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The LEAP Model: Perceptions of Emergency Service Leaders of Legitimacy

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The *LEAP* Model: Perceptions of Emergency Service Leaders of Legitimacy

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ABSTRACT

This study adds to the qualitative data showing how leaders in the emergency services perceive legitimacy and the bases of power. The study examines the perception of leaders and their perspective on why subordinates view their leader as legitimate and/or authentic. Two definitions of legitimacy are presented: the traditional viewpoint of French and Raven (1959) associating legitimate power “with having status or formal job authority” and the other proposed by Maxfield (2012) in the LEAP leadership model basing legitimacy or authenticity more on the characteristics and skills leaders bring to their positions. Emergency service students interviewed leaders in their career fields, determining their view of legitimacy. They found that few emergency services leaders perceived legitimacy as traditionally defined, but rather they saw it as the experience, education and training, the skills and traits they bring to the position. Subordinate trust was important to their definition of legitimacy and this was on leader experience and integrity. The results of this study posit that leadership education should include developing the legitimacy and authenticity of leaders beyond the traditional aspects of position and/or rank.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, leadership training and leadership education have permeated business, politics, academia, and our national lexicon. Yet, it appears that as a nation we have little or no confidence in our leadership. Barbara Kellerman (2012), in her book, *The End of Leadership* contends that, "...while the leadership industry has been thriving growing and prospering beyond anyone's early imaginings—leaders by and large are performing poorly, worse in many ways than before, miserably disappointing in any case to those among us who once believed the experts held the keys to the kingdom (p. xv)." Her premise is that because of technology such as the Internet, cell phones, social networking, etc., followers are finding ways to make traditional leaders, using traditional methods, less effective. In some ways we agree with this phenomenon. However, we also see something more serious and alarming with regard to contemporary leadership.

Over the last 20 years or so, we have observed society becoming obsessed with instant gratification and glamour. Consequently, leaders and in a general sense, parents, have gravitated toward seeking popularity and/or fame as opposed to providing character and substantive leadership. Leaders have used hollow platitudes of hope and change to gain favor with followers, but have not been able to deliver leaving their followers disenchanted, if not jaded.

French and Raven's (1959) research on the bases of social power is the most widely quoted writing on the source of leader power. Their research provides a framework of dyadic relationships connecting the person with the power and the persons influenced by the power. French and Raven identified five types of power as legitimate, reward, coercive, referent, and expert. Northouse (2013, pp. 10-11) further divided the types of power into position and personal power. Position power is the power a person acquires from being holder of a position,

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rank or office within an organization. Because of position, these leaders can exercise any or all of legitimate, reward or coercive authority as the bases of their power. French and Raven defined legitimate as being “associated with having status or formal job authority.” Reward power comes from the leader’s ability to provide rewards to subordinates. Coercive power is “the capacity to penalize or punish others.” Personal power, on the other hand, is the authority followers attribute to leaders. It is gained based on referent or expert power. Referent power comes from the followers’ liking or identification for the leader. Followers attribute expert power to the leader when they perceive a leader as being competent and knowledgeable as a leader or in the business enterprise.

The question is, “Why are our leaders so ineffective?” Barbara Kellerman may be right in her assertion that technology has changed the role and function of leaders. However, we feel there may be a much simpler explanation. If our premise is correct, it will take much effort from scholars, those in positions of authority, and most importantly, parents to educate and implement a shift in thinking.

Leadership is holistic, not prescriptive. This may be where people have gone wrong in their thinking. As Barbara Kellerman asserts in her book, the leadership-training/education trend is somewhat nascent and based on the belief that anyone can become a leader if they take a few classes and apply a few principles. But as she points out, this does not seem to be necessarily true. Max Van Manen (1990), an educator/scholar argues that the prescribed method for human science, in contrast to natural science involves description, interpretations, and self-reflective or critical analysis. In other words, we explain nature, but we must understand human life.

Scholarly work on leadership, in a relative sense, is lacking. We feel that the Newtonian approach to the study of leadership has been one of the reasons. What we mean by this is

scientists have used the approach that if leadership can be broken down to its most basic unit or atomized, it can then be rebuilt in a step-by-step method, thereby creating a prescription for building great leaders. Yet, because we are dealing with the dynamics of being human, leadership is a *subjective*, not an objective experience. Therefore, we subscribe more to an Einsteinian approach. The Einsteinian view *infers* a reality based on the analysis of the relationship between the observed and the observer. It is easy to study, survey, quantify, and statistically analyze formative and summative results of various leadership strategies to find what works. However, it does not tell us how it works; or how one leader is able to get results that another leader does not, while using the same strategies. Applying strategies or theories is only part of the leadership equation.

Leadership Theories

There are dozens, if not hundreds of definitions for leadership. All of them are probably right in one form or another because leadership is so hard to pin down to a specific concept. So, for the purposes of this paper we will offer a working definition of what we believe to be one of the better leadership characterizations. Leadership is: *A process and state where an individual influences a group and the group agrees to the influence of the individual in order to reach a desired ideal or vision.*

With that thought in mind, it would be beneficial to briefly introduce (or re-introduce) some of the more prevalent theories on leadership. This is by no means an exhaustive list, as there are too many. We are just presenting the more common and well-known theories for a better understanding of some of the research and work developed around leadership. We will not explore these theories in depth, but they will be important to understand as we look at our *LEAP* leadership model.

Nature versus Nurture—The Great Man Theory

Are great leaders born, natural leaders or were they developed or nurtured to become great leaders? This debate has been going on for a long time and there is probably some legitimacy in both positions. Maybe a better way to describe these differing views is to look at them as *trait, attribute, or characteristic leadership* versus *skill-based leadership*.

Trait, attribute, or characteristic leadership ascribes that a leader is born with certain characteristics, attributes and/or traits that endow them with leadership abilities. Some of these traits may be things like intelligence, extroversion, verbal proficiency, physical factors (such as height), and so on. This particular concept has been studied for years. Researchers have worked to discover those traits that are common among many leaders. This is appealing to most of us because it fits with our experience and beliefs (or at least our hopes that a great leader has been born and will emerge when needed). One problem with this research approach is that while some traits and characteristics were identified it seems that the list continues to grow. This may be because in these studies leadership was not explored by context or situation.

Skills-based leadership ascribes that a leader develops those skills and abilities that make a good leader. Those skills and/or abilities can basically be broken down into three main areas: Technical skills, interpersonal skills, and conceptual/analytical skills. This also is appealing in that it gives hope to those who may not have, or believe they have the inborn traits of leadership. By learning and developing specific skills, a person may be able to enhance his or her leadership potential. One of the biggest weaknesses of this approach is that just having or developing these skills is not a good predictor of leadership success. Another weakness we find in this approach is that many of the skills can really be considered traits or characteristics, so it is hard to define what skills really enhance leadership ability (Northouse, 2010).

Path-Goal Theory

The Path-Goal theory basically asserts the function of a leader is to motivate the follower by finding ways of increasing personal payoffs for the individual with his or her employment goal attainment and making the route to those payoffs easier by clarifying desired outcomes, eliminating barriers and increasing the opportunities for personal growth and satisfaction of the follower. One of the interesting aspects of the Path-Goal theory is that it identifies some different approaches to leadership, namely:

1. Directive Leadership—the leader gives the followers instructions about their task (e.g., what is expected, how it is to be done, and when it is to be done).
2. Supportive Leadership—the leader is friendly, approachable and taking care of the needs and wellbeing of followers.
3. Participative Leadership—the leader is one who invites the followers to share in the decision-making processes by consulting and incorporating the ideas, input, and opinions of followers.
4. Achievement-Oriented Leadership—the leader challenges followers to rise to their highest levels of personal and/or team achievement.

A major strength of the Path-Goal leadership theory is that it underscores the importance of leadership's relationship with subordinate performance by removing barriers to performance and giving clarity to goals and outcomes. However, the biggest weakness we see in this theory is that it seems to be a bit nebulous in identifying the relationship between motivation and leadership, or in other words, it seems to be more of a management tool than a leadership attribute and is a little too complex to be easily understood (Northouse, 2010).

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Psychodynamic Approach

The Psychodynamic Approach is not really a theory of leadership, but rather a different way to approach leading. It is based on the assumption that everyone has a different personality type and responds differently to leadership based on their personality. Many of you may be familiar with or even have participated in surveys or questionnaires designed to determine your personality type. An example of this would be the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator. This approach is based in some of Sigmund Freud's, Carl Jung's, and others' work in psychology. In fact, Carl Jung's work on personality types led to the classifications most prevalent today. They are: 1) extroversion vs. introversion; 2) sensing vs. intuiting; 3) thinking vs. feeling; and 4) judging vs. perceiving. From these four classifications there are 16 different combinations of personality dimensions.

The Psychodynamic Approach asserts that the leader needs to become more aware of subordinates' personality types as well as his or her own, and how the subordinates will respond in work and task relationships. This identifies the apparent strength of the Psychodynamic Approach—that the leader becomes more aware his or her own approach to leadership, of the individual subordinate needs and the relationship between tasks and success. Yet, as one can imagine, that is also identifies the greatest weakness. It appears to be a gargantuan task for the leader to learn, be aware of, and facilitate the needs of each subordinate. While this may be very effective among small work groups, it seems apparent that it would have major drawbacks in larger more complex organizations (Northouse, 2010).

Servant Leadership

Robert Greenleaf, in the 1970s coined the phrase “servant leadership,” which has since gained popularity and become a topic of study and research. Basically, Servant Leadership is just

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as it sounds, to lead by being a servant. Greenleaf argued that a person becomes a leader because it is his or her nature to serve. In other words, Greenleaf was asserting that a person first becomes a servant by being concerned about the needs and well-being of others, and then is bestowed leadership by those being served.

As one can imagine, this has become very popular. Who does not want to feel that he or she matters and that someone is looking out for him or her? The great strength of servant leadership is that focuses on people first; serve the needs of subordinates and they will perform at higher levels. The biggest weakness we see in this approach is that the leader may become so involved in serving they have no time or compulsion to create and strive toward a preferred future or vision of where the group or organization needs to move (Greenleaf Foundation, 1970).

Contingency Leadership or Leader-Match

Contingency Theory, introduced by Fred Fiedler (1964) asserts that a leader's effectiveness is based upon the situation or context of the issue. In other words, contingency theory is that a leader is matched to a situation based upon the leader's personal style; hence the situation determines the type of leader needed. Fiedler developed the "least preferred co-worker" scale (LPC) to help determine a person's style or orientation to match their potential for leadership in a certain context. This scale is used widely today by many organizations with the hope of identifying the right leader for the right situation.

One of the strengths of this theory is the fact that there has been a lot of research and empirical support for it. One other strength is the fact that contingency theory asserts a leader does not have to be effective in all situations, which implies that a one-size-fits-all leader is not necessarily the best approach.

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The biggest weakness to contingency theory we see is that it does not explain what to do when a person in a leadership position is not the right fit for the situation. Because this theory is developed around personality, there seems to be little consideration for development and training of current leaders, nor does it explain well why some leaders whose styles do not match the situation or context are still successful.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership's goal is to transform people and/or organizations into more vibrant, robust, and dynamic entities that are in congruence with core values and principles of excellence. To simplify, the transformational leader creates vision and provides the supportive network to allow followers to achieve the vision. This is usually accomplished by the leader using one or more of the following means to achieve success: 1) Inspiration, 2) Intellectual simulation, 3) Trust, and 4) Individualized attention.

One of the strongest features of transformational theory is that it is not just based on the attributes and/or needs of the leader, but also incorporates the needs and desires of the followers. So, leadership emerges as a result of the interaction of the leader and followers. One other strength similar to the one previously mentioned, is that transformational leadership has a strong emphasis on morality, values, ethics, and follower needs. This gives the theory an intuitive appeal.

One weakness of transformational leadership is that it is hard to measure this and may be because the four factors introduced above seem to be inter-related rather than independent. Another weakness we see is that the theory may depend too much on trait or personality characteristics, which leads one to question whether or not this can be taught or developed. Our last criticism on transformational leadership theory is that there may be a tendency for this theory

to develop a concept of a “hero” leader by focusing on the leader and not the holistic interaction of the leader, followers, organization, and environment (Northouse, 2010).

Management vs. Leadership

Because leadership has been unconsciously married to business and/or military settings, we feel that a natural confusion has occurred between management and leadership. In our opinion, this confusion has been exacerbated through the process of scientific inquiry. While both of these skills are important to the function of administration, they are also the anathema of each other. Take a moment to think about the role and attributes of management and the role and attributes of leadership.

First of all, what is the main function of management? If one really breaks it down to the most basic level, management is the process of controlling and compressing (to the best of one’s ability) the events of one’s environment in order to ensure efficiency and desired outcomes. In other words, it focuses on the processes or means by which outcomes are reached. It seeks to eliminate chaos or to tone-down any disruptive noise which may affect the processes and ultimately the outcome (or so that is the implied reason). However, doesn’t that tend to make the focus on means and processes? Isn’t that why there are policies and strict procedures for job performance? In fact, aren’t we expected to be busy at all times so that our process and productivity can be measured? Aren’t we compensated for our efficiency and output?

Leadership, on the other hand is expansive and nurturing. Leaders foster exploration, experimentation, reflection, and surprisingly, a little chaos (Wheatley, 2006). Leaders try not to be bound by firm policies, rules and procedures because they may inhibit the ability to move toward the vision. Leadership’s main role is to keep the vision (end) as the focus and foster a sense of community in seeking the vision. The focus is on doing the right thing. As Peter

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Drucker said, “Managers do things right (**means**); leaders do the right thing (**ends**)” (parenthetical comments added). Sometimes means and ends can complement and other times they conflict. It is for this reason we think that legitimacy is more just having authority (French and Raven, 1959).

LEAP Model of Leadership

Maxfield (2012) introduced a new leadership model, which redefines the bases of power and legitimacy. This model, designated by the acronym LEAP, provides a guide for developing and assessing leadership. Maxfield and Fisher (2012) propose it as an effective tool in professionalizing fire and emergency service leadership (or for that matter, any other discipline). The LEAP model is comprised of the four leader traits or characteristics they believe to be most important. A leader is: 1) Legitimate—a leader has legitimate power, knowledge, skill and ability developed through his or her work, experience, education, and attention to detail; 2) Ethical—a good leader has strong character, strong values, and makes ethical and value-based decisions when confronted with choices and/or dilemmas; 3) Affective—a good leader has the ability to instill, trust, confidence, emotion, passion, and create vision with others; and, 4) Persistent—a good leader does not give up when times are tough or there is resistance to a righteous idea or plan, but shows determination in achieving goals and objectives.

The LEAP model appears to fit when applied to the desired proficiencies/outcomes of the Professional Fire Officer Development Standard (National Fire Protection Association, 2012). The education, training, and experience components of the professional standard seek to demonstrate the individual’s legitimate expertise in the discipline by assessing the demonstrative outcomes of the taxonomies of learning, e.g., cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (Bloom, Krathwhol, & Masia, 1964; Bloom, 1956).

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Benjamin Bloom, David Krathwohl and other colleagues (1964) studied the objectives of education. After many exploratory meetings with college and university examiners, they identified divisions within the objectives of education. They were:

1. *Cognitive*: Objectives that emphasize remembering, recalling or reproducing something that has been believed to be learned. Cognitive objectives also vary from simple recall of material to combining and synthesizing new ideas and/or material.

2. *Affective*: Objectives that emphasize a feeling, an emotion, or acceptance or rejection of material. They further identified these objectives as interests, attitudes, appreciations, values, and emotional sets or biases.

3. *Psychomotor*: Objectives that emphasize motor skills (muscular), manipulation of materials and objects, or some act that requires a neuromuscular coordination.

From our observations and study it appears that most educators have placed emphasis for training and educational methods on the cognitive and psychomotor domains. While these are important and effective, it is the affective domain that seems more intriguing and relevant to adult learning. In other words, once something has been put into one's awareness, has it been accepted enough to bring about change in one's viewpoint and/or behavior?

The self-development section of the proposed NFPA Professional Standard assesses the individual's growth and understanding of inter-personal skills, values, ethics, communication and efficacy in creating/ promoting vision, emotion, passion, etc. It can be posited that self-efficacy, or the belief that one has the knowledge and skills to produce creative solutions and outcomes seems to demonstrate or reflect intrinsic motivation to engage in ethical development and affective or creative activities such as vision building (Gong, Huang, & Fahr, 2009).

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Finally, implied as is the intended outcome of the professional development model, an individual demonstrates a certain amount of persistence in completing the process and portfolio requirements of the standard. No empirical evidence exists (yet) that this fire and emergency services standard's process completely develops an individual's leadership ability. However, considerable anecdotal evidence shows the correlation between education, training, experience and leadership success.

METHODOLOGY

Twenty-eight senior emergency services students in a leadership capstone course were asked to interview public administrators. Most chose to interview administrators in their career field – fire (14), police (7), or emergency management (3). Other fields (4) included city government, health and university administration, and disaster agency management. Three interviewees were female, none from police or fire. One of the questions the leaders were asked was: “What personal characteristics or background do you have that your subordinates would say legitimize you as a leader?” Other questions were related to ethics, vision, and persistence. The students asked to have the responses supported by leadership experiences and specific examples or stories. Then they wrote the responses into a narrative as part of a paper about leadership. The interview was chosen because it is suitable for the novice as well as the sophisticated researcher (Turner, 2010).

The goal of this study was to determine how legitimacy was defined by leaders/administrators as interpreted by the students and whether they discovered new insights about leadership legitimacy. The construct of this study was based on the premise that legitimacy is a social dynamic, which means that it is not a *thing* but a *relation* within a group of people (see definition of leadership above).

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The interviews provide rich qualitative data resulting in better understanding of phenomena, as well as generating hypotheses or propositions related to the phenomena. Grounded theory methodology provides a process for analysis through developing categories of information, interconnecting them, and then developing theoretical propositions. This research methodology follows a process of analysis, described as the data analysis spiral (Creswell, 2013, p. 183). Interview data is organized and then read, while the researcher makes notes and memos in the margins. Subsequently, a process of describing, classifying and interpreting begins. This process puts the data in context, makes comparisons, and categorizes the information using codes. Codes are combined, reduced in number and, propositions are put forward connecting the phenomena with their contexts.

FINDINGS

The study found that establishing legitimacy as perceived by the leaders interviewed is best accomplished through experience, education and training, skills, and traits. A consensus perception (based on the codes) appeared to affirm these were the most important characteristics.

Experience

Experience was the most frequent reason interviewees gave for subordinates viewing them as legitimate leaders. Experience was identified 23 times. Working “from the ground up” has provided them opportunities to serve in many positions and take on many responsibilities. “The main thing that legitimizes you as a leader is your current experiences with the guys you work with,” said one leader.

Four leaders identified longevity and/or seniority as important. One saw his career as “a path of consistent progression and promotion.” Another said, “I believe being in a position for months and/or years allows for a greater understanding of the position’s responsibilities and

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objectives.” Another added that through experience he has “been able to accrue heavy and complex responsibilities [leading to] an authoritative positional role in the process.” A fourth indicated that having done the job of those she now leads is important in legitimizing her as a leader.

Two leaders indicated that their experience made them competent leaders and two said their experience gave them understanding. One fire chief indicated that “the experiences he carries with him have helped give him a deep understanding and appreciation for the work of his firefighters.” Another leader said, “I have shown by my past experience that my judgment is sound.” Another added, “When people know that you have been around for a while, they look to you for answers.”

Experience and reflection has allowed them to learn from other leaders. One administrator said experience and reflections allowed him to see what he liked and did not like in other leaders and to observe the type of values others demonstrated that had importance to him. This reflective process made him more aware of some of his personal qualities, as well as his strengths and deficiencies. One fire chief indicated: “I learned from my old leader’s inadequacies. One lieutenant was not the leader of the crew. The engineer was the unofficial leader. It was a difficult process to learn.” He added appreciatively, “I had a captain who was a strong leader and helped me to develop my own leadership skills by counseling and heart-to-heart talks.”

Education and Training

While experience teaches leadership skills, formal education and training also help to legitimize administrators in the emergency services as leaders. Eight interviewees identified education and training as important. Education is often defined as the formal studies taken at

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colleges or universities which help someone to think critically and problem solve. Training on the other hand, is more practical and often done in context.

One leader offered his view on the relationship between experience and education. “Even with my experience I am learning new methodologies and believe that education is the key in maintaining good leadership.” Another added, “I have proven skills and training that echoes through my leadership. I believe that is why others are drawn to my leadership.” Another said, “People look to well-educated people to know the answers to ... problems.”

Skills

Skills are often distinguished from traits because they are learned rather than inherited (Northouse, 2013), however they may often overlap. Fourteen interviewees identified vital skills they thought important in legitimizing them as leaders. The following skills were identified by the interviewed leaders/administrators: *communication and listening (8), problem solving and decision making (5), and technical expertise (1)*.

Communication and problem solving were identified as skills the leaders use on a daily basis. Good listening skills are critical, according to one leader. “By listening to team members who have different levels of experience and expertise, [a leader] can learn and [get] more understanding and [build] relationships,” he said. The result is greater success in accomplishing the overall goals and objectives of the unit. Another said, “Legitimate leaders are understanding and willing to listen.... Having the ability to listen is critical and not taking offense when someone has different ideas.” A fire chief emphasized the importance of listening in decision making. “I rarely make a decision without the input of a least a few other members of the department at the combat level,” he said.

Traits and characteristics

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Numerous traits and characteristics were identified as legitimizing leaders. Perhaps most important was honesty and integrity (identified by 14 leaders). Personal integrity combined with experience develops follower trust. “Doing the right thing is important,” said one leader. “Choosing the difficult right over the easy wrong goes right back to your character,” said another leader.

Trust is crucial in the emergency services when a person’s life or death may depend on the decisions of leaders. “You can’t follow someone you don’t trust,” said one leader. Another said he let his personal characteristics guide his actions and he gained the trust of his subordinates. “The guys totally trust me in all aspects of the decisions we make,” said another leader.

One leader focused on the importance of example in building trust. “I do what I say I will do. I live the mission, vision and values of our company. Employees know me. I am visible.” Another said, “I think my deputies know that what I say and what I do is the same thing. I’m never going to ask them to do something I haven’t done before or aren’t willing to do myself.” Another added, “Following the rules, whether you agree with them or not is important to your reputation. You follow the rules because that’s the job.”

Another critical trait identified is the willingness to learn from subordinates and be flexible in decision making. One leader, reflecting back on his first appointment as a leader in the police force said, “Gradually I saw that my ideas were not the only ones and were not always the best ones.” Another said, “Humble leaders tend to be more successful in connecting with their employees.”

Leadership philosophy seemed important as well. Caring about, helping, and mentoring subordinates was identified by three interviewees. Fairness was identified as an important trait

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and other leaders also felt it was important to lead by example. “Maturity plays a huge role in my leadership style as well as my employees. Mature employees, who know what needs to be done just do it. Newer employees need guidance and direction,” said one leader. “You can’t lead from behind and push your employees; you have to lead from the front and encourage them to follow,” another added. “My greatest success is helping others to succeed themselves,” said another.

Five interviewees indicated goal setting and vision were important in legitimizing them as leaders and similarly others felt that task orientation and working hard were also important. “To bring others together to work together, to achieve a common goal, and the ability to establish that common goal” are important characteristics that one interviewee identified as legitimizing him as a leader.

A student interviewer summed up the personal characteristics of the leader he interviewed. “He never really did anything different to make himself stand out from his peers other than working hard, being honest, and always acting mature and showing respect.” Only one interviewee identified his appointment (job authority) was important in legitimizing him as a leader.

The following chart summarizes the characteristics interviewees felt subordinates viewed as important in legitimizing them as leaders.

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Chart 1. Characteristics that legitimize leaders

Experience, 23	Traits (continued)
	Flexible, 1
Education and Training, 8	Caring, 3
	Fairness, 1
Skills, 14	Lead by example, 3
Communication and listening, 8	Goal setting, 5
Problem solving and decision making, 5	Hard work, 2
Technical expertise, 1	Values, 1
	Involved, 1
Traits, 33	Love for department, 1
Honesty and integrity, 14	Creative, 1
Trust, 3	
Learn from subordinates, 2	Appointment, 1

DISCUSSION

Only one leader indicated his legitimate power was based on the traditional definition “associated with having status or formal job authority” (French and Raven, 1959). All leaders saw their legitimacy more in terms of experience, education and training, skills and traits. This fits better Maxfield’s (2012) definition of legitimacy which is “developed through the leader’s work, experience, education, and attention to detail.” It also corresponds better with personal power (Northouse, 2013), which is the authority that followers attribute to leaders, based on referent or expert power. Subordinates identify with the leader based on the perception that he or

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she is competent and knowledgeable. This study is limited in its scope because of its methodology and the size and nature of participants. The interview approach provides qualitative rather than empirical data. Twenty-eight leaders limited to the emergency services field were interviewed and answers were based on one open-ended question: “What personal characteristics or background do you have that your subordinates would say legitimize you as a leader?”

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study suggest two conclusions (or propositions).

- More emphasis is placed by emergency services leaders on experience and working relationships than on formal appointment and job position.
- Trust is more important in the emergency services than a command and control structure. Personal integrity combined with experience lead to trust.

This study appears to affirm the value of the LEAP model as applied to the emergency services and may have application in any leadership context. Leaders can confirm their legitimacy through work experience, education and training, the development of skills and leadership traits. The paper seems to assert that curriculum for leadership development should be developed to introduce and reinforce the development of skills and attributes of legitimacy. By developing courses for reality-based, experiential (ontological) educational experience, students will be able to apply the principles of legitimacy that exceed positions power (French and Raven, 1959).

While this study did not examine the Ethical, Affective, and Persistent aspects of the LEAP model, these characteristics appear to build leadership legitimacy as well as trust. While some of the identified components of legitimacy were traits, most were characteristics and/or skills,

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which could be developed or refined through attention, reflective practice, and experimentation.

We believe that legitimacy in the eyes of the followers is much more than appointed authority, but rather developed characteristics of the leader/administrator, hence the difference between manager and leader, and as such, should be taught in higher education courses.

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