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POLICE OFFICER FOLLOWERSHIP

A Capstone

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty at Governors State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Bradley W. Gronke

Graduation May 2017

## ABSTRACT

The problem within the River Grove Police Department is that the majority of our leadership is getting close to retirement and there is minimal leadership training available for our patrol officers that will soon fill those leadership roles. Action research with the River Grove Police Department explored this problem. Utilizing a foundation of theoretical framework based upon followership, career development, and leader-member exchange three objectives were identified and accomplished through this research. This research identified that there was not a positive linear relationship between followership typology, age and years of experience groups. It also identified if there was a perception among officers that an understanding of followership and the type of follower that they currently are will help in their career development. The research gave participants a tool and knowledge that can potentially help with their career development.

*Keywords:* followership, leader-member exchange, career development

## DEDICATION

This manuscript and action research project is dedicated to the professional men and women of the River Grove police department as well as all future leaders within the law enforcement community.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of this project would not have been possible without the unwavering support of key individuals most notably my family. The encouragement and understanding that was offered by my wonderful wife, Vanessa, and my two children, Riley and Gwen was unmatched through this year's long process.

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I would also like to thank my site supervisor, whom is also my Chief of Police, Rodger Loni for all of his assistance and support for this project as well as always being a great mentor for me within the law enforcement community. I would be remiss if I did not extend gratitude to my independent third party verifier, Chuck Beck, whom the integrity of this research could have been questioned without his wonderful dedication to reviewing my data. Finally, I would like to recognize all my fellow cohorts that were there for me when questions aroused.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Leadership in any field can be challenging. Leading in a police department has very specific and unique challenges (Swanson, Taylor, & Territo, 2001). There have been many studies performed on leadership as well as many books written about leadership, specifically with regards to leading police officers (Haberfeld, 2012; Howe, 2011). However, upon a search of the literature available on the subject, there appears to have been minimal research performed on the concept of followership and the police officer (Chaleff, 2009; Havins, 2010). This research hopes to show that police officers might be able to experience better leadership, if they understand what type of follower they are (Baublits, 2014; Brewer, 2014; Lord, 2008). This may allow for better leadership of officers as well as the possible creation of a leadership training module on followership that could be utilized by other police agencies.

#### **Background of the Study**

The River Grove Police Department is located in the State of Illinois and in the suburban Chicago metropolitan area, sharing a boarder with the city. The village has approximately 10,000 residents and the police department is staffed with 50 police officers. These police officers are provided with initial police academy training as well as opportunities for continuing education throughout their careers. However, as observed by this practitioner and researcher, there is minimal leadership preparation within the police department. These observations and experiences have led me to believe that such a lack of leadership preparation has led to relationship conflict within the agency. Obtaining an understanding of followership for both leaders and followers may provide for improved understanding and communication in

relationships (Brewer, 2014). If that is true then it is possible for police officers to advance in their careers more effectively if they gain an understanding of the theory of followership (Kelley, 1992).

### **Problem Statement**

There is a problem with self-centeredness getting in the way of leadership in Police Departments today (Arnold, 2013). Leaders that develop a robust self-centered approach and place barriers to feedback cannot grow (Chaleff, 1995). Growth between both the ranks of policing and in rank can be an important part of being a good leader. The followers (while some leadership theories use the terms *subordinates* I feel the term follower is more respectful and appropriate for this research) of a leader can be complacent and question their ability to offer feedback to the leader (Chaleff, 1995). Leaders require feedback in order to improve individual professional relationships they have as well as the organization as a whole. Through an understanding and development of the follower through the followership continuum, one may improve the ability for followers to offer feedback and leaders to be accepting of that feedback. The problem within the River Grove Police Department is that the majority of the leadership is nearing retirement and there is minimal leadership training available for patrol officers that will soon fill those leadership roles.

Action research with the River Grove Police Department will explore this problem. Despite having leadership training options available such as the Northwestern School of Staff and Command, officers are not fully prepared to lead and leaders are not fully prepared to follow, researchers such as Chaleff feel that ego is getting in the way of growth (1995). A possible contributor to this problem is a lack of an understanding of followership (Chaleff,

2008). A study which investigates followership growth could be a step towards a remedy of the situation by providing insight for each officer as to the type of follower that they identify as being and the type of follower that they could grow to become.

### **Purpose**

The goal of this exploratory study is to see if there is a relationship between the growth of the police officer within their followership continuum and how that may affect their career development. The police officers of the small suburban department that I work for have experienced a lack of leadership training prior to them entering the roles of supervisor. During this same timeframe there has been increased public accountability placed on the police department due to events that have occurred across the country (United States Department of Justice, 2015). The officers will be provided with a self-study on followership as well as a followership inventory tool as designed by Chaleff (2008) which they will take and then also complete a follow up survey regarding their experience. The objectives of this research are:

- Identify if there is a positive linear relationship between followership typology, age and years of experience groups.
- Identify if there is a perception among officers that an understanding of followership and the type of follower that they currently are will help in their career development.
- Give participants a tool and knowledge that can potentially help with their career development.

## Research Questions

The questions identified for this research should help to provide for further understanding of the role of followership within a small suburban police organization. These questions were developed with a focus on providing a detailed understanding of how an officer moves through the followership continuum. These questions focus the research by looking at followership throughout their career development process. The continuum movement can help them mature into successful leaders and assist with both relational and organizational growth.

- Does a positive linear relationship exist between the level of followership typology and the age of the member of the River Grove Police Department?

If there is a growth of the type of follower after a certain period of time then perhaps followership can develop with maturity.

- Does a positive linear relationship exist between the level of followership typology and number of years of service on the River Grove Police Department?

If there is a growth of the type of follower after a certain period of years of service then perhaps followership can develop over time within a police department and officer.

- How strongly do officers perceive that an understanding of followership and an awareness of the level of follower typology will help with the officer's career development in the River Grove Police Department?

Having an awareness of one's ability to follow can impact their ability to lead (Chaleff, 2009). The perception and understanding of followership is necessary for this process. This

exploratory study of the type of follower that the police officers of the River Grove Police Department currently identify as being and the impact they feel learning about followership will have on their career development will be able to answer these questions.

### **Study Significance**

This study hopes to provide information to a small suburban police department, as a model that may help it provide better career development to their officers. Previous research has examined followership (Carsten, Uhl-bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010; Chaleff, 2009; Collinson, 2006; Crossman, & Crossman, 2011; Kellerman, 2008; Kelley, 1992; Rossi, 2008). In addition connections have been made between followership and leadership (Baublits, 2014; Brewer, 2014; Lord, 2008). However, there has been little research found on followership and leadership in law enforcement (Chaleff, 2009; Havins, 2010; Kellerman, 2008).

Currently, the village has a significant financial deficit and as a result the possibility of lay-offs or not maintaining past staffing levels is a possible reality. Therefore, it is not only to improve the organization by developing the members that it currently has there is a greater need for the individual to also develop and make themselves more marketable should they need to find alternative employment

This study comes at a time where community relations are strained between the protectors and the protected (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). The ability to provide our police officers with leadership training that may help them understand the type of follower they are could help their relationship with the public (Chaleff, 2009; Havins, 2010; Kellerman, 2008). A micro application of this research will be that it may help a small suburban



police department develop officers that are aware of the type of follower that they identify as which could help them with their preparation to lead.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The basis for this research is centered on the theory of followership. The application of this theory will be undertaken through the theory of Career Development. Leader-Member Exchange theory will be utilized to identify in-groups and out-groups. Understanding the type of follower that an officer is can be important as it will help the officer gain information as to their personality, how they interact with their leaders, and how they can develop their careers (Baublits, 2014; Brewer, 2014; Lord, 2008).

#### **Followership**

The concept of followership was first developed by Kelley (1992) whereby he identified that followers can influence leaders in different ways as constructs of their personalities. He defined several types of followers. *Alienated* followers will not willingly commit to any leader as they are deep and independent thinkers. *Passive* followers are not very active participants in group settings, they do as they are instructed to do so but do not think critically about problems. The *conformist* follower will not challenge leaders but are more of a participant than the passive followers. The *pragmatic* follower only engages when appropriate, is careful not to overstep their bounds, but is also participatory when needed. The final category is the *exemplary* follower which is identified as the ideal follower. They work to achieve the best results through attention to detail, strong group engagement, and well thought out constructive feedback as well as challenges to leadership.

Kelley's research was further developed by Chaleff, who in 1995 developed a more refined theory of followership. He explained that everyone is a follower and works to mitigate the passiveness identified with being a follower. Chaleff's structure to followership will be utilized in this research. Chaleff (2009) defined four types of followers: (a) the resource follower, (b) the individualist follower, (c) the implementer follower and (d) the partner follower. Chaleff explained the traits of each of these followership types. The low support and low challenged followers were resource types in that they will only do what is required of them to not get fired. The low support and high challenged followers were individualist types or the type that will only contribute when they can be singled out. The implementer type is when there is high support but low challenge. This follower will be aggressive, but with little attention to risk mitigation. Finally, the partner follower type is high support and high challenge. This type of follower takes accountability for their position as well as for the leader's behavior (Chaleff, 2009).

### **Career Development**

The organizations' membership understanding of the theory of followership and an employee's awareness of where they fall within the followership spectrum can help their overall development within an organization. It can also consequently help the organizations development as well as its success. Taking the time to invest in human resource development or HRD is critical to organizational success (Torraco & Swanson, 1995). The River Grove Police Department is continually working on its strategic direction. "Although not always obvious, there is a natural fit between initiatives for developing employee expertise and the organization's strategic direction" (Torraco & Swanson, 1995, p.12). HRD may encompass programs that are

utilized to improve personal learning such as the followership inventory assessment as well as programs that are a required component for everyone in the organization such as a new evaluation process. While the followership inventory assessment may not have direct strategic value such as the implementation of a new evaluation process it does work to improve the individual police officer within the River Grove Police Department and collectively the organization as a whole through this increased awareness of the way that each member interacts with leadership and also the way that leadership interacts with each member, regardless of age or years of service.

HRD works to support strategic initiatives (Torraco & Swanson, 1995) as previously identified but HRD also seeks to improve performance of the organization, the process, and the individual as a result of creating expertise through learning (Swanson, 1995). This will be further discussed in the literature review but lays a foundation for implementing the followership inventory tool within the River Grove Police Department. The dichotomy of improving both the individual as well as the organization is a theme across the literature on career development.

The fluidity of careers applies to not only the private sector but to the River Grove Police Department as well. Currently, the department is reviewing its authorized strength and strong consideration is being given to reductions through retirement incentives but may also include reduction-in-force strategy. Therefore there is a need to prepare these officers for careers that may lead outside of the organization as well as for their development within the organization. The continuing relative stability in the public sector of careers is balanced with the increasing fluidity that is becoming apparent and as such development of the individual can be just as important as development of the organization for the industry and for society as a whole (Baruch,

2006). The further exploration of the individual versus organizational learning is addressed by Baruch and will be developed in the literature review.

Career development or CD is a component of HRD (Egan, Upton, & Lynham, 2006). The previously discussed relationship of individual development and organizational development is at the core of career development as a component of HRD. Specific career development theories will be discussed further in the literature review that supports the process of career development of the individual. The implementation of the followership inventory tool at the River Grove Police Department seeks to improve the career development of the individual officer and collectively improve the organization.

Learning both about followership and the impact it can have on present and future leaders could assist all members of the organization on an individual basis as well as overall through organizational learning to improve their ability to be mindful, introspective, and critical in their cognitive reflection. These concepts all could potentially improve a police officer's capacity for learning.

The balance between organizational needs and individual needs in career development is one that needs to further be pursued. One such way to reach this balance is through the followership inventory tool. The increased understanding of the type of follower that a member is will help them in their career development individually as they will gain insight into how they interact with leadership and where they can improve upon those interactions. It will also assist with organizational development by offering leadership a way to understand their followers.

Marsick and Watkins (1994) do present these above viewpoints on career development succinctly by stating that “HRD as a combination of training, career development, and organization development offers the theoretical integration needed to envision a learning organization, but it must also be positioned to act strategically throughout the organization” (p.355). I am seeking in this research to utilize the followership inventory tool as a way to engage members of the River Grove Police Department to learn more about themselves and their relationships with leadership as well as leadership’s relationship with subordinate members. This individual learning can improve career development as an integrated part of a larger human resource development plan. This can help to bring the level of organizational learning up and lead to a component of the overall organizational strategy for future improvement. These connections are made through the literature on career development that has been presented and will be further developed in the literature review presented in chapter two.

### **Leader-Member Exchange**

In addition to understanding followership this research will also be guided by leader-member exchange theory. The ability to form working relationships between leadership and followership or leaders and members is important to organizational success (Northouse, 2016). Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory was first established as vertical dyad linkage theory more than three decades ago and continues to be extensively researched (Northouse, 2016). LMX theory is focused on the process of the relationships formed between leaders and followers (members).

According to Northouse, (2016) leadership development can be accomplished through LMX by focusing on substantial exchanges between the leaders and the members. The process

of leadership development involves the stranger phase, acquaintance phase, and the mature partnership phase. These phases are in sync with the four phases of followership as described by Chaleff. Through maturation and by accepting new roles and responsibilities, both officially and unofficially, members move through these phases to develop full partnerships with their leaders. The partnerships that are established have specific qualities that are very important to solid relationships including trust, respect, and obligation. These relationships lead to positive results for both the individual as well as the organization as a whole. Establishing successful leadership through the leader-member relationship can be accomplished through application of this theory.

### **Application to the Study**

Utilizing the theories of followership, career development, and LMX in this study has direct applications. Through administration of the followership inventory that was developed by Chaleff, participants in the study will be able to identify and gain further understanding of their unique followership typology. This knowledge should help improve their relationships across the organization. Utilizing the theory of career development in this research aligns with the objectives of improving career development for the officers through followership. The understanding that the leader-member relationship is mutually beneficial as well as cyclical instead of linear should help leaders better communicate with officers and officers develop in their careers into better leaders.

### **Summary of Chapter One**

While there are leadership training options available to officers they are not fully prepared to lead and leaders are not fully prepared to follow as ego is getting in the way of

growth (Chaleff, 1995). A possible contributor to this problem is a lack of an understanding of followership. A study which investigates followership growth could be a step towards a remedy of the situation. This could be accomplished by providing each officer a tool that identifies the type of follower that they are and the type of follower that they could grow into as they develop in their careers. This research could lead to better leadership training of officers as well as the possible creation of a leadership training module on followership for the River Grove Police Department.

The answers to the research questions should help to provide for further understanding of the role of followership within a small suburban police organization. The questions were developed with a focus on providing understanding of the followership continuum. The questions focus the research by looking at followership throughout the officer's leadership training. The continuum movement could help officers become successful leaders by reducing ego which can inhibit relational and organizational growth.

The theory of followership is the framework for this research supported by the concept of career development as a subset of HRD and the theory of Leader-member exchange. Utilizing the inventory developed by Chaleff foundationally rooted in the theory of followership participants should be able to identify and gain further insight to the type of follower that they identify as being. Having this information should help improve their leadership training and their relationships that are both internal and external to the organization. Relationship building that these participants will be focusing on is explained through the leader-member exchange theory.

The rest of this capstone will be organized as follows. Chapter two contains the literature review where both the theories of followership, leader-member exchange, and career development will be explored through in depth analysis. Chapter three contains a clear and focused explanation of the method chosen for the study and why the particular method was selected. Chapter three will also include disclosure of any ethical concerns, researcher bias, and how the researcher has worked to mitigate these concerns and biases. Chapter four will present the data analysis and findings of the exploratory study. Chapter five will offer the discussion of the significance of the exploratory study and the impact it will have on the River Grove Police Department. Chapter five will also offer the limitations and suggestions for future research. Appendices to be included will be a copy of the inventory tool, participant data form, and the recruitment letter.



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The different theories of followership will be explored in detail within this literature review as well as the reasoning for focusing on Chaleff's theory. This will include that Chaleff's followership inventory tool has been utilized by multiple law enforcement including agencies. Chaleff's tool is also a required part of attending a class by Barbara Kellerman at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (Chaleff, 2009).

Secondly there have been many studies performed on leadership and education as well as many books written about leadership and education, specifically with regards to leading police officers (Haberfeld, 2012; Howe, 2011). Several authors have proposed that through education on followership one can become a better leader (Baublits, 2014; Brewer, 2014; Lord, 2008). An analysis of each theory of followership will be presented through a table showing the differences as well as a detailed description on why followership may be a key to producing better leaders within my small suburban police department.

Career Development (CD) is one of the many practices of Human Resource Development (HRD) (Egan et al., 2006) and this construct is an essential part of this research. The process of career development for the individual as a part of an HRD strategy will be explored as well as the specific CD theories in this literature review. The utilization of the followership inventory tool and an introduction into the theory of followership is at the core of this action research. It is anticipated that providing education on followership through the inventory tool officers within

the River Grove Police Department will be able to further develop in their careers by becoming better leaders, regardless of age or years of service on the department.

The application of the theory of followership as it integrates into organizational relationships can also find connections through the Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX). This theory addresses that there is a dyadic relationship between followers and leaders versus a linear structure of a leader to their followers with no variation on individual leader-follower relationships (Northouse, 2016). The development of the LMX theory will be explored as well as its significant relationship to followership and its relationships to this study in particular.

The three main components of this literature review therefore will be on a review of followership theory, career development theory, and leader-member exchange theory. All three of these played an important role in the action research that was conducted. The basis for the research was on the concept of learning more about followership to improve career development and leadership within the River Grove Police Department. This literature review will connect these three areas of literature and illustrate how they apply to the action research that was performed.

### **Followership Theory**

The first identification on the theory of followership was developed by Hersey and Blanchard in 1988 however; they called it a model of situational leadership. They identified that the most important component of the leadership model was the behavior of the leader in relation to the followers. Swanson et al. (2001), presented this model for followership in their text on Police Administration. The Hersey-Blanchard model of situational leadership is presented and

has similarities to the other models that will be discussed on followership (Chaleff, 2009; Kelley, 1992; Rossi, 2008). This is a quadrant-based system to identify and define followers so the leader can be more effective in his or her role. The four types of followers are (a) delegating, (b) participating, (c) selling and (d) telling. A delegating follower has a low level of relationship and task motivation. They completely rely on leadership for action. Participating followers still a low task motivation, but a high relationship level. This follower will offer some ideas to leadership. A selling follower is both at the high level for task and relationship. They are independently motivated to complete tasks and are dependent on the relationship with the leader. A telling follower is at a high level of task but a low level of relationship.

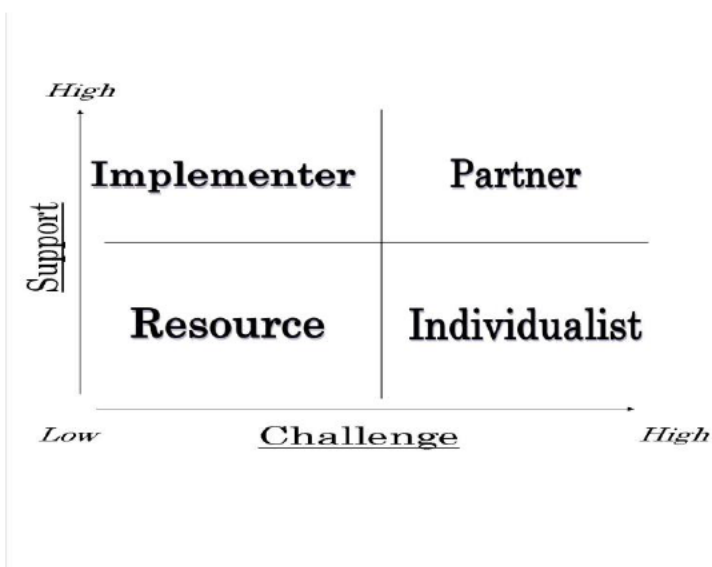
The leader will need to define the specifics of the task and inform the follower of what needs to be done as well as how to do it. They frame this as a way to address situational leadership; however, it appears to better target the characteristics of the follower (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988).

The concept of followership was further developed by Kelley (1992) whereby he identified that followers can influence leaders in different ways as constructs of their personalities. Kelley defines an alienated follower as one that is not willing to commit to any leader as they are deep and independent thinkers. Kelley defines passive followers are not very active participants in group settings, they do as they are instructed to do so but do not think critically about problems. The conformist follower will not challenge leaders but are more of a participant than the passive followers. The pragmatic follower only engages when appropriate, is careful not to overstep their bounds, but is also participatory when needed. The final category is the exemplary or effective follower and is described as the ideal follower. They work to

achieve the best results through attention to detail, strong group engagement, and well thought out constructive feedback as well as challenges to leadership (Kelley, 1992).

Chaleff, who in 1995 developed a more refined theory of followership, further developed Kelley's research. He explains that everyone is a follower and worked to mitigate the passiveness identified with being a follower. Chaleff's structure to followership, which will be utilized in this research, is as follows: Chaleff (2008) defined four types of followers: (a) the resource follower, (b) the individualist follower, (c) the implementer follower and (d) the partner follower. These four types of followers were defined on a conceptual four-quadrant graph with variables of support and challenge. Figure 1 is an illustration of Chaleff's (2009, p. 40) theory of followership.

**Figure 1.** Followership Continuum



Conceptual four-quadrant graph with variables of support and challenge (Chaleff, 2009, p. 40)

Chaleff, 2008 explains the traits of each of these followership types as follows: The low support and low challenged followers were resource types in that they will only do what is

required of them not get fired. The low support and high challenged followers were individualist types or the type that will only contribute when they can be singled out. The implementer type is when there is high support but low challenge. This follower will be aggressive, but with little attention to risk mitigation. Finally, the partner follower type is high support and high challenge. This type of follower takes accountability for their position as well as for the leader's behavior (Chaleff, 2008).

The term *follower* does not carry with it the negative tone that people may relate to it, such as subordinate. The two terms are different. According to McGregor (2006), a follower in an organization is one that shares the organizations values and mission. A subordinate is merely a person that reports to someone else placed higher up the chain of command. Goffee and Jones (2006) indicated that followership is driven by inclusiveness, challenges and adventure. This is relatable in that the police officer can likely experience the need to fit in or be a part of the team, face challenges and also have adventurous days (Kirschman, 2007).

One additional way to construct the definitions of followership typologies is by level of engagement (Kellerman, 2007). She defined these followers as isolates, bystanders, participants, activists, and diehards. Isolates do not care much for their leadership and do not respond well to them. This type is usually found in large agencies where the ability to hide from your leadership is somewhat possible. Bystanders do not offer much support; they are the observers and are not engaged with the organizations mission. Participants try to help the organization and will support leadership if they are in agreement with what the leadership is presenting, however if they disagree then they will oppose the leaders directives. Activists are strong supporters of their agency or organization, being so they are fully engaged with leadership and energetic about pursuing the agencies mission. Diehards are completely committed to particular leaders within

an organization as well as leadership's ideas and when they consider a mission worthy they will do everything to accomplish the goal (Kellerman, 2007).

The research of Rossi (2008) revealed four stages of followership. They are (a) conception, (b) cultivation, (c) separation and (d) redefinition. Conception occurs at the very start of the followership relationship with the leader when there is frequent sharing of knowledge, skills and abilities from the leader to the follower. Cultivation tends to develop over time of the relationships existence where both the follower and the leader are starting to work together with the follower testing boundaries. The third step or phase in the relationship is that of separation, which is where the follower will begin to work independently of the leader but will also be subjected to possible feelings of abandonment by the leader if not addressed in a timely matter. The final part of this development is redefinition, when the followership and leadership relationship is redefined as the follower may question the leader and challenge his ideas (Chaleff, 2009).

According to Chaleff (2009), followership should be viewed as the basis for leadership. The United States military has also recognized this concept and has begun writing and educating soldiers as well as command staff on the theory of followership (Kelley, 1996; Latour & Rast, 2004). Despite the construct that good leadership comes from good followership there is very little focus or education on followership (Chaleff, 2009). In fact, followership is so important that followers may exhibit great control over an organization; yet, many leaders fail to gain this understanding (Chaleff, 2009). The success of an organization is dependent upon its leaders understanding that they obtain their power through their followership (Chaleff, 2009). This is an

important concept not only in any organization but also specifically within the law enforcement community.

The research of Carsten et al. (2010) on followership had similar findings as Chaleff. They identified followers as (a) passive, (b) active or (c) proactive. Proactive followers were those who would take risks by working on projects with self-motivation and self-direction as well as offer feedback to leadership. Active followers would only offer feedback when it was asked for, and while they did contribute to the leadership process, they were not very self-motivated. Passive followers only conformed to the group and were best when functioning in a structured, hierarchical system.

There are many publications available today regarding followership including an overview of this terminology by Crossman and Crossman (2011). Followership has three main areas which are; (a) descriptive behavior typologies, (b) prescriptive behavior typologies and (c) situational theories. The descriptive behavior typologies are those behaviors exhibited by followers that identify and define the various actions conducted by followers. Prescriptive behavior typologies are those behaviors exhibited by followers that identify and define the various actions that should be conducted by followers. The final area is situational theories where the context in which the leadership and followership is taking place actually works to define the follower (Crossman & Crossman, 2011).

Table 1 outlines each of the various constructs and typologies discussed may help provide an illustration as to why the specific typology proposed by Chaleff (2009) was selected for this research. The following table displays a review of typologies by several different researchers including if the typologies are broadly defined by the researchers or specifically

defined. The table also reflects if an inventory or self-assessment tool is available that was developed by the researchers that research participants could utilize. The final column identifies if the particular researchers information and self-assessment tool has ever been utilized by a law enforcement agency in the past.

Table 1

*Followership Theories*

Author	Typologies	Self-Assessment Tool	Prior Law Enforcement Use
Hersey-Blanchard	Delegating; Participating; Selling; Telling	No	No
Kelley	Alienated; Passive; Conformist; Pragmatic; Exemplary	No	No
Chaleff	Resource; Individualist; Implementer; Partner	Yes	Yes
Kellerman	Isolates; Bystanders; Participants; Activists; Diehards	No	Yes
Rossi	Conception; Cultivation; Separation; Redefinition	No	No
Carsten, Uhl-bien, West, Patera, & McGregor	Passive; Active; Proactive	No	No



### **Followership and Career Development**

Career development (CD) is a subset of human resource development (HRD) and a key component of an organizations overall HRD strategy (Marsick & Watkins, 1992). HRD is not a discipline but is “rather a field of multiple disciplines” (Kuchinke, 2001, p.292). Adult learning theory, systems theory, economic theory, performance improvement and psychological theory all from key underlying theories and disciplines for HRD (Weinberger, 1998). Career development practices are a key element of the HRD function (Gilley, 2002), improving the individual and thus the organizational performance through career development can be part of a strategic plan to improve the success of an organization.

HRD can be a strategy to improve organizational performance, processes and even the individual contributor (Torraco & Swanson, 1995). The development of leadership as an impact to organizational performance is a component of HRD. The overall performance of an organization relies on its leadership to understand their followers and the best approach to interact with each other (Chaleff, 2009). While speaking truth to power is part of a courageous conversation it is also a benchmark of an organization that can move from good to great (Collins, 2001). This move from good to great is a part of organizational transition that can be realized if there is a clear understanding of the followership theory. The ability for HRD to improve the individual contributor is essential to a strategic plan for overall organizational success (Torraco & Swanson, 1995). Individual contributor growth is at the root of the career development component of HRD.

Swanson (1995) helps to define HRD as a process where expertise is harvested through both organizational development as well as individual growth. He believes that the ability to develop an organization is accomplished through implementing organizational change for the

purpose of improving performance while the individual growth comes through cultivating the expertise that is within contributors to the organization. He identifies three subsets of HRD including human resource management, career development, and quality improvement. The career development subset identified by Swanson is the connection that this exploratory action research will further develop through the implementation of the followership inventory tool. It is one objective that this tool may clarify career objectives and the impact to career development by the members of the organization.

The importance of career development for the individual as well as for the organization is becoming more critical in our society as employment in organizations is becoming more fluid (Baruch, 2006). Police officers no longer experience the same level of job stability that they had years ago, specifically within the River Grove police department. Including the followership inventory tool as a part of career development and to a larger extent HRD will be shown by this action research to benefit both the organization and the individual.

The conceptual alignment of career development as a component of HRD is further developed by Egan et al., (2006). The establishment of CD as a component of HRD was clearly outlined by Egan et al., (2006) as their work established an identification of nineteen CD theories and 30 CD definitions. Through all of these numerous theories and definitions there was one central theme of CD being a critical component of HRD.

The purpose and value of followership is becoming the new way of thinking instead of viewing a follower as an inferior subordinate (Baublits, 2014). The use of a followership inventory assessment tool at introduction into the organization and then again throughout the career of the officer may help the officer understand their informal relationships with others in

the department (Chaleff, 2009). Developing followers is as important, if not more so, than developing leaders (Johnson, 2009; Kellerman, 2008).

Adults begin to reconsider their perspectives as they are introduced to new experiences through transformative learning (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). The transformative approach to informal learning allows for an increase in critical thinking abilities, self-control of actions, and mindfulness (Baublits, 2014). The career development of the police officer can be impacted by his or her maturity through the followership typologies as outlined previously by Chaleff (2009), these transitions from one type of follower to another are essentially informal learning processes.

Integrating followership theory into an organization that is highly structured and paramilitary could be difficult; however, even the military itself has made recent acknowledgements about the value of learning followership theory (Latour & Rast, 2004; Link, 2001). The ability for the relationship between leader and follower be understood by both leader and follower is an essential component of developing the organization as a whole (Chaleff, 2009). Having leaders recognize that ideas can be developed by followers or that followers can discuss the merits of an idea with leaders will help individual and organizational learning occur (Chaleff, 2009; Johnson, 2009; Kellerman, 2008). The direct impact of using a followership inventory tool in a police agency has not been extensively studied through the available research and it is the hope that this research may assist to accomplish that missing link.

Followers form the foundation upon which great leadership is established through various models including teamwork, collaboration, partnership and alignment (Brewer, 2014). Conversely, leadership can assist followers by identifying organizational problems that are currently present or may develop in the future and preparing them with the skills to critically think about creative solutions for these potential problems (Brewer, 2014). This dyad of thinking

between the follower and the leader is a relationship whereby the development of the learner is experienced by both the follower and the leader (Eraut, 2007).

Brewer (2014) presents four key components to the leader – follower relationship for a successful organization which is summarized below:

- (a) the state of the organization is dependent upon the quality of its leaders
- (b) the quality of the leadership does not matter unless it is supported by the knowledge of the followership
- (c) all communities or organizations require some type of initiative for motivation and inspiration
- (d) the leadership – followership relationship needs continual development

These four concepts can be obtained but for them to be obtained a clear understanding of followership must exist for both leaders and followers (Brewer, 2014). Through the use of the followership inventory tool developed by Chaleff this researcher will be able to explore the perceived impact it may have on career development of the police officer. Leaders and followers have a dynamic relationship (Kellerman, 2008). The followership inventory tool is a key for both current leaders and followers because at any point in time the follower may become the leader and the leader may become the follower (Chaleff, 2009). This concept can be especially true in the tactical environment of police work where a patrol officer may need to be a leader of a crime scene until a supervisor arrives or if tragedy strikes during a confrontation and a supervisor is injured then a patrol officer will need to step up into the leadership role. Due to these dynamic situations as well as the preparation for career advancement having an understanding of followership plays a role within all levels of a police organization (Havins, 2010).

A follower's self-knowledge and cognitive abilities are important as well as the basis for followers responses to leadership are predicated on their own personalities (Lord, 2008). It appears that this view of the development of followers occurs over time and as part of the development process. Followers develop their respective typologies based in part upon their psychological make-up over time through their experiences (Lord, 2008). Awareness of these contextual processes is important for the follower to make meaningful contributions to their leaders and to the organization as a whole (Lord, 2008).

### **Leader-Member Exchange and Followership**

According to Northouse (2016) leader-member exchange theory or LMX was developed to address the ability for a leader to tailor their style of leadership to each follower. This was one of the first times that a theory of leadership looked at addressing the type of follower a leader is interacting with and to what extent the leader needs to adjust their style to have the greatest impact on the follower versus utilization of an overall average leadership style for an entire group of followers.

LMX was first developed through a theory of vertical dyad linkage or VDL (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). VDL identified that there was a relationship between leader and follower through both in-groups and out-groups. Personality traits of the follower were identified and determined the placement within the dyad of in-group or out-group. Placement was determined based upon how the followers pursued increasing their responsibilities with the leader (Graen, 1976). The followers that wanted to discuss with the leader how they can contribute to the group were placed in the in-group. Followers that were not interested on expanding their roles and responsibilities were placed in the out-group.

The foundational research for LMX evolved into studies where the exchange of ideas between followers and leaders could lead to decreased turnover, better evaluations, more promotions, larger employee buy-in, an increase in morale, increased support from the leader, and faster promotions (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993). All of these benefits appear to be desirable for any organization including for the law enforcement agency that is being studied for this research but specifically looking at this from a career development standpoint it would appear that there is a link as reflected above between LMX theory and Followership theory.

Utilizing LMX theory to address the need for further understanding of followership has other benefits as well. In the law enforcement environment the ability to cultivate leadership abilities prior to an officer seeking or obtaining promotion can help organizational effectiveness once they enter the leadership role (Swanson et al., 2001). The development of leaders starts through the relationship with followers and the dyads of including all followers within the organization (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The aspect of career development mirrors that of the development of the follower as shown by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991). There are three phases of followership progression into leadership roles, which are cultivated at each phase through the theory of LMX. Those phases are the *stranger*, *acquaintance*, and *mature partnership*. These phases are congruent with the phases of resource, individualist, implementer, and partner follower that were established by Chaleff (2009).

According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) in the first phase, the stranger phase, the follower is interested in themselves more than the good of the overall organization. The secondary phase of acquaintance is when the relationship between leader and follower begins to

take shape through the exchange of ideas as well as a period of time whereby the leader assesses the follower and vice versa to gain further insight into each other's commitment to the organizational goals as well as career development from both parties. This secondary phase appears to reflect similar qualities as previously outlined of the individualist and implementer typologies of followership theory. The third phase of LMX theory is that of a mature partnership which is when there is a high level of mutual trust, respect and a challenging of ideas to the further improvement of both the follower and the leader, ending in an overall improvement of the organization as a whole. The final phase of LMX theory, a mature partnership, is a link into the same final level of that in followership theory of the partner-follower.

The balance of LMX theory between both descriptive and prescriptive segments continues to show that there are special relationships developed between leaders and followers. The relationship quality fostered through the development of followers by leaders as well as by followers of leaders can help the goals of all members as well as the overall goals of the organization become realized (Northouse, 2016). The career development could be improved within my law enforcement agency being studied if the understanding of followership theory, which has been shown to be connected to LMX theory as well as adult informal learning, is developed and cultivated within the organization.

### **Summary of Chapter Two**

The basis for this research is on the theories of followership, supported by the theories of career development, and leader-member exchange theory. The action research performed is to utilize an exploratory study by offering the followership inventory tool to members of the department and gain their perspective on its potential impact to their career development. Understanding the type of follower that an officer is can be important as it may help the officer

gain information as to their personality, how they interact with their leaders (Baublits, 2014; Brewer, 2014; Lord, 2008). Followership study and research to this point in time has been presented in narrow focus of macro implications between the leadership followership relationships.

This review of the different theories on followership currently available has assisted this researcher to select the most appropriate followership theory to utilize for this particular exploratory study. The previous six theories of followership all have commonalities and differences. All of the six theories identify specific typologies within their respective theories. There are only two of these six theories that have been applied to law enforcement agencies in the past including Chaleff and Kellerman. However, only Chaleff's theory was further developed by him to include a followership inventory tool that could be utilized for this particular research

Havins (2010) proposed three areas for action as a result of his research. First, information on followership may be appropriate for all levels within the law enforcement organization with regard to career development. Second, the followership inventory tool that was developed by Chaleff (2009) should be administered to the entire organization to attempt to identify what followership type each officer identifies as being. Third, organizations that want to develop followership concepts could do so through all aspects of the organization and at all levels. Additionally, followership education could be implemented across all levels of a law enforcement agency since according to Kelley (1992), 80% of the organization is followers and they complete 80% of the organizations goals. Therefore, followership development could be an essential part of organizational learning.



Through the review of LMX theory we see that there is a clear link between followership and career development. The phases of LMX identified by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991) and the phases of followership identified by Chaleff (2009) were discussed and support further that the development of followership theory when applied in my law enforcement agency may aid in career development for the officers in the department.

The ability to identify what type of follower police officers are will assist the leader in the department to perform at a higher level of efficiency and effectiveness thereby hopefully ensuring that the department is providing a high level of customer service. Hurwitz and Hurwitz (2009) indicate that followership research is very important from a practical standpoint. Police officers that develop followership skills may exhibit mindfulness and experience greater job satisfaction possibly resulting in a higher performing police department.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

I was interested in finding if there were positive linear relationships among a number of variables, including type of follower, age, years of service, and the perceived impact on career development of gaining an understanding of followership. In order to determine these relationships and their strengths, a quantitative method was chosen. Survey data supplied information on the variables and statistical procedures were used to determine if there were positive linear relationships.

This specific research gave each officer within the River Grove police department the opportunity to identify with a specific followership typology utilizing the followership inventory tool and based upon the variables established by Chaleff, 2008 including challenge and supervisory support those typologies were for each participating officer. The participant data variables included years of service, age, and perception of impact on career development.

The selection of a quantitative method of research was driven by the utilization of an inventory tool and then a follow up survey which obtained the statistical information needed for analysis. Creswell (2003) presented several experimental designs and non-experimental designs that supplied data necessary to gauge correlations among variables. In many research designs surveys supply the needed data. The quantitative method for this type of action research involving a survey with multiple variables has been performed before (Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004).

The ability to utilize quantitative methods through social science research can be performed to identify specific correlations of agreement (Campbell, 1955). In Campbell's research he utilized surveys of two different groups and then utilized statistical methods to compare their results. While researching leadership and the impact of the theory of charismatic leadership a quantitative review was performed to explore the correlations between charismatic leadership and satisfaction with the leader (Fuller, Patterson, Hester, & Stringer, 1996). When wanting to perform research on transformational and instructional leadership on student outcomes quantitative methodology was utilized as the research was based in part on gathering data information through a survey and then performing statistical analysis on that data (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

### **Hypotheses**

This research used multiple variables that will articulate each hypothesis. The variables for this research were based the dependent variable of specific followership style and the independent variables of age as well as years of service.

In order to identify the specific followership style for each officer they took the followership inventory tool that was developed by Chaleff, (2008). The variables utilized by Chaleff on the followership continuum are *challenge* and *supervisory support*. These variables are utilized in the followership inventory tool to determine the type of follower that the participant currently identifies as being. Challenge is the dependent variable and supervisory support acts as the independent variable.

The variable of challenge is the ability for a follower to offer actionable, constructive feedback to leadership (Chaleff, 2008). The variable of supervisory support is the offering of acceptance, trust, and confidence from follower to leader as well as from leader to follower (Chaleff, 2008). The research is being conducted with the goals outlined above in mind and lead to the following hypotheses that were tested.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive linear relationship between age group and followership style.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive linear relationship between years of service group and followership style.

H<sub>3</sub>: The older an officer is, the stronger they agree that an understanding of their followership style will have an impact on their career development.

H<sub>4</sub>: The more years of service an officer has the stronger they agree that an understanding of their followership style has an impact on their career development.

### **Population**

The sample that was utilized for this study was of police officers from a small suburban police department located near Chicago, Illinois. The number of questionnaires was based on the total number of police officers which is 50.

The sample was recruited through written solicitation of the participants by the researcher. This was accomplished by the researcher sending out an email to all department members informing them of the research and the opportunity to voluntarily participate. The research site supervisor, Director of Police Roger Loni, agreed to the conduction of this research at his organization. This was accomplished through asking him if he would approve my

conducting of this research within the organization with the assurance that participation would be voluntary for all participants and that respondents data would remain confidential. There was no incentive offered by the researcher for participation other than the option of including an email address at the end of the survey to receive an electronic copy of the final research findings when they are available. Recruitment information included the name of the involved researcher and the university involved in the project as well as the contact info of the researcher, the chair of the capstone committee, and the research site supervisor. It also included the criteria for involvement in the study and truthful descriptions of any direct benefit or payment for participating in the study.

### **Procedure**

The tool identified the typology of the participant. The inventory tool had been developed by Ira Chaleff and permission for its use in this study had been secured from the developer. It is a twenty question followership inventory tool that takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes for the participant to complete. Responses were obtained through paper. Following completion of the followership inventory tool the participants took a five question survey obtaining information on their age, years of service, the followership type that they identified as being through the results of the tool that they just completed and read, followed by a final question regarding their perceived impact that this new information on followership has on their career development (Appendix C). The response to the participant data question of perception that followership has on career development was received utilizing a five factor analysis.

The research proposal was submitted for consideration and approved by Governor's State University Institutional Review Board. The informed consent form was included with the

survey. The procedure for the study which was to solicit feedback from the police officers from the River Grove police department in the form of a written survey was distributed directly.

There were no perceived risks or discomforts beyond what was experienced in daily life. The perceived benefits to the individual were as follows: Enhanced leadership may possibly be developed as a result of identifying the type of followership present in each participant. The participant has gained knowledge in the type of follower that they identify as being. This was accomplished through providing the participant with instructions on how to complete the followership inventory tool, what the results mean for that participant after they completed the tool, and a description of each of the four types of followership (Appendix B). The meaning of that identification includes how the participant can possibly grow over time on the followership continuum and how the participant can possibly increase their career development opportunities. The perceived benefits for society at large are that with a better understanding of followership in the River Grove police department as a model for a majority of police organizations within the United States, and enhanced leadership in police departments, society may experience an increase in the level of service provided by their police agencies. There were no alternative procedures offered by this researcher.

The time constraints of this study warranted the ability to utilize, with permission of the author, an existing and proven followership inventory tool. Therefore, this action research is largely based upon the theory of followership as developed by Chaleff. The impact that this theory has was to allow for the exploratory nature of the study to proceed in identifying if learning about followership and the type of follower that a member of the organization is can help in their career development.

Data was obtained with anonymity of the participant protected. Confidentiality of data was maintained and will be stored for a period of three years. Only the researcher, the independent third party verifier, and the capstone committee chair had access to the raw data. Also, once published there was no raw data that has any personal identifying information available to the public. Protection of the raw data was accomplished through storage of the data on a password protected, encrypted, universal serial bus flash drive that was secured in a locked safe to which only this researcher has the combination or access to the override key.

The researcher, capstone committee chair, and IRB contact information was provided to all participants for those with questions about the study, with questions about research subject's rights, and in the event of a research-related injury. Refusal to participate did not result in any penalty or loss of benefits and the participant may withdraw consent at any time. The anticipated approximate number of participants was 50.

### **Measures**

Multiple variables of participants were reviewed through the data analysis including age and years of service. The additional variables that were considered were rank, gender, and race at the onset of this research project. Upon considering the 50 potential participants for the research these variables were not utilized due to the sample sizes being significantly small including only three that identify as being other than Caucasian and only two that identify as being female. The number of full years of time since the birth of the participant as of the date they first participate in the study. The number of full years of time since the hire date of the officer as of the date they first participate in the study.

### **Data Analysis**

Each participant read and then took the followership inventory tool. Upon completion of the followership inventory tool the participant then completed the five question survey. Data obtained from the survey that the participants completed following the followership inventory tool was the focus of the data analysis for this research project.

### **Ethics**

The researcher is a member of the research site organization and as such had bias as to the research process and results. The researcher therefore did not participate in the research. This known bias was mitigated further by ensuring that the inventory tool and survey data did not contain any specific identifying information about the participant with regard to name, date of birth, social security number, employee number, shield or star number, or other specifically identifying information. The followership inventory tool and post inventory tool survey were both collected via sealed plain white envelopes that only had control numbers on them for tracking purposes.

The researcher is a police officer and had undertaken a research project that investigated fellow police officers of the same agency that this researcher was a member. The implicit bias as a result of this positionality of the researcher had been mitigated through the use of third party independent verification of data. The third party is not a police officer in the agency researched or a police officer in any agency. The independent third party is also not in any professional or volunteer law enforcement role and has affirmed that they have no immediate family members that are in any professional or volunteer law enforcement role. Use of the independent third party had been obtained to verify this researcher's data analysis to avoid any unintentional or deliberate distortion of the data. This was accomplished by Chuck Beck whom holds a degree in



information technology and management from the Illinois Institute of Technology and for the past six years served as a professional analyst and technical product manager. The stated hypotheses have not been altered since obtaining the data. This was accomplished by developing and presenting the hypotheses prior to obtaining the data and providing same to an independent third party. These steps were undertaken to avoid any potential data driven hypotheses.

### **Summary of Chapter Three**

The problem within the River Grove Police Department was that the majority of our leadership is getting close to retirement and there is minimal leadership training available for our patrol officers that will soon fill those leadership roles. The method of this research was chosen to obtain data that was directly related to the organization that is the focus of the research.

The choice to utilize the followership inventory tool developed by Chaleff allows for this research to focus on the positive linear relationship between the followership style of the officer and their age as well as their years of service. This selection also provided information to the participant about what followership is and the interpretation of each of the four followership styles. This provided participant with the ability to then complete the survey that was presented after the followership style inventory tool.

The raw data was protected from unauthorized access and was only accessible to the researcher, the capstone chair, and the independent third party verifier. This data will be protected from any unauthorized access for a period of not less than three years.

The action research conducted was undertaken at an organization of which the researcher is also a member. The implicit bias had been mitigated through the procedures outlined including anonymous responses to the survey and confidentiality of the participant's responses.

The researcher had also retained the services of an independent third party verifier to mitigate any implications that the data or hypotheses proposed have been manipulated by the researcher.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Research Findings**

Data collection was conducted over a time period of three months. The initial communication with potential participants was made via email. Emails were sent to 50 potential participants. The research materials were distributed via email to all potential participants.

The research materials included an introductory letter and request for participation which outlined the benefits, risks, and contact information for the potential participant to ask any questions of the researcher, the capstone chair, or the Institutional Review Board of Governor's State University. The materials further included an agreement of participation form to be signed by the participant, instructions on how to complete the participants' role in the research study, a complete Followership Style Assessment and a post assessment survey to gather the data for this particular research.

### **Response Rate**

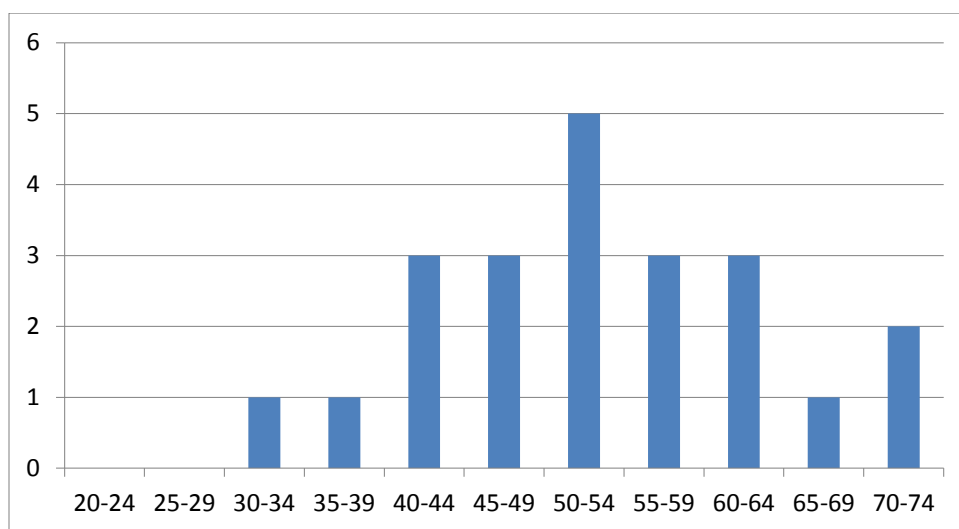
There were 50 potential participants for this research study as members of the River Grove Police Department. Overall 22 surveys were returned completed given a total response rate of 44%. This resulted in an n of less than 30 which places the data under the central limit theorem. This finding does not negate the data however the studies implications and analysis will result in less meaningful conclusions.

### **Demographics**

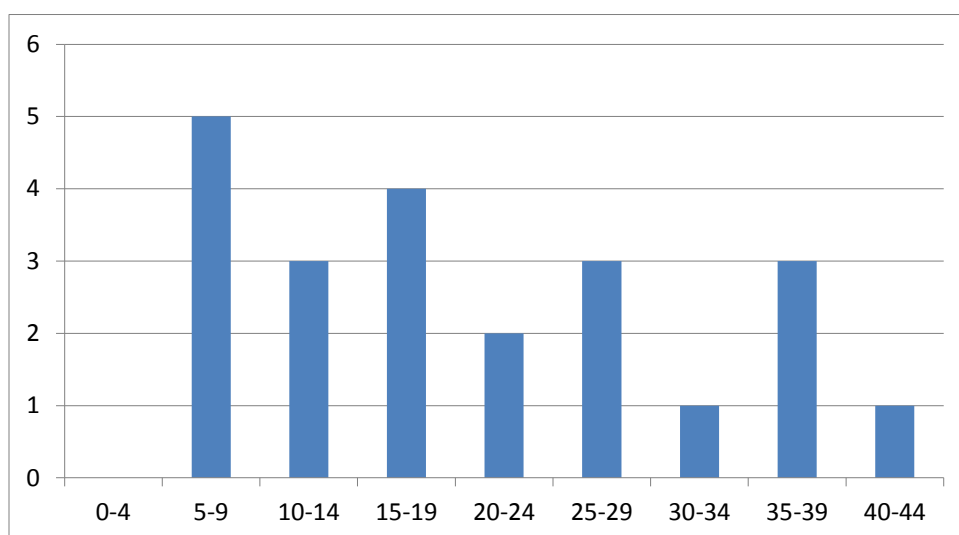
The survey that was completed by participants following their completion of the Followership Style Assessment provided two key demographics. There were 22 total

participants ranging in age groups from 30-34 up to 70-74 (Figure 2). The mean is 52.9 and the standard deviation is 3.85. The years of service ranged from 5-9 years up to a group from 40-44 years of service (Figure 3). The mean is 20.4 and the standard deviation is 1.47. T-tests were not used because this data was not a normally distributed sample due to  $n = 22$  ( $n < 30$ ).

**Figure 2.** Participants Age Range Response Rate



**Figure 3.** Participants Years of Service Range Response Rate



### **Followership Assessment Tool and Survey**

The followership assessment tool that was utilized for this research was given to each of the participants with specific information as to the meaning behind each followership typology and followership theory in general (Appendix B). After completing the followership assessment tool, which was 20 questions, and discovering what followership typology the participant identified as being they were then asked to take a five question survey (Appendix C). This survey asked demographical information such as age range (in five year increments) as well as years of service with the department (again in five year increments). The survey also asked two questions regarding the followership assessment tool. The first question asked the participant what followership typology that the tool identified them as being most aligned. The second question asked the participant how strongly they agreed or disagreed that having taken part in the followership assessment tool and their new knowledge would have an impact on their career development. The response choices to this question were arranged as a five point Likert scale of strongly disagree, disagree, neither, agree, strongly agree. The post followership assessment tool survey was five questions in total, three demographical and two specific to the results of the followership assessment tool. One of the three demographical questions regarding rank of the officer was selected to not be utilized in the final research as the sample size when divided by rank was significantly small. All questions were answered on all of the surveys that were completed by the participants.

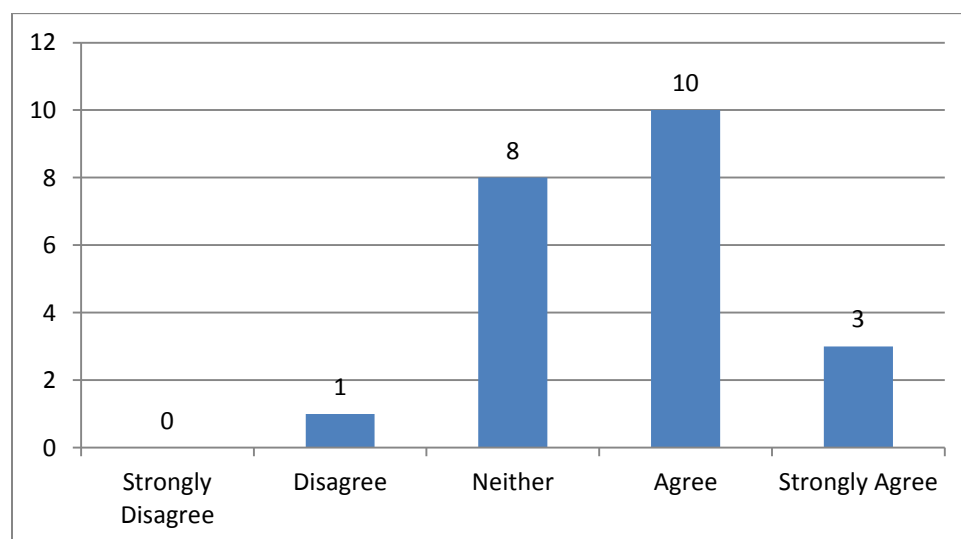
The follower self-assessment tool has been used previously in other research and has been vetted as being valid and reliable. The tool has been utilized by law enforcement including agencies at every level in California and is also a required part of attending a class on

Followership by Barbara Kellerman at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (Chaleff, 2009). Dixon & Westbrook (2003) applied the follower self-assessment tool to their research of 299 participants across 17 organizations and found the tool to be both valid and reliable.

### **Key Feedback Post Followership Self-Assessment Tool Administration**

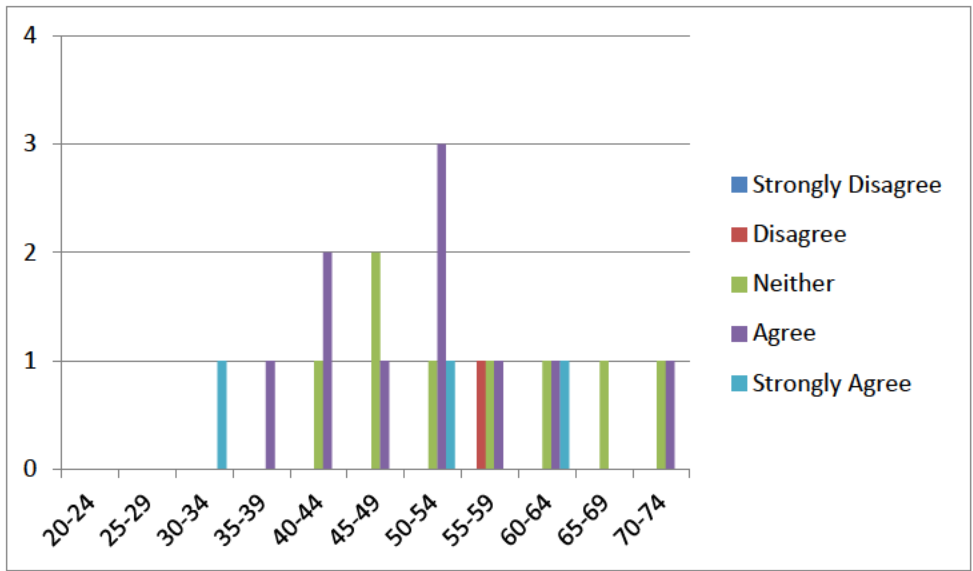
The first question sought to obtain the participants opinion after reading and participating in the research by taking the Followership Style Assessment. The question asked if gaining an understanding of followership and an awareness of the level of follower style that you are will help with your career development. Figure 4.3 reports the results of question four, it shows that almost 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the participants therefore felt that gaining an understanding of followership and an awareness of the level of follower style that they are will help them with their career development. One participant disagreed (4.5%), 8 were neutral (36.3%), 10 agreed (45.5%), and 3 strongly agreed (13.6%). The mean is 3.68 and the standard deviation is 1.10.

**Figure 4** Knowledge of Followership will Help with Career Development



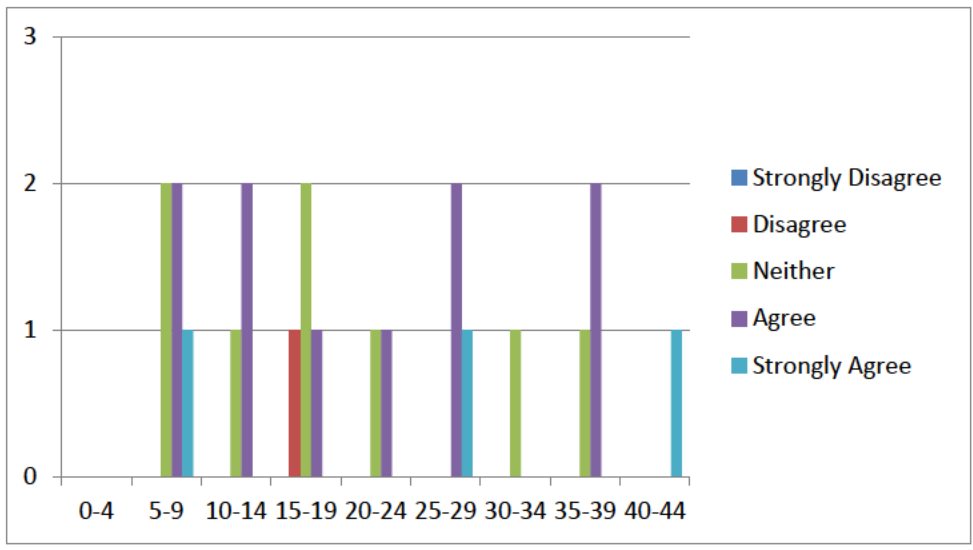
The response to this question can be further analyzed by each demographic category. The first demographic utilized was by age range and the responses are reflected in Figure 5.

**Figure 5.** Knowledge of Followership will Help with Career Development by Age



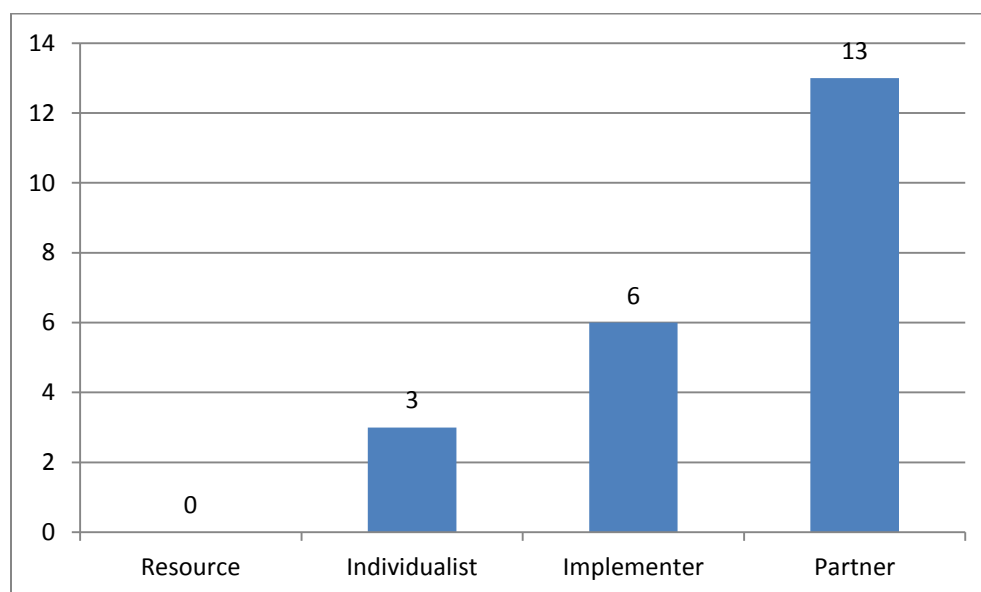
Further demographic analysis of this question can be undertaken when viewed by the years of service of the participant in the River Grove Police Department as is reflected in Figure 6.

**Figure 6.** Knowledge of Followership will Help with Career Development by Years of Service



The second research survey question asked the participant to indicate after taking the Followership Style Assessment which style they were found to identify with the most including Resource, Individualist, Implementer, and Partner. The general concept of followership was explained in written form prior to completing the follower self-assessment tool as well each individual style in detail post completion so that they would be able to gain further knowledge regarding the specific style that they identified as being. The overall results are reflected in Figure 7 showing that 3 are Individualist followers (13.6%), 6 are Implementer followers (27.3%), and 13 are Partner followers (59.1%).

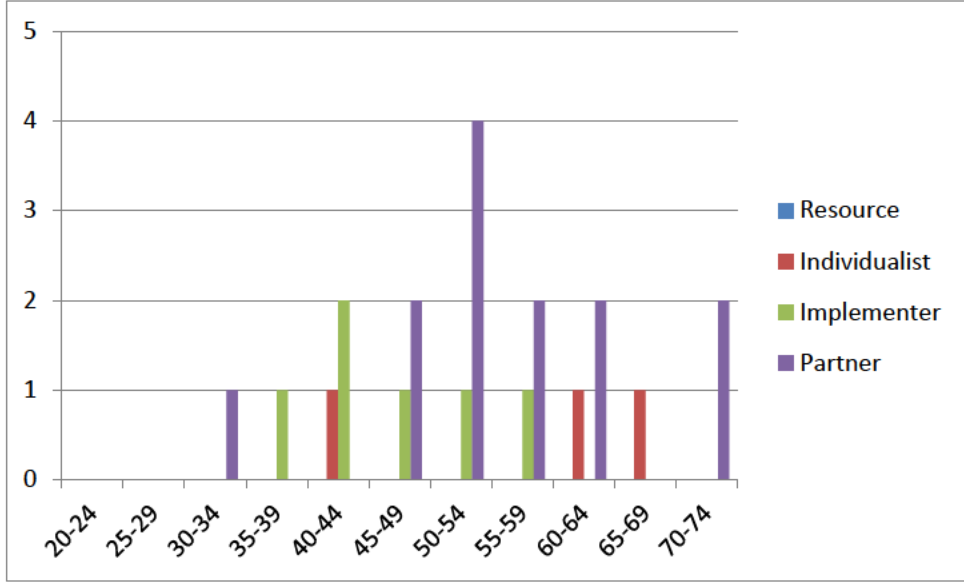
**Figure 7** Followership Style



The response to this question can be further analyzed by each demographic category. The first demographic utilized was by age range and the responses are reflected in Figure 8.

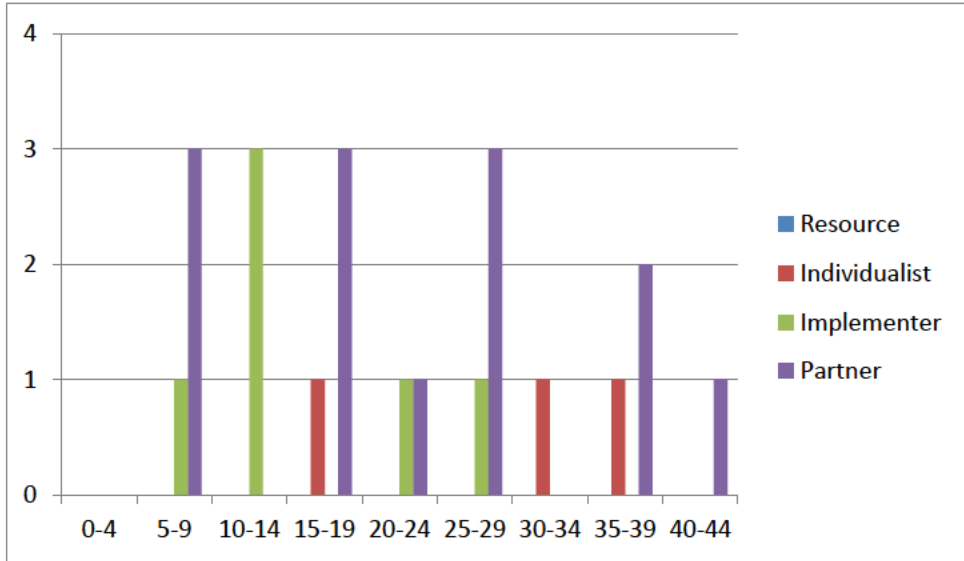


**Figure 8.** Followership Style by Age



Further demographic analysis of this question can be undertaken when viewed by the years of service of the participant in the River Grove Police Department as is reflected in Figure 9.

**Figure 9** Followership Style by Years of Service



### First Hypothesis

$H_{01}$ : There is no positive linear relationship between age and followership style.

$H_1$ : There is a positive linear relationship between age and followership style.

There is categorical data (age groups) as the independent variable, and categorical data (followership style) as the dependent variable. Therefore the Chi-Square test statistic was utilized to analyze this data. The null hypothesis is represented as follows:  $H_{01}: P_1 = P_2 = P_3 = P_4$ . The research hypothesis is represented as follows:  $H_1: P_1 \neq P_2 \neq P_3 \neq P_4$ . The Type I error rate was set at .05. The results of the analysis were as follows:  $\chi^2 = 19.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $df = 27$ . The critical value is 40.11. The obtained value does not exceed the critical value, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted and the research hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2

#### *Age and Followership Type*

Age Group	Resource	Individualist	Implementer	Partner
20-24	0	0	0	0
25-29	0	0	0	0
30-34	0	0	0	1
35-39	0	0	1	0
40-44	0	1	2	0
45-49	0	0	1	2
50-54	0	0	1	4
55-59	0	0	1	2
60-64	0	1	0	2
65-69	0	1	0	0
70-74	0	0	0	2

### Second Hypothesis

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no positive linear relationship between years of service and followership style

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive linear relationship between years of service and followership style.

There is categorical data (years of service groups) as the independent variable, and categorical data (followership style) as the dependent variable. Therefore the Chi-Square test statistic was utilized to analyze this data. The null hypothesis is represented as follows: H<sub>02</sub>: P<sub>1</sub> = P<sub>2</sub> = P<sub>3</sub> = P<sub>4</sub>. The research hypothesis is represented as follows: H<sub>2</sub>: P<sub>1</sub> ≠ P<sub>2</sub> ≠ P<sub>3</sub> ≠ P<sub>4</sub>. The Type I error rate was set at .05. The results of the analysis were as follows:  $\chi^2 = 20.50$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $df = 24$ . The critical value is 36.42. The obtained value does not exceed the critical value, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted and the research hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3

#### *Years of Service and Followership Type*

Years of Service Group	Resource	Individualist	Implementer	Partner
0-4	0	0	0	0
5-9	0	0	1	3
10-14	0	0	3	0
15-19	0	1	0	3
20-24	0	0	1	1
25-29	0	0	1	3
30-34	0	1	0	0
35-39	0	1	0	2
40-44	0	0	0	1

### Third Hypothesis

H<sub>03</sub>: The older an officer is, the less they agree that an understanding of their followership style will have an impact on their career development.

H<sub>3</sub>: The older an officer is, the stronger they agree that an understanding of their followership style will have an impact on their career development.

There is categorical data (age groups) as the independent variable, and categorical data (followership style) as the dependent variable. Therefore the Chi-Square test statistic was utilized to analyze this data. The null hypothesis is represented as follows: H<sub>03</sub>: P<sub>1</sub> = P<sub>2</sub> = P<sub>3</sub> = P<sub>4</sub>. The research hypothesis is represented as follows: H<sub>3</sub>: P<sub>1</sub> ≠ P<sub>2</sub> ≠ P<sub>3</sub> ≠ P<sub>4</sub>. The Type I error rate was set at .05. The results of the analysis were as follows:  $\chi^2 = 20.06$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $df = 36$ . The critical value is 50.99. The obtained value is less than the critical value, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted and the research hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4

*Age and Opinion*

Age Group	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
20-24	0	0	0	0	0
25-29	0	0	0	0	0
30-34	0	0	0	0	1
35-39	0	0	0	1	0
40-44	0	0	1	2	0
45-49	0	0	2	1	0
50-54	0	0	1	3	1
55-59	0	1	1	1	0
60-64	0	0	1	1	1
65-69	0	0	1	0	0
70-74	0	0	1	1	0

### Fourth Hypothesis

H<sub>04</sub>: The less years of service an officer has the stronger they agree that an understanding of their followership style has an impact on their career development.

H<sub>4</sub>: The more years of service an officer has the stronger they agree that an understanding of their followership style has an impact on their career development.

There is categorical data (years of service groups) as the independent variable, and categorical data (followership style) as the dependent variable. Therefore the Chi-Square test statistic was utilized to analyze this data. The null hypothesis is represented as follows: H<sub>03</sub>: P<sub>1</sub> = P<sub>2</sub> = P<sub>3</sub> = P<sub>4</sub>. The research hypothesis is represented as follows: H<sub>3</sub>: P<sub>1</sub> ≠ P<sub>2</sub> ≠ P<sub>3</sub> ≠ P<sub>4</sub>. The Type I error rate was set at .05. The results of the analysis were as follows:  $\chi^2 = 17.56$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $df = 4$ . The critical value is 9.49. The obtained value is more extreme than the critical value, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5

#### *Years of Service and Opinion*

Years of Service Group	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
0-4	0	0	0	0	0
5-9	0	0	2	2	1
10-14	0	0	1	2	0
15-19	0	1	2	1	0
20-24	0	0	1	1	0
25-29	0	0	0	2	1
30-34	0	0	1	0	0
35-39	0	0	1	2	0
40-44	0	0	0	0	1

### **Summary of Chapter Four**

The data presented and analyzed in this chapter reflects upon several years of preparation and several months of work in the gathering of this data. The method for gathering of the data was reviewed as well as the specific results of the participant's use of the Followership Style Assessment and the following research survey. A review was performed of the specific demographic categories in which participants were divided as well as an overall review of the responses exclusive of the demographic data. The two key research survey questions were identified and the gathered data analyzed based upon age range and years of service to the River Grove Police Department. Following the overall data results being reviewed and the specific demographic filtering of those results the four hypothesis statements were reviewed. The data was applied to the four hypothesis statements and analyzed to determine if the hypothesis were likely true or false given this specific research.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Discussion**

The research of followership and its perceived impact onto career development was the core of this project. Through this discussion chapter I will review the specific objectives of this research as well as what conclusions can be reached from the data that was gathered and analyzed. Then a review of the research questions will be performed along with the answers that are available following the gathering of data and analysis. Following the research questions discussion will be a presentation of how the results of the hypothesis testing helps to aid in the conclusions reached regarding this research. Finally, an overall review of the study findings and the significance of those findings will be presented.

### **Research Questions**

There were three research questions proposed in Chapter one at the onset of this action research. Each question was crafted with the three objectives in mind and the ultimate goal of this action research to find a possible solution to a current problem within the River Grove Police Department. The concept was to provide insight for the police officers to the level of follower that they currently identify as being as well as providing them with an understanding of followership and seeing if that knowledge could assist them with their career development.

The first research question was to see what relationship exists between the level of followership typology and the number of years of service on the River Grove Police Department. When I performed my data analysis there did not appear to be a relationship when considering this variable directly. This indicates to me that from the research specifically performed that

growth from one follower style to the next is not necessarily dependent upon years of service within the organization. There was some indication that Chaleff's (2009) theory on follower style growth was correct however in that the officers with more years of service did, in the majority, identify as being Partner followers.

The second research question was to see what relationship exists between the level of followership typology and the age of the member of the River Grove Police Department. This variable also did not result in a relationship with followership growth from Resource style, to Individual style, to Implementer style and finally arriving at Partner style. However, the majority again of participants that were 35 years of age or older did identify with the Partner style of follower. This would further Chaleff's theory that there may be growth of the type of follower over time and that the type of follower someone identifies with may be able to change through maturity.

The final research question asked how strongly the officers of the River Grove Police Department perceive that an understanding of followership and an awareness of the level of follower typology would help with their career development within the organization. The overwhelming response to this question clearly showed that the majority of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that gaining more understanding of followership and an understanding of the type of follower that they are would be able to help them with their career development.

In summary the three research questions addressed two variables as well as an opinion question with a five factor analysis to assess impact of the participation of the officers in the study and their awareness of followership theory on their career development process. The results of these questions did not illustrate a clear relationship such as theorized by Chaleff



(2009). The findings also indicate that there is a perceived value in learning about followership and the type of follower that the officer is with assisting in the officer's career development.

### **Objectives**

There were three objectives presented at the onset of this research. Each objective was to aid this researcher in the overall goal of the research. A review of these three objectives is presented in this section as well as the outcome of those objectives.

#### **First Objective**

The first objective was to identify if the variables of age and years of service on the department have a relationship with the followership typology (follower style) of an officer. The two demographics within this objective were each presented as individual questions on the post Followership Assessment tool survey.

The first objective included a look at the age range of the participant. The participants were asked to select an age range for this demographic on the post Followership Assessment tool survey. I would have anticipated based on Chaleff's research that the younger age of the participant would have led them to identify with one of the follower styles such as Resource or Individualist which have been identified as a less mature individual within the organization versus those that identify as Implementer's or Partner followers. However, perhaps the individual that was youthful but still identified as a Partner follower also has other life experience such as the military where he or she was called to lead fellow organizational members. The majority of participants were 35 years of age or older. The majority of the

participants in this category identified with the Partner style of follower at a rate of 57.1% which does follow existing research on followership.

The next demographic obtained asked respondents to identify a range of years of service they have on the department. The majority of participants had 10 or more years of service or specifically 86.4% of participants. There were only three participants that had from one year of service to nine years of service. These three participants identified with two of the four follower styles. This was following completion of the Followership Assessment. It is not surprising that the majority of officers with several years of service on the department identified with the Partner follower as according to Chaleff (2009), the length of time spent within an organization can have an impact on the linear growth of the follower style that members of the organization identify as being most closely aligned. However, something that is unique is that there were three participants that indicated that they identified with the Individualist style of follower even though they have more than 10 years of service for the organization. Additionally, the majority of those participants with less than 10 years of service identified as being Partner followers, yet the time they have spent with the organization is less than other officers that identified with what Chaleff would describe as lower on the linear growth chart of followership. This may reflect that there are other variables that are impacting these results, including the knowledge of followership of the participant, the years of service within similar but perhaps not the same organization, as well as the age of the follower. These will all be discussed in the limitations section.

There is no large relationship with regard to the age or years of service to the organization that these demographics relate to the type of follower style that the participants identify as being as reflected in Chapter 4.

The impact that these demographics have as separate categories on the type of followers style that participants identified with after taking the Followership Assessment does not appear to follow the same theory as presented by Chaleff (2009). However, his growth of followership typologies may have an impact when looked at the participant as a whole, including many different variables, perhaps would prove to be correct. This will be further discussed in the limitations section of this research.

## **Second Objective**

The second objective of this research was to identify if there was a perception among officers that an understanding of followership and the type of follower that they currently identify with will help in their career development. In order to reach this objective the question was posed to the participants after they read and participated in taking the Followership Assessment tool as prepared by Chaleff (2009) and used with his permission. The responses were overall in agreement that understanding followership and the type of follower that the participant currently identifies with will help with their career development. There were 59.1% of participants that agreed or strongly agreed with the question. There were 36.4% that neither agreed nor disagreed with the question. This could have been due possibly due to a lack of further discussion on followership and a presentation on the material with a question and answer period versus simply relying on the participant to read and understand the Followership Assessment instructions and background information on followership. Interestingly there was

only one or 4.5% of the participants that selected that they disagreed that an understanding of followership and the type of follower that they currently identify with being would help in their career development. Additionally, there were no participants that strongly disagreed.

Given this feedback on followership from the participants in the department, which represents almost half of the entire department or 44%, it appears that there is a desire to learn about followership and that in doing same it may have a positive impact on the career development of officers in the River Grove Police Department. The outset of this research was to help improve our police department through other sources of career development beyond offerings with the Northeast Multi-Regional Team and the Northwestern School for Staff and Command. Through the feedback provided it appears that there is a level of open mindedness throughout all ranks of the department to pursue learning more about followership.

### **Third Objective**

The third objective of this research was to give participants a tool and knowledge that can potentially help with their career development. The participants were provided each with a comprehensive outline of the background of followership as well as specific definitions of each type of follower according to Chaleff, 2009. The participants were then asked to read the document as well as take the Followership Assessment tool. The knowledge gained from these documents as well as participating in the Followership Assessment was provided to the participants to potentially help with their career development. The feedback provided from the participants clearly reflected that they were of the opinion that the knowledge gained would help with their career development. While this particular iteration of exposure to followership was voluntary and included almost half of the members of the department perhaps exposing all

members of the department to the concept of followership could have benefits for the organization as a whole.

In summary the three objectives that were identified in Chapter one of this research document were established to have a clear understanding of the scope of the research. The work was performed to move towards the accomplishment of each of the three objectives. I identified if the variables of age or years of service on the department had a relationship impacting the followership typology of the participants. I identified if there was a perception among officers that an understanding of followership and the type of follower that they currently are would help them in their career development. I provided the participants with a tool and with limited knowledge that could potentially help with their career development through the Followership Assessment. I have worked to establish a basis for the creation of a career development module on followership that could be utilized specifically by the River Grove Police Department and possibly adopted by other police agencies as well.

### **Hypotheses**

The four hypotheses were each tested and reviewed within the data analysis of this research project. Each of the first two hypothesis selected specific variable patterns which would result in specific types of follower style. The first two null hypotheses were accepted given the specific variables outlined in each hypothesis however with each hypothesis there also was some room for further discussion and possibility that they could be true if the study was expanded. This will be further discussed in the limitations chapter. The two variables of age and years of service were utilized each as ways to measure relationship between these variables and followership style. The third and fourth hypotheses were presented to gain overall knowledge as

to the perceived impact that followership understanding will have on the River Grove Police Department based on age. The third null hypothesis was accepted and the fourth null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that officers who are older do not feel that learning about followership will help in their career development. However, the fourth null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that officers who have more years of service on the department do feel that learning more about followership will help their career development. While the fourth null hypothesis was rejected, the data responses also reflected that 41% of the respondents did not believe that gaining further knowledge of followership would help their career development. This indicates to the researcher that perhaps further education of the theory of followership may impact these officers' opinions regarding its potential impact on their career development. This will also be discussed as a possible study limitation.

There were no officers that participated in the study that identified as being Resource followers. There could be several reasons for this result. The officers that participated in the study could have all been significantly older than the minimum age for a police officer of 21. The officers that participated in the study could have all had more than a few years of service on the department and not be considered rookie officers. The officers that participated in the study that were of lower rank may have other outside professional careers beyond policing that impacts their level of followership with respect to those that serve in the auxiliary or part time policing roles on the department. This will be further discussed in the limitations chapter.

In summary the majority of the null hypotheses were rejected. This informs the researcher that there may have been limitations to this study and will be discussed in detail in a future chapter. Beyond that the finding that the first two hypotheses were false illustrates that

followership may not have a clearly developed relationship to age and years of service that can be applied in all organizations. However, in the abstract the theory that Chaleff (2009) developed there clearly are implications for career development improvement for the majority of participants in this study according to the results of the third and fourth hypotheses.

The original theoretical framework for this study was based upon Chaleff's identification of four specific followership types. Chaleff (2008) defined four types of followers: (a) the resource follower, (b) the individualist follower, (c) the implementer follower and (d) the partner follower. He established that as an individual matures through life and through an organization that they grow on the followership continuum from a resource follower to an individualist, then to an implementer and finally to a partner follower. This progression was identified within the River Grove Police department however there were exceptions to this evolution in this limited case study. The data presented, when specifically limited to age showed that there were younger officers and older officers alike that identified with being partner followers as well as older officers that identified as being individualist and implementer followers. These findings could be due to outside variables that were not pursued in this particular case study but would be excellent areas for future research including what other life experiences the younger officers have had such as being a leader in the military.

The secondary theoretical framework for this study was through the Career Development theory. This being a subset of Human Resource Development theory was utilized in conjunction with Followership theory to identify that through learning about the type of follower that the officer identifies as being they will be able to further develop in their careers. This model of self-identification through the Followership Assessment tool that was developed by Chaleff of

which follower the officer identifies with is perceived by the officers that participated in the study as helping with their career development. This awareness is a transferable skill for the officers that they can utilize throughout their profession regardless of the organization that they are a member.

The final theoretical framework for this study was through the Leader-Member Exchange theory. This theory identifies in-groups and out-groups. The application of this theory to the case study is through the identification of a possible cause for the lack of participation within the study itself. The reluctance to participate in the study by more than half of the department, despite support for the project from leaders within the department, and the researcher being a member of the department may have come from the out-group. The group of individuals that do not trust any research study no matter who may be supporting the study or administering it. The in-group would be the 44% of individuals within the department that did participate in the study, support furthering the profession, the department, and themselves through active involvement in the improvement of the organization.

### **Implications**

The action research conducted by this practitioner-researcher was undertaken to make an improvement in the River Grove Police Department. The department is exemplary but it is likely that all organizations can seek improvement regardless of how effective and efficient that they may currently function. The specific problem presented in the River Grove Police Department was that despite some career development opportunities for officers at all ranks the officers are not fully prepared to lead and leaders are not fully prepared to follow, ego is getting in the way of growth (Chaleff, 1995). This study realized some significant implications.



The first implication realized through this action research by this researcher was that the willingness to learn about a new topic is present within the River Grove Police Department. The entire department was asked to participate in this research with the support of the Director of Police. There was a participation rate of 44% or 22 out of 50 officers. This was accomplished with only three emails from the researcher. The implication here is that almost the majority of police officers within the River Grove Police Department wish to learn and grow as individuals by participating in an activity that may help not only themselves but the organization as a whole and the community.

The second implication that this action research has purported was that the majority of participants identified as being Partner style followers. There were 22 participants and of those 13 or 59.1% identified as being Partner style followers. According to Chaleff (2009), the Partner style follower is one that offers high support to their leaders but also offers a high challenge to their leaders as well, or said another way is that the follower is not afraid to tell truth to power. The paramilitary structure of the River Grove Police Department is one where the linear rank structure does not allow, outwardly, the ability to question orders of superior officers (insubordination). However, it appears that if there is an order given that may harm the organization the subordinate officer working as a Partner style follower may offer feedback to the supervisor / leader so that the order may be reconsidered.

The next implication is that there is still room for growth within the River Grove Police Department. Even though there were 59.1% of participants that identified as being Partner style followers that leaves the remaining 40.9% of participants that have the opportunity to grow through the linear progression established by Chaleff (2009) from Individualist style follower, to

Implementer style follower, and ultimately to Partner style follower. This growth opportunity is one that could potentially lead to other career development as well for the officers of the River Grove Police Department.

The study reflected almost a 50% participation rate and therefore there is an implication that the participants in the study can reasonably reflect a significant sample size of the entire department. The findings of the study therefore are a reflection of the organization as a whole and these findings could be implemented across the entire department to improve career development.

The action research resulted in feedback that the officers of the River Grove Police Department would benefit in their career development from gaining an understanding of followership and an awareness of the level of follower style that they identify as being. The implication here is that all officers of the River Grove Police Department should take the Followership Assessment tool and receive information on followership. This could be performed as a part of new hire training as well as a part of in-service training as well.

This action research implies that there is a valid need for further information on followership presented to all of the officers of the River Grove Police Department and that information will help with their career development. The development of a learning module on followership would be a helpful tool for the River Grove Police Department officers and the organization as a whole.

In summary, the River Grove Police department members have a willingness to learn about new concepts. The majority of officers in the River Grove Police Department identify as

being Partner followers. There is still room for growth for many of the officers of the department within the followership continuum. The overall organization wishes to pursue further information and ways to improve their career development. A tool, such as the Followership Assessment should be utilized throughout the entire department and a training module should be developed to help inform the officers about followership.

### **Limitations**

The limitations for this study did have an impact on the research however the limitations were also minimized in order to reach a successful conclusion to the research so that the implications of the research could still be reached. The main limitations to the study were the nature of the study itself and the small number of participants.

The nature of the study itself was one based upon a researcher-practitioner performing action research within a professional setting where the researcher was also a member of the group being studied. The bias involved in this setting of the researcher is one where the participants are each known and the researcher has a professional relationship as well as a personal relationship with several of the potential participants. This likely resulted in an increase in the number of participants to the study. However, bias was minimized as the researcher did not directly ask the participants to participate in the study via face to face contact. All of the participants were asked via email and explicitly advised that their participation was completely voluntary. They were also advised that their participation or lack thereof would not have any positive or negative consequences other than the benefits of participation that was clearly documented in the recruitment letter per the Institutional Review Board guidelines. This could be viewed as a potential limitation to the research as those that participated in the research may

have done so due to the professional or personal relationship that they had with the researcher prior to the research being conducted. The limitation being that the sample size of officers may have been influenced by pre-existing relationships with the researcher. The research was performed only within the River Grove Police Department and not outside at other agencies therefore the ability to increase participants, increase a sample size, and increase the implications to cross over to other agencies other than just for the River Grove Police Department was also a limitation of this study. However, by its nature as action research that was developed to help find a solution to a problem within the River Grove Police Department the research study was self-limiting and was not intended at this time to be applied to other agencies.

The participants in this study reached 22 which may seem to be a small sample size however the River Grove Police Department only has a total of 50 members including all employment groups, auxiliary, part time, and full time officers. The study had a strong response rate of 44% but the number of participants was small. When the number of participants is divided into each of the three employment groups then the sample size for each of the three employment groups is very small. However, the study was focused only on the River Grove Police Department. It is possible that should this same study be applied to multiple agencies or agencies with larger employment groups then likely the sample size would increase. It is not known if the results would be different as that would be a proposal for future research to find out but the application of this research was limited at this time to only the River Grove Police Department. Performing this same study in a larger agency may have an increase in the sample size but may also have a decrease in the response rate as the personal and professional relationships that the researcher has with the potential participants may be minimized as the number of members of the agency is increased.

In summary, the limitations to this study included the nature of the study and the number of participants. The nature of the study was one of action research by a researcher-practitioner and as such there was a bias due to the pre-existing relationships that the researcher had with the participants both on a professional and personal level. This was minimized through minimal contact that the researcher had with the participants during the study as well as through ensuring voluntary participation. The final limitation discussed of this study was the low participation numbers. The study was limited to the River Grove Police Department and had a significant response rate even though the number of participants was low. The department does not have a large membership and as such a large amount of participants was not anticipated. These were the three main limitations to the study as identified by this researcher at this time.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There are two levels for recommendations for future research by this researcher including both within the River Grove Police Department and outside of the River Grove Police Department. The recommendations within the River Grove Police Department include expanding the research to include other variables as well as the development of an information module on followership that could be presented to the members. The recommendations for future research to be performed outside of the River Grove Police Department would be to replicate this research at similar departments in size and structure to see if similar results are discovered as well as to expand the information module on followership to include presentations to other departments beyond only the River Grove Police Department.

This research was limited in time and scope intentionally as it was performed by the researcher-practitioner as action research to address an immediate concern within the River Grove Police Department. The ability to improve career development opportunities for the

members of the River Grove Police Department was a desired outcome of the research and one that was achieved. However, there could be more research performed in the future. Further research could be undertaken within the same topic of followership with the addition of factoring in other variables that may impact the results. These variables could include rank within the department, if the participant has outside employment experience, how many years of experience in outside employment, the type of employment that they have outside of the police department, as well as if they already had knowledge of the theory of followership prior to this research.

The second recommendation from within the River Grove Police Department would be for the development of an information module on followership so that further learning could occur for those members that participated in the research. Also, the module could be offered or even potentially required to all members of the organization so that every member has the same baseline understanding of followership and all members are then assisted with their career development. The learning module could be developed in different variants including up to a 16 hour presentation as this researcher discussed with Ira Chaleff (Gronke, 2016) down to an 8 hour, 4 hour or even 2 hour presentation. The 2 hour presentation would even be enough to expand and build upon the informational packet of instruction that the participants received prior to participating in this research.

The impact that this specific action research has was only to assist the River Grove Police Department but further research could be performed at similar departments or even drastically larger departments to determine if the results would be replicated. This researcher anticipates that due to the large sample size that the results from a similarly staffed department would be very similar to the results from this study. Future research should include not only the replication of this study by outside agencies but also the addition of other variables if time and

scope of such research is appropriate for the agency involved and the researcher's goals.

Additional variables to consider could include if there is outside employment or experiences that may affect the follow style that the participant identifies as being.

The final recommendation for future continuation of this topic of research would be to expand the informational module on followership beyond only application from within the River Grove Police Department to include outside agencies that are both similarly staffed as well as agencies that are staffed in much greater numbers as well. The informational session again could be expanded or abbreviated based upon the capabilities for training hours of the specific agency. It is clear from this research that was performed that the members of the River Grove Police Department feel that such a program would assist in their career development process. Likely this same feeling would be true at other agencies as well.

### **Summary of Chapter Five**

The three objectives of this research were reviewed and discussed. Information was presented regarding the followership typology of each group. The variables of age and years of service on the department were reviewed to see if there was a relationship to the follower style that the participant, a police officer in the River Grove Police Department, would identify as being. The perception among police officers in the River Grove Police Department was reviewed to see if there was any indication that an understanding of followership and the type of follower that they identified as being would assist with their career development to meet the second objective. The Followership Assessment as utilized with permission from Chaleff (2009) was provided to the participants in order to provide them with a tool and knowledge that could potentially help with their career development to meet the third objective of the research.

The three research questions were reviewed, answers purported and discussion followed. The research questions were outlined to see specifically if there were followership typologies that were each related individually and separately to the age of the participant/officer in the River Grove Police Department and the number of years of service on the River Grove Police Department. It was determined that each variable did not have a significant relationship with a followership style. The last research question was to set up an inquiry with a five factor analysis to determine how strongly participants/officers of the River Grove Police Department perceived that an understanding of followership and an awareness of the level of follower typology would help them with their career development. The participants/officers of the River Grove Police Department, in the majority at almost 60% agreed or strongly agreed that an understanding of followership and an awareness of the level of follower that they were would help them with their career development.

There were three hypotheses presented as a part of this action research. The first two hypotheses each contained specific variables of age and years of service. The first null hypothesis stated no relationship existed between age and followership style. The second null hypothesis stated no relationship existed between years of service and followership style. The first and second null hypotheses were accepted. The final null hypothesis was rejected as it was found that there was a significant relationship between the perception of knowledge on followership and an officer's career development.

Overall the research indicates that there is value in providing police officers within the River Grove Police Department with information to further their understanding of followership and provide them with the tool so that they may be able to identify what follower's style they



identify as being. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following section on this action research's implications.

There were several implications that this research purported. There is a willingness to learn about new this new topic of followership within the River Grove Police Department. Many of the members of the River Grove Police Department are already identifying as being at the upper level of the followership continuum as Partner style followers. There is still room for growth in followership for several members of the department. The department is largely in support of pursuing more information on followership to improve their career development.

There were some limitations with this research. The very nature of the study being action research by a practitioner-researcher that was a member of the organization involved bias that was mitigated as best as possible. The number of participants in the study was small which could change the results of the study in a larger department, possibly, but overall the sample size given the overall size of the department was a significant representation of the department as a whole.

Recommendations for further research included recommendations for both within the River Grove Police Department and outside of the River Grove Police Department. The recommendations for within the River Grove Police Department included the opportunity to conduct the research in the future with the inclusion of additional variables such as rank, employment experience outside of the department for participants. Additionally, the development of an informational module could help the River Grove Police Department membership learn more about followership and improve their career development. Outside of the River Grove Police Department the research in the future could be expanded to include not only similar agencies but also larger agencies to see if the results would be similar given a larger

participant pool as well as the inclusion of additional variables such as outside employment experience beyond the agency that is being included in the study. Also, the development of the informational module for the River Grove Police Department could be utilized by other agencies as well to assist their membership with improving their career development.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT AND DIRECTIONS

To: Potential Research Participant

From: Brad Gronke

Re: Informed Consent to Participate in Research (Police Officer Followership)

**Background:** I am currently a candidate for the doctorate of education degree in interdisciplinary leadership with a concentration in public safety at Governors State University. The completion of a capstone involving action research is a partial requirement for conferral of the degree. Your participation in this research will help me complete this requirement. I have secured permission from the research site supervisor, Director of Police Roger Loni to proceed with this study at the River Grove police department.

**Participation:** Participating in this study is completely voluntary, confidential, and responses are anonymous. Participation in this study or lack thereof will not directly yield any benefits or consequences related to your employment with the research site organization. You may also elect to withdraw from the study at any time and without reason.

**Risks:** There are no known risks outside the risks associated with your daily life that you would be exposed to if you participated in this study. No personally identifying information will be collected including but not limited to name, date of birth, social security number, employee number, or shield or star number.

**Benefits:** You will have gained knowledge in the type of follower that you identify as being. The meaning of that identification includes how you can possibly grow over time on the followership continuum and how you can possibly increase your career development opportunities.

**Process:** The enclosed followership style self-assessment handout should take approximately 12 minutes to complete and the brief survey following completion of the self-assessment should take approximately 3 minutes to complete, for a total time of 15 minutes.

**Contact Information:** Should you wish to obtain a copy of the results of this research upon its conclusion those results can be shared with you electronically if you provide an email address to the researcher. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns at all regarding your potential or actual involvement in this research please feel free to contact the researcher, the capstone committee chair, or the institutional review board at Governors State University.

Researcher: Brad Gronke, [REDACTED]  
 Capstone Committee Chair: Dr. Brian Vivona, [REDACTED]  
 Research Site Supervisor: Roger Loni, [REDACTED]  
 Institutional Review Board: [REDACTED]

By signing below you agree to participate in this study and acknowledge all of the risks and benefits outlined above.

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Signature of Participant

---

Date

APPENDIX B

FOLLOWERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND TOOL

# **Followership Style Self-Assessment Instructions**

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL MEMO



**Memo****To: Dr. Brian Vivona and Brad Gronke****From:** Drs. Praggyan Mohanty and Renee Theiss, IRB Co-Chair**CC:** Fatmah Tommalieh**Date:** September 17, 2015**Re:** Police Officer Followership**Project Number:** #15-09-02

We are pleased to inform you that your proposal has been approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board. You may begin your research. Please be advised that the protocol will expire on September 17, 2016, one year from today.

Before the study expiration date, if your research is completed, please inform the IRB in writing of the number of participants involved in your research and the closing date. If you intend to collect data using human subjects after that date, the proposal must be renewed by the IRB. If you make any substantive changes in your research protocols before that date, you must inform the IRB and have the new protocols approved.

Please include the exact title of your project and the assigned IRB number in any correspondence about this project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Drs. Praggyan Mohanty or Renee Theiss

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