
<td>matter expert (in charge of flight operations) and squadron instructor in AF. Moved to Navy reserves to continue in aviation. “Not lots of leadership opportunities in Navy unless you are the commander.” Owns several start-up businesses &amp; uses military leadership learning as foundation there</td>
<td>large scale problems &amp; asking why; does well interacting with people (connector); leading &amp; giving mentorship; innovative; &amp; flexible; genuine and caring</td>
<td>mentors in several industries; Navy mentor helped to re-balance Service/civilian life and pushed USNWC; spurred self-reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td>classes, values self-awareness, it is needed before leading others; responds to sea stories, retroactively looks at situations/experiences to glean leadership lessons; reads books on communication &amp; other topics; Drive (book about the theory of motivation). Applies military leadership learnings to his business.</td>
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<td>Steve</td>
<td>Medical Corps: BS in chemistry and MS industrial hygiene. Liked military job structure vs. OSHA. Did not focus on early leadership foundations.</td>
<td>Said MBTI and 360 were interesting tools for understanding self &amp; others. Used findings (introvert) to ID possible issues. Likes reading books and has had shore command, but did not relay early Navy experiences.</td>
<td>Can’t judge himself. Not a charismatic leader. Good manager, good at functional business &amp; following up. Direct and demanding, but takes staff input into decisions (balancing) &amp; explains reasons</td>
<td>No long term mentor, but sought out help for Fitness Reports from seniors. Never pursued that kind of relationship.</td>
<td>CO school seemed to have most LD &amp; training, not much structured LD in Command Leadership School; medical community has own week-long Lead training. “Navy does not provide the opportunity to acquire the proven leadership skills or people management.”</td>
<td>Did not like leadership case study approach; hard for him to translate books &amp; training into practicing leadership. Feels being a good leader is innate.</td>
<td>Believes good Navy leaders “float to the top” by demonstrating competence, gaining followers’ trust, having good interpersonal relations, and accomplishing the mission. That’s not him. However, he did find command climate survey feedback helpful (lack of eye contact). Feels more training &amp; education is needed in giving/receiving feedback to improve leadership skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheng</td>
<td>BA political science. Family history of military</td>
<td>Most developmental experience was Damage Control Assistant School</td>
<td>Fair, give others opportunities to succeed or fail; a little hard at</td>
<td>Had informal mentors, one former dept head was</td>
<td>Did not focus much on other Navy courses, but DCA school</td>
<td>Has not had Navy War College classes yet.</td>
<td>Likes to get ahead of a problem, have subordinates involved in the plan, make</td>
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<td>Sam</td>
<td>Eagle Scout, learned early leadership lessons at a summer youth camp age 16-17. “Helping others develop comfort in the wilderness;” gain confidence. Went to Merchant Marine</td>
<td>SWO on guided missile destroyer; key leader initiative CPO to Division Officer Program (experimental helping petty officers serve as DIVOs). Challenge to develop competency in young sailors; required more rigor but worked. Early experiences pre-passionate &amp; compassionate; showing a desire to be part of an organization or profession gains followers. Having a sense of humor, being vulnerable; tell the narrative-relate your experience to others so they understand the</td>
<td>protective and helped overcome a “caustic work environment” one they reflected on and analyzed for leadership failures (moral); rehashing old sea stories</td>
<td>learning was formative. “Navy, as a system, does not put a whole lot of thought or effort into matching talent to task” (personnel management system-poli sci major in engineering)</td>
<td>NPS MBA in financial management some more exposure to ethics (business). Had technical competence for driving ships, early Navy experience in being a division officer on a 4-year old steamship with 20-30 people underneath his care was a pretty</td>
<td>Coming from NLEC, I wanted to continue to develop at USNWC – leadership reflection, professional reflection &amp; reading, developing, communicating and writing.</td>
<td>There has to be a place for reflection. Questions what leads to destructive behavior by sailors, especially leaders? Had a leader with different moral compass-presented an ethical challenge: “How do you provide them the opportunity to get out of that?” Has an issue with leadership training</td>
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| Mike        | Naval Academy athlete; saw                    | Put in charge of 15 people as a SWO; had about three | Passionate, outspoken; tries to communicate | No formal mentor; his dad is his moral | Taught SWO classes under NLEC. Saw | Liked USNWC leadership elective course: | “Experience and reflecting on them is what allows for self-
value of contributing to team mission early on. Navy service understanding grew; but "rooted towards the crew." Innate personal drive.

months to figure it out (teams contribution to ship’s mission). Saw early success-created virtuous cycle; thought he could do this leadership stuff in Navy. Early experience with poor department heads & some good division officers who were picking up slack- good role models. Saw patrol craft led by LT; “Looked like coolest job ever.” Became XO & CO of minesweeper.

through actions and how he approaches being a leader as well; builds consensus; get many opinions before deciding (balanced processing). Always been self-aware, possibly a reflection of athletic background; mental preparation and feedback on knowing where you stand.

rock, but not mentor. Recognizes need to reach out to senior officers for mentorship, but athletic attitude to achieve on own merits prevented it, combined with poor leaders early on made him reticent. Has officers he models behavior and leadership qualities after & stays in touch with a few

limitations of on-the-job training/experience and formal schooling, especially difficulty of teaching prior to experience and leadership and ethics prior to experience. Did not comment much on his personal Navy LD classes, other to say he attended command leadership school and dept head school but more on his teaching experience: Have to match experience with learning and have to start habits at beginning of experience that may not bear fruit until they’re (students) through some level of experience so they can see what you

Operational leadership & Moral foundations. Ethics symposium-hard to cover thousands of years of human development; found it wanting; too short.

awareness.” Saw as dept head and XO & CO that unit took on his personality that he chose to show. Says his morals are stronger influence than ethics, but professional ethics has improved over time; must meet the standard or else (rewrite log example). Cynical about Navy culture. Navy values are “hollow.”

Navy culture & Character not good at developing this. Too many requirements & regulations one chooses what you’re not doing-danger in “making not good enough, good enough.”

We have not learned from the McCain or Fitzgerald-need more training not assessments. Cites
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<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Submariner; UT systems engineer in nuclear power Officer Candidate Program.</td>
<td>JPME I at NPS, early training “in the pipeline” before school was not helpful; observation of other leaders &amp; how they approached leadership / seeing what he wanted to do and did not want to do was effective. Second tour was not very positive- poor COs; saw how subordinates reacted to their negative leadership style.</td>
<td>Very approachable, very hands-off [laid-back]; servant leader; solicits opinions prior to making decisions.</td>
<td>Post dept head tour, commodore served as a mentor since 2016 (none earlier). Had career-based discussions, bounce off ideas. Mentor was also good for LD; modeling – a highly effective leader, observing how he approached problems &amp; people &amp; treated them,</td>
<td>Overall, education was minor in his LD. Dept head course was not helpful for LD. CO- XO leadership course taught at NLEC was helpful. 360 feedback after CO course was helpful. Came up with LD plan-share a common vision. Likes to read, will experiment- not exactly trial &amp; error, but trying things out &amp; finding what’s</td>
<td>Did not mention CNW program regarding LD.</td>
<td>poor decision in SWOs to get rid of basic schoolhouse so everyone “learns on-the-job” where in actually no one was!</td>
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</table>

Simon Sinek’s *Leader’s Eat Last* (book); linked to his servant leader focus. “People are going to focus on what you do and how your actions align with your values..more important to display it [values] than talk about it.”

Navy culture consistent for character development? Yes & No answer; bureaucracy and culture hard to change; both good &
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<td>interacted with everyone on a daily basis. Mentor discussed his philosophy and why he was doing things regularly.</td>
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<td>most effective.</td>
<td></td>
<td>bad apples; people who may be interested in their personal lives &amp; career [more than Navy mission]. But Navy is “steering in the right direction.”</td>
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## Appendix I: Listing of Navy Leadership Development Guiding Documents Reviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Author/Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction. (2015). <em>Officer Professional Military Education Policy</em> (CJCSI OPMEP 1800.01E)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chief of Naval Operations. (n.d.) <em>Sailing Directions</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navy Leader Development Framework 1.0 (2017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navy Leader Development Framework 2.0 (2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navy Leader Development Strategy (2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>USNWC June 2018 CNW Graduation Perceptions Survey Analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>USNWC June 2018 CNC&amp;S Graduation Perceptions Survey Analysis.</td>
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</table>
December 12, 2017

Mr. Ed Gillen
Doctoral candidate 2019, College of Professional Studies
Northeastern University
127 Ferry Landing Circle, Portsmouth, RI 02871

Dear Ed,

This letter is to verify that you have permission to conduct your dissertation research study at the US Naval War College in your role as a student at Northeastern University during CY 2018, in accordance with the research protocol outlined in your letter of 11 December, 2017.

Best wishes for a successful study.

Respectfully,

Dr. Lewis Duncan, Provost
US Naval War College
686 Cushing Road
Newport, RI 02814

cc: Dean of Students
Subject line: Learning about your leadership development experiences in the Navy

My name is Ed Gillen, and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University, Boston, MA studying organizational leadership. I am also the director of institutional effectiveness at the USNWC. I am writing to request your assistance in my dissertation research study.

I have a strong interest in the most important experiences Navy officers have had regarding their personal development as leaders, and in the methods they have used to become better leaders.

Your participation in the research would involve sharing your leadership experiences in the Navy and personal leadership development efforts in an interview.

During the interview, I will gather some basic background information, and ask questions that primarily concentrate on your leadership development experiences in the Navy. The interview will last roughly 60 minutes and be recorded for accuracy. All responses will be kept confidential – no personally identifiable information will ever be published. All interviews conducted will follow strict Northeastern University procedures, which include the rights of participants to remain confidential.

If you are interested in taking part in the study, please contact me at; or via email at gillen.e@husky.neu.edu (per Northeastern University IRB, any emails to usnwc.edu must be deleted without response). I will send you a consent form and interview questions. You will have an opportunity to review the interview transcripts for accuracy. You do not have to take part in the study if you do not wish to. Should you so, you have the right to withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Your participation is entirely voluntary; if you do not contact me at my student email address or my personal phone number, you will not be contacted again regarding this research.

Thank you for your consideration and for your time.

V/r,

Ed Gillen
EdD Candidate, Northeastern University, Boston, MA

NEU email: gillen.e@husky.neu.edu
Consent Form

Northeastern University, Boston, MA

Northeastern Department: College of Professional Studies (CPS) Organizational Leadership concentration

Name of Investigator(s): Dr. Bryan Patterson (Principal Investigator), Edward Gillen (Student Researcher)

Title of Project: An Intrinsic Case Study of the Experiences of Naval Officers’ Leadership Development

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

You are invited to participate in this research study on the important experiences that contributed to your development as a Navy leader, and how these experiences connect with the Navy’s leadership development programs and methods.

This document will provide information about the study, but the Student Researcher will describe it to you initially. You may ask any questions you wish about the study. When you are prepared to make a decision about whether to participate or not, simply tell the researcher of your decision. Your participation is completely voluntary; you do not have to participate and if you decide not to participate, there will be no adverse impact to you. Should you decide to participate in this study, you will be one of a number of participants in this research effort. Before agreeing to participate, we ask that you carefully read this form and sign this statement. You will receive a copy to keep.

This study is being conducted by Edward Gillen, a Doctoral Candidate in Organizational Leadership at Northeastern University, Boston, MA. This study is performed under the supervision of Dr. Bryan Patterson (Northeastern University).

Why is this research study being done?
The purpose of this research study is to explore and understand the experiences of Navy officers that contributed significantly to their leadership development.

I invite you to participate in this study and request your consent to interview you. Additionally, a review Navy guidance on leader development (Navy Leadership Development Strategy, Navy Leader Development Framework, The Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP), etc., and USNWC institutional assessment reports (group-level data on leadership outcomes) will be part of the study.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
The leadership development experiences of intermediate-level and senior-level USNWC Navy officers are the primary focus of this research.
What will I be asked to do?
I will ask all participants to participate in a semi-structured interview that I will record and have transcribed. The interview will take roughly 60 minutes and will be conducted at a location of your choosing. The interview will take place during 2018. The interview will consist of 6 questions and related follow-up/probes, and some initial demographic/administrative questions. I will offer you an opportunity to review the transcript of your interview for accuracy.

I will ask you to select a pseudonym to protect your confidentiality. All responses to interview questions will be kept confidential to the best of our ability. Any reports or publications based on this research will only use the selected pseudonym, so no participant can be identified as being part of the study.

Are there any benefits or risks to participating?
There is also no foreseeable risk to participating in the study and there are no direct benefits to you for study participation. However, since the study is designed to gather knowledge about your leadership development, it may spur reflection and promote future progress in this area.

Who will see the information about me?
Your involvement in this study will be confidential and your personal information will be protected. All data collected will be stored in a password protected computer and all documents, audio-recordings, and study material will be preserved in a locked file cabinet in the office of the Student Researcher’s home. Only the Principal Investigator (Dr. Bryan Patterson) and Student Researcher (Edward Gillen) will have access to research files. Once the study is completed, data will be retained and destroyed in accordance with Northeastern University guidelines.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?
If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Mr. Edward Gillen at 516-641-5773 (cell) or gillen.e@husky.neu.edu (NEU email). You may also contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Bryan Patterson at b.patterson@northeastern.edu

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, Mail Stop: 560-177, 360 Huntington Avenue, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

I appreciate your willingness to participate in this important study.
**Participant’s Agreement**
I have read the information provided above and understand the information presented. My questions to date have been answered. I agree to participate in this research study voluntarily, and my signature below indicates this; and my understanding that I can withdraw at any time.

**Please indicate your consent by signing below:**

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<th>Signature of person agreeing to take part</th>
<th>Date</th>
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**Printed name of person above**

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<th>Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent</th>
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**Printed name of person above**
Interview Protocol

Time/Date of interview:

Researcher:

Interviewee pseudonym:

**Part I** 0-10 minutes to describe the study, answer questions, and engender rapport with the participant.

**Introductory Statement:** Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this research is to explore and understand the experiences you have had that contributed significantly to your leadership development in the Navy. Primary data collection will include individual interviews with officers that will last approximately one hour.

Since your responses are so important, and I want to ensure that I accurately capture your answers, I would like to audio-tape our discussion today. Do I have permission to record the interview? *(If yes, turn on recording devices).* I will also be taking some notes during our conversation. I’d like to remind you that your answers will remain confidential and only the pseudonym you have selected will be used when quoting from the interview texts. A professional transcription service will perform the transcription and you will have an opportunity to review the transcript for accuracy. Interview recordings will be destroyed after they have been transcribed.

To meet the ethical requirements of Northeastern University, you must sign the Consent Form. I have a copy with me. *(See Appendix C)*. In a nutshell, this document asserts that:

1) all information collected will be held in confidence;

2) your involvement is voluntary and you may stop participating at any time; and

3) there are no perceived risks to participate in the study, we do not intend to cause any harm.

Do you have any questions about the study, interview process, the form, or how your data will be used? Do you agree to sign the Consent Form? Thank you.

This interview should last about an hour. During this time I’d like you to answer several questions about your leadership development and leadership experiences in your own words.
Part II 0-50 minutes to conduct the interview.

Background Questions:

Pseudonym:

Gender: M  F

Student level and Rank:

Race:

Ethnicity:

Navy community:

Assignment before USNWC:

Assignment after USNWC: (if known)

Years of Service:

Highest degree level:    Major:    School:

Had command?  Y  N

Leadership electives? Y  N

NWC Email:

Personal email: (for member checking)

Cell phone: (for follow-up only if needed)
Interview Questions

1) What was your initial motivation to join the Navy? Does your service to the Navy align with your personal goals? How?

2) What leadership development experiences, assignments, or programs in the Navy were most important or helpful to your overall leadership development?

   How did these experiences develop you as a leader? Why?

3) What experiences have you had in the Navy that enabled you to become more self-aware?

   How did you process or use this feedback information?
   Have you had a mentor? If so, in what ways did your mentor influence your leadership development?

4) How would you describe yourself as a leader? How would others describe you as a leader?

   Would they say you are open to listening to their (others) ideas or suggestions before making a decision? Can you cite an example?

   Do you routinely solicit opinions or viewpoints of superiors/subordinates? Please explain.

5) How have you personally developed your leadership capacity? What role did:

   a) formal schooling play?

   b) experience and training on-the-job play?

   c) self-guided learning play?

5) What are your future leadership development plans?

6) The CNO and the Navy Leadership Development Framework publication talks about moral and ethical character development. How do these perspectives influence your actions or decisions as a leader? Can you cite an example?

   Do the Navy’s core values play a role? Do you share your values with others? How so?

   Is the Navy culture conducive to character or ethical development of its officers? Why do you say that?

   Is there anything you would like to add about leadership development in the Navy?
Member Check Form

Time/Date of interview:
Researcher:
Interviewee pseudonym:

I have reviewed the interview transcripts and findings and I indicate agreement with the following statements (please check boxes that apply and initial on the bottom):

- I verify that the report is accurate, comprehensive and genuine.

- I do not concur with the report and I make the following corrections (see comments/suggestions below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee initial</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Date</th>
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Please initial above digitally and return via email within 7 days.

Comments:

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NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION

Date: February 12, 2018  IRB #: CPS18-01-02
Principal Investigator(s): Bryan Patterson
                         Edward Gillen
Department: Doctor of Education Program
            College of Professional Studies
Address: 20 Belvidere
         Northeastern University
Title of Project: An Intrinsic Case Study of the Experiences of Naval
                  Officers’ Leadership Development
Participating Sites: US Naval War College approval in file
DHHS Review Category: Expedited #6, #7
Informed Consents: One (1) signed consent form
Monitoring Interval: 12 months

APPROVAL EXPIRATION DATE: FEBRUARY 11, 2019

Investigator’s Responsibilities:
1. The informed consent form bearing the IRB approval stamp must be used when
   recruiting participants into the study.
2. The investigator must notify IRB immediately of unexpected adverse reactions, or new
   information that may alter our perception of the benefit-risk ratio.
3. Study procedures and files are subject to audit any time.
4. Any modifications of the protocol or the informed consent as the study progresses must
   be reviewed and approved by this committee prior to being instituted.
5. Continuing Review Approval for the proposal should be requested at least one month
   prior to the expiration date above.
6. This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any
   other university approvals that may be necessary.

C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

Nan C. Regina, Director
Human Subject Research Protection

Northeastern University FWA #4630