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RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES FIRE SERVICE: AN

INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF

CHIEF OFFICERS' PERCEPTIONS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Human Resource Development

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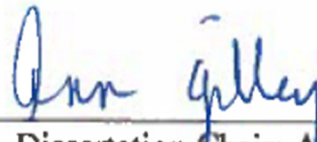
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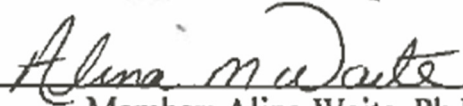
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Abstract

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April 2018

Trends in the current human resource development (HRD) literature emphasize the role

that integration of strategic human resource development (SHRD) practices has on

organizational effectiveness (Garavan, 1991; Garavan, 2007; Gilley & Gilley, 2003;

Gilley & Maycunich, 2000; Ruona & Gilley, 2009; Wright, 2007). The United States

Fire Service currently views human resource development as a management practice to

be utilized by the chief officer to address vocational or technical skills (Stowell, 2004).

This interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) qualitative study explored the

beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of chief officers in the United States Fire Service to

further understanding of barriers to integration of strategic human resource development

practices and the strategies that have been utilized to overcome these barriers. Data were

collected using semi-structured interviews. Once transcribed, the data were analyzed

using qualitative data analysis techniques. The population for this study was twenty-four

chief officers currently employed in the United States Fire Service. By identifying

common themes that affect the integration of SHRD practices in the United States Fire

Service, this study advances understanding of barriers that prevent integration of SHRD

practices and the strategies that have been utilized to overcome these barriers.

Understanding these barriers contributes to the literature and provides multiple practical

benefits to scholars, practitioners, and fire service organizations on how to address the

barriers to integration of SHRD.

Keywords: strategic human resource development, strategic human resource

management, organizational performance, human resource development, top

management support, expanded trainer role.

Chapter One

Introduction

Background to the Problem

As human resource development (HRD) opportunities transition from event-based training to strategic human resource development (SHRD) that is focused on improving business results, the credibility of HRD practitioners is often questioned by upper management (Gilley & Gilley, 2003). This issue is further exacerbated by fire service leaders who instill their antiquated notions of autocratic leadership, which impedes organizational growth and change (Cox, 2012).

The traditional view of the fire service is one that defines the function of HRD as a management practice to be utilized by the chief officer to address vocational or technical skills (Stowell, 2004). In contrast, Cox (2012) stated that firefighters are no longer blue-collar workers and that modern-day firefighters are highly trained and technology-equipped professionals, which further underscores the need to adopt SHRD practices. According to Gilley and Gilley (2003), to cross the line of demarcation and transform HRD from activity-based training to SHRD and to adopt a result-driven focus is the most difficult part of the transformation. Garavan and Carberry (2012) clarified this by asserting that some of the barriers to this integration are a lack of understanding by leadership on the value of SHRD and stakeholders who face a significant cultural barrier and believe HRD function is administrative or reactive in focus. To further understanding of the barriers associated with the transformation process and the strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers this qualitative study explored chief officers' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of the integration of SHRD practices and the process of

transformation from an event-based HRD department to a results-driven SHRD organization.

An Overview of the Fire Service

Many organizations utilize HRD to initiate and deliver training and thus deserve research attention. As an industry, the fire service in the United States has multiple courses on technical training that are standardized and delivered systematically by chief officers throughout the nation. This standardized nationwide training system provides a unique opportunity to study an industry that operates in the public sector and performs HRD functions daily with a focus on activity-based training.

The culture of the fire service is unique in that it offers an interesting population for this study. In 2014, the National Fire Protection Agency estimated the fire service in the United States employed 1,124,400 career firefighters of whom 82% were white and 95.9% were male (Haynes & Stein, 2016). This lack of diversity has contributed to a culture that too often adopts programs based on cultural norms and expectations of the group. This study offers a unique understanding of the barriers to integration of SHRD in groups resistant to change.

Statement of the Problem

Although the fire service does an excellent job conducting training for the development of technical skills and event-based initiatives, chief officers have yet to incorporate SHRD practices into the workplace. Integration of SHRD practices is essential to organizational efficiency, effectiveness, learning, and the creation of a sustainable learning culture (Garavan, 2007).

The problem not adequately addressed in the literature pertains to the barriers chief officers encountered and the strategies they have utilized to transform fire service organizations into SHRD organizations focused on programming aligned with organizational goals, mission, and vision. According to Ruona and Gilley (2009), this theory-practice gap is evident, and they called for research to advance the understanding of scholars and practitioners. Furthering understanding of this gap will allow organizations to take the transformational step and transition from HRD event-focused training departments into SHRD-focused organizations. Cox (2012) summarized this issue succinctly by stating, "Current leaders, and their autocratic, non-communicative leadership styles, are a product of an ingrained organizational culture, a culture where leadership visions, values, and expectations are not shared" (p. 13).

This problem is important because it is imperative for fire service organizations to incorporate strategic development models rather than those of yesteryears management paradigms due to society's current cognitive, cultural, and political contexts, rather than those of yesteryears management paradigms (Cox, 2012). Crossing this threshold may allow fire service organizations focused solely on activity-based HRD to benefit from the integration of SHRD practices. By furthering the understanding of the barriers associated with this process, fire service organizations operating in the public sector will be able to utilize the results of this qualitative study of barriers to integration of SHRD practices to increase organizational effectiveness, organizational efficiency, chief officer performance, and employee morale.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of chief officers in the United States Fire Service to further understanding of the barriers to integration of SHRD practices and the strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers.

Theoretical Framework

Three conceptual theories provided the impetus for this study. First, Gilley and Gilley (2003) spoke about crossing the line of demarcation. This line serves as the symbolic barrier that organizations must breach to transition from event-based HRD activities to an SHRD-focused organization that fully integrates the HRD function. Second, Ruona and Gilley (2009) succinctly stated a theory-practice gap is evident and they called for research to advance the understanding of both scholars and practitioners. Third, Garavan and Carberry (2012) spoke about barriers to integration of SHRD within organizations and the need for HRD professionals to understand these barriers to facilitate the adoption of SHRD practices.

Therefore, Gilley and Gilley (2003) suggested five key competencies or prerequisites that are critical to HRD practitioners. They are stakeholder relationship skills, systems thinking skills, organizational analysis skills, industry experience and technical skills, and project management skills. In addition, Garavan (1991) identified nine essential characteristics of SHRD integration with organizational missions and goals, top management support, environmental scanning; HRD plans and policies, line manager commitment and involvement, the existence of complementary human resource management (HRM) activities, expanded trainer role, recognition of culture, and

emphasis on evaluation. These theories are the core conceptual theories that underpin this research of barriers to integration of SHRD within an organization and the need for HRD professionals to understand these barriers in order facilitate the adoption of SHRD practices.

Research Questions

This study was guided by two research questions. First, the study explored the perceptions of chief officers on the barriers they encounter when trying to integrate SHRD practices. Second, the study examined chief officers' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of strategies that may be utilized to overcome these barriers to integration of SHRD practices. Furthermore, each research question had associated interview questions that were designed to clarify the chief officer's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. To further understanding, probing questions were asked to gain detail on areas in need of additional clarity.

RQ 1) What are the barriers encountered by chief officers when they try to integrate SHRD practices?

IQ 1) Please describe the current state of SHRD in your organization.

IQ 2) Please describe the ideal state of SHRD in your organization.

IQ 3) What is preventing your organization from transforming from the current state to the ideal state?

RQ 2) How can chief officers overcome the barriers to integration of SHRD practices?

IQ 4) How could these barriers to SHRD be overcome?

IQ 5) What organizational changes are needed to overcome these barriers

to SHRD?

IQ 6) If provided these resources, how would you implement the changes

in your organization?

IQ 7) How would adopting SHRD practices benefit your

organization?

Overview and Design of the Study

This qualitative study utilized an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

approach to data interpretation, and the participants were selected from chief fire officers

currently employed full-time in departments throughout the United States. Furthermore,

the selection was limited to chief officers holding the rank of full-time battalion chief or

higher.

Research Setting

The United States Fire Service was chosen due to its unique attributes and

extensive standardized training system. This population allowed for the collection of rich

data on chief officers' perspectives of the barriers to SHRD integration and the strategies

that have been utilized to overcome these barriers.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were selected from chief fire officers currently

employed full-time in departments throughout the United States using three specific

approaches. First, the researcher contacted the fire chiefs of departments to obtain the

names and email contact details for chief officers meeting the criteria for the study.

Second, the researcher contacted the International Association of Fire Chiefs and

obtained the names and email contact details for chief officers meeting the criteria for the

study. Third, the researcher used a snowball sampling strategy and obtained the names of potential chief officers who met the criteria for the study from those that had agreed to participate in this study. These three approaches for identifying potential study participants were used due to each group's potential knowledge of individuals who met the requirements for participating in this research. From the names gathered, the chief officers were then contacted by the researcher via email about the purpose of the research and invited to participate in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary means of data collection for this qualitative study. The United States Fire Service was chosen due to its unique attributes and its extensive standardized training system. This population allowed for the collection of rich data on chief officers' perspectives of the barriers to SHRD integration, twenty-four individual semi-structured interviews were conducted.

Data Analysis Procedures

According to Pope, Ziebland, and Mays (2000), "Analyzing qualitative data is not a simple or quick task. Done properly, it is systematic and rigorous, and therefore labour-intensive and time-consuming" (p. 116). Qualitative research also produces vast amounts of data that need to be analyzed in an ongoing sequential process to allow the researcher to continually refine questions and hypotheses in pursuit of emerging themes (Pope et al., 2000). Specific data analysis procedures for this phenomenological study followed strict guidelines. Once an interview was completed, it was transcribed, coded, and analyzed using MAXQDA qualitative analysis software to identify any pertinent themes. Successive interviews were then conducted in a manner that built on and

compared each additional interview to the repository of themes to identify additional contributory themes. Once new themes no longer emerged, the data analysis process was deemed saturated, and interviews concluded.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability were maintained throughout this study to promote the credibility of this research. Several techniques suggested by Creswell (1998) and Creswell and Miller (2000) were implemented to maintain transparency and credibility such as describing the role of the researcher, data triangulation, use of rich, thick descriptions, member checks, and meticulous record keeping were used to maintain transparency and credibility.

Significance of the Study

Understanding barriers to integration of SHRD in the fire service may play a pivotal role in implementing change processes focused on alignment of organizational values, mission, vision, and goals in pursuit of organizational effectiveness. By furthering the understanding of the barriers associated with this transformational step, fire service organizations operating in the public sector can utilize the results of this qualitative study of barriers to integration of SHRD practices to increase organizational effectiveness, organizational efficiency, chief officer performance, and employee morale.

Assumptions

Two general assumptions were made regarding this research. First, it was assumed that the chief officers answered the interview questions openly and honestly. The anonymity of the participants was strictly maintained, and interviewees' identities remained confidential to ensure honest responses. The second assumption was that chief

officers have a general understanding of HRD practices and SHRD practices. Each

interviewee was asked to state their familiarity with human resource (HR) concepts to

ensure that only chief officers who self-acknowledge their HR competency level would

participate in this study.

Definitions of Terms

      Barriers. According to Post and Altma (1994), "Organizational barriers include

factors such as employee attitudes, poor communications, past practice and inadequate

top management leadership. The barriers to change that confront management present a

mixture of generic and unique obstacles. Formidable barriers obstruct management

efforts to transform the way a firm's strategic decisions are made and routine operations

conducted" (p. 67).

      Capability. Helfat and Peteraf (2003) stated "organizational capability refers to

the ability of an organization to perform a coordinated set of tasks, utilizing

organizational resources, for the purpose of achieving a particular end result" (p. 999).

      Capacity. Mackay, Horton, Dupleich, and Andersen (2002) noted that "Capacity

refers to both the organizational arrangements and the technical capabilities that permit

organizations to carry out their primary functions and thereby accomplish their

development goals" (p. 122).

      Chief Officer. A member of an organized fire department who has risen through

the ranks of the department by demonstrating the competencies needed to become a

leader in their organization. The Chief Officer's primary function within the organization

is to develop, guide, and implement policy in a manner that enhances organizational

performance and organizational efficiency by assisting, developing, and training

personnel to understand the vision and mission of the organization (Stowell, 2004).

Competence. "*Competencies* represent the knowledge, skills, and abilities that

exist among and across employees and groups of employees" (Ulrich, 1998, p. 68).

Fire service Human Resource Development Professionals. These individuals

are responsible for employee growth, development, and education within the department.

Human Resource Development. Swanson and Holton (2009) defined "HRD as

a process of developing and unleashing expertise for the purpose of improving individual

and teamwork processes, and organizational systems performance" (p. 4).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA is an approach to

qualitative research with a particular psychological interest in how people make sense of

their experience. IPA requires the researcher to collect detailed, reflective, first-person

accounts from research participants (Larkin & Thompson, 2012).

Machine Bureaucracy. According to Mintzberg (1980), "The Machine

Bureaucracy coordinates primarily by the imposition of work standards from the

technostructure; jobs are highly specialized and formalized, units functional and very

large (at the operating level), power centralized vertically at the strategic apex with

limited horizontal decentralization to the technostructure; this structure tends to be found

in simple, stable environments, and is often associated with older, larger organizations,

sometimes externally controlled, and mass production technical systems" (p. 322).

Organizational Collaboration. For the purpose of this study, the theme

Organizational Collaboration is defined as the ability to establish, maintain, and grow

internal and external stakeholder support.

Organizational Communication. For the purpose of this study, the theme *Organizational Communication* is defined as the methods used to inform, update and disseminate information within the organization.

Organizational Culture. For the purpose of this study, the theme *Organizational Culture* is defined as a system of shared beliefs held by the employees within the organization on how the organization should function and what the organization's strategy should be.

Organizational Health. For the purpose of this study, the theme *Organizational Health* is defined as the number of individual stress, morale, substance abuse, and mental health issues suffered by the individual employees within the organization. When combined, these issues assist in determining the overall *Organizational Health* of the department.

Organizational Knowledge. For the purpose of this study, the theme *Organizational Knowledge* is defined as the knowledge of the individual employee when combined with all other employees' knowledge.

Performance Management System. "Performance management is a continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization" (Aguinis & Pierce, 2008, p. 139).

Phenomenology. "Phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual, 'bracketing' taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of perceiving. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based on a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and emphasize the importance of

personal perspective and interpretation. As such, they are powerful for understanding the subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom" (Lester, 1999, p. 1).

Professional Bureaucracy. "The professional bureaucracy relies on the standardization of skills in its operating core for coordination; jobs are highly specialized but minimally formalized. Training is extensive, and grouping is on a concurrent functional and market basis, with large sized operating units, and decentralization is extensive in both the vertical and horizontal dimensions; this structure is typically found in complex but stable environments, with technical systems that are simple and non-regulating" (Mintzberg,1980, p. 322).

Public Sector. Dube and Danescu (2011) stated "The public sector consists of governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services" (p. 3).

Strategic Human Resource Development. "SHRD could thus be defined as the creation of a learning culture, within which a range of training, development and learning strategies both respond to corporate strategy and also help to shape and influence it. It is about meeting the organization's existing needs, but also about helping the organization to change and develop, to thrive and grow" (McCracken & Wallace, 2000, p. 288).

Strategy. Strategy consists of the "particular objectives a company has for the future and how it plans to focus its business practices so as to create and sustain value." (Greensburg, 2011, p. 539).

Summary of Chapter One and Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter one included the background to the problem, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and research questions. It also contained insight into the unique population to be studied and the unusual cultural significance associated with the fire service. The chapter concluded with a definition of terms used throughout the dissertation.

Chapter two provides a literature review on the pertinent literature associated with the fire service, SHRD, organizational learning, organizational performance, and the nine key features of SHRD that Garavan (1991) believed are needed for SHRD to flourish within an organization. The chapter contains twelve sections and concludes with a summary.

Chapter three presents the research design and method, the purpose of the study, research questions, design of the study, rationale for the methodological approach, and the methods of data collection. This chapter also includes the rationale for using a phenomenological study and the reasons an IPA phenomenological study was utilized and then concludes with a discussion of the material presented.

Chapter four provides the results of this qualitative study. Chapter five then discusses the implications for practice, the findings of this study, and offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

This chapter reviews the literature on a series of topics related to HRD, SHRD, organizational performance, organizational learning, and change theory. The chapter is organized into six major sections based upon the SHRD literature (Garavan, 1991, 2007; Garavan & Carberry, 2012; Garavan, Costine, & Heraty, 1995; Gilley & Gilley, 2003; McCracken & Wallace, 2000; Tseng & McLean, 2008). The purpose of this broad literature review was to identify the research gaps that provided the foundation for this study.

This literature review examines multiple areas associated with SHRD and HRD regarding possible barriers that HRD practitioners face while trying to integrate SHRD practices. In the first section, HRD and SHRD are examined to reveal their foundational features. The second section examines nine key features of SHRD as put forward by Garavan (1991) and then refined further by McCracken and Wallace (2000). The third section examines organizational learning to provide information on how SHRD can influence organizational performance and increase organizational effectiveness. The fourth section examines organizational change theory to provide an understanding of basic organizational change assumptions and challenges faced during all change processes. The fifth section summarizes the literature review, speaks to the gap in the literature, and discusses the implications of the literature review on this study and how the adoption of SHRD practices will enhance the fire service. The chapter then concludes with a table summarizing the literature reviewed.

The University of Texas at Tyler Robert R. Muntz Library computer system was utilized to search the following databases EBSCOhost and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses databases. In addition, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and The Indiana State University Cunningham Library resources were utilized to complete this literature review. A systematic approach was utilized to search terms including *strategic human resource development, strategic human resource management, organizational performance, organizational change theory, human resource development, organizational mission and goals, environmental scanning, top management support, HRD plans and policies, line manager commitment and involvement, complementary HRM activities, expanded trainer role, recognition of culture, and an emphasis on evaluation.*

Human Resource Development

Defining HRD over the course of the field's existence has been a process that has resulted in a continual debate about what exactly HRD is (Hamlin & Stewart, 2011). According to Garavan, O'Donnell, McGuire, & Watson (2007), "As an academic field, it is generally accepted that it remains segmented, incomplete, lacking comprehensiveness and coherence, with diverse theories and models offering competing explanations" (p. 3). However, it is generally accepted that HRD at its core involves an activity focused on learning transfer in pursuit of development (Gilley & Gilley, 2003; Zachmeier & Cho, 2014).

An activity-based focus leads some practitioners to behave as if their mission were to conduct workshops, seminars, meetings, and conferences (Gilley & Gilley, 2003; Ruona & Gilley, 2009). The event or activity-based focus utilized by HRD practitioners

is a subtle and key difference in how Gilley and Gilley (2003) and Garavan (2007) perceive an SHRD practitioner's role within the organization. Both authors postulate that an HRD practitioner's role should evolve to include proactive duties focused on strategic organizational initiatives. Clarification of these roles and the beliefs that practitioners have regarding these duties is an often-debated topic.

Strategic Human Resource Development

Strategically integrated HRD is a "results-driven philosophy" (Gilley & Gilley, 2003, p. 34) and involves the long-term development of people within organizations (Gilley & Maycunich, 2000). Garavan et al. (1995) postulated on the existence of SHRD, and Garavan (2007) further defined SHRD as "a multi-level concept whose contribution to the organization is to enhance its performance in the long term" (p. 11). "Thus, SHRD involves the consideration of the impact of the overall HRD strategy on the organization or business unit" (Alagaraja, 2013, p. 75). Garavan and Carberry (2012) further expounded on this belief by stating that "SHRD is premised on the view that HRD practitioners possess the competencies to assume the role of strategic partners, strategic players, and players in the business rather than simply reacting to the events of the business" (p. 24).

The SHRD literature reflects the belief that SHRD efforts should focus on the development of employees and alignment of organizational strategy. In addition, this review has revealed multiple underlying themes such as integration of organizational mission and goals, top management support, environmental scanning, HRD plans and policies, line manager commitment and involvement, existence of complementary HRM activities, recognition of culture, and emphasis on evaluation that have been suggested to

be key features of integration and implementation of SHRD into the organizational fabric (Garavan, 1991; McCracken & Wallace, 2000).

As revealed by Garavan (1991), there are nine essential characteristics of SHRD (i.e., integration with organizational missions and goals, top management support, environmental scanning, HRD plans and policies, line manager commitment and involvement, existence of complementary HRM activities, expanded trainer role, recognition of culture, and emphasis on evaluation) that are critical for key stakeholders to understand to allow for integration of SHRD. These nine key features assisted in forming the research questions that were developed for this study and provided a conceptual framework of the perceived inhibitors to the implementation of SHRD within the organization. A brief overview of each of these nine key factors has been included to provide background information on the research questions that were developed based on these features.

Nine Key Features of Strategic Human Resource Development

Integration of organizational mission, and goals. Tseng and McLean (2008) reiterated Garavan's nine key characteristics that are needed for SHRD to flourish. Integration of organizational mission and goals was listed first, signifying the importance of the organizational mission and goals in the adoption of SHRD strategies. According to Pearce and David (1987), "a mission statement is an important first step in the strategic planning process" (p. 109), and an effective mission statement sets a business apart from other firms and identifies the scope of business operations. Wright (2007) highlighted two factors that are particularly important to goal theory. First, individuals are more committed to goals that they believe are achievable. Second, the belief in the goal is

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strengthened when it is perceived that the goal will have positive outcomes associated with it for either the individual or the organization.

Both organizational mission and goal establishment are critical to the integration and acceptance of SHRD. Without either, the organization and its employees are faced with uncertain direction and guidance. Gilley and Gilley (2003) emphasized organizational goals by stating that it is no longer enough for HRD programs to improve performance; instead, they called for HRD practitioners to enhance organizations by assisting them in reaching their strategic business goals. Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, and Courtright (2015) stated "that senior executives can enhance the effects of the motivationally focused organizational resources on collective organizational engagement by aligning their departmental goals with the firm's strategic objectives and by actively monitoring progress toward these goals" (p. 114).

Multiple theories exist regarding the correct way to integrate goals strategically within the organization; however, Bryson (1988) suggested that the direct approach theory is perhaps the best for most government agencies. This approach allows strategic stakeholders to utilize the mission, mandates, and results of the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats analysis (SWOT) to identify and integrate strategic initiatives (Bryson, 1988). The importance of training alignment with goals, mission, and strategy in conjunction with top management support has a positive impact on the organization's goals and enhances employees' learning efforts while creating a beneficial return on assets (Hirota, Kubo, Miyajima, Hong, & Won Park, 2010). Understanding how mission and goals are utilized by chief officers is especially important to this study to further understanding on how SHRD is integrated into the fabric of the organization.

Top management support. Top management support is critical to successful integration of SHRD. Mintzberg (1994) argued that there is a difference between strategic planning and strategic thinking. He believed that strategic planning, as currently practiced in most organizations, has been strategic programming and has curtailed the creativity associated with strategic thinking. He further expounded on this by stating that the strategy making process should capture what the manager learns from all sources and be incorporated into the creation of a succinct vision for the business.

Beer (1997) reported that chief executive officers (CEOs) are a major force of change within the organization. CEOs should recognize the need for strategic change and develop managers with the capability to support strategic change. Nonaka, Von Krogh, and Voelpel (2006) discussed the differences associated with information and knowledge. They defined knowledge creation "as a continuous process through which one overcomes the individual boundaries and constraints imposed by information and past learning by acquiring a new context, a new view of the world and new knowledge" (p. 1182). The highest levels of organizational engagement occur when top management support is provided while implementing strategic objectives (Barrick et al., 2015) and is considered essential to the success of strategy development in the public sector to support those involved in the strategic process (Poister, 2010). Therefore, understanding top management support is especially important when trying to discern the opinions and beliefs of top management and the steps they have taken to provide support to their HRD practitioners.

Environmental scanning. Blackwell and Blackmore (2003) asserted that environmental scanning is recognized as a key function utilized by SHRD. Garavan

(1991) listed environmental scanning as one of the key components of SHRD. Choo

(2001) defined environmental scanning "as the acquisition and use of information about

events, trends, and relationships in an organization's external environment, the knowledge

of which would assist management in planning the organization's future course of action"

(p. 1)

Scanning skills are considered to be a basic skill set needed by managers to assist

organizations in reaching their potential by determining important strategies that help

organizations reach their goals (Pansiri & Temtime, 2008). Temtime (2001) summarized

the importance of scanning by stating it is a prerequisite for company survival and

success. Information gathered during environmental scanning could be viewed as either

an inhibitor or an asset depending on the process of information gathering advocated by

top management and its dissemination to managers and key stakeholders for integration

into their SHRD strategies.

HRD policies and plans. At the operational level, the goal of planning is to get

line managers to think about business goals and adapt them to learning needs (Garavan,

1991). According to Zula and Chermack (2007), alignment of organizational mission,

vision, values, and goals begins with the strategic planning process. Chermack and

Swanson (2008) simply stated that "scenario planning is about seeing" (p. 137). Wack

(1985) perhaps summarized planning best when he noted, "Scenario analysis is a

disciplined way to think about the future. It demands, above all, an understanding of the

forces that drive the system, rather than reliance on forecasts" (p. 143). Gilley and Gilley

(2003) warned of the perils associated with the implementation of the strategic planning

process and advised HRD practitioners that it should be viewed as a continual process.

By adopting a flexible planning approach, a sustainable competitive advantage may be found between the interaction of the planning process and the strategic plan (Dibrell, Craig, & Neubaum, 2014). Understanding the planning process and the need to update these plans continually is a critical insight into ascertaining the degree to which organizations fully understand how SHRD should be utilized within the organization (Fox, 2013). Thus, it is critically important for HRD practitioners to acquire an understanding of the planning process and how these skills may be utilized to advance HRD within their organization (Alagaraja, 2013).

   Line-manager commitment and involvement. Gong, Law, Chang, and Xin (2009) found that "effectively committed employees represent a valuable, relatively rare, and difficult-to-imitate resource" (p. 272). Renwick (2003) reported that there were negatives and positives associated with line managers using strategically integrated SHRD. A few of the positives were reported to be increased employee satisfaction, a positive view of HR, career benefits, and managers who are considerate of employee needs and wishes. A few of the negatives centered on a need for additional HR skills, time to perform HR work, and dilution of focus as a result of taking on HR work. In contrast, Renwick and MacNeil (2002) reported that failure to strategically integrate line managers might be a result of the human resource manager's fear of reduced influence if line managers prove efficient at conducting HR business at the operational level. Devolution or the transfer of the HR function to line managers is a growing trend (Holt, Larsen, & Brewster, 2003) and has proven beneficial to organizations when line managers are given the support and training and are held accountable for their performance in these roles (Perry & Kulik, 2008).

Existence of complementary HRM policies. Gilley and Gilley (2003) spoke

about the integration of HRD functions and believed that integration should be

implemented to the point that SHRD practitioners begin to perform at the operational unit

level and provide services similar to a consultant. Devolution to the line manager is

considered to be a key component of complementary HRM activities. However, the

resulting perceived loss of power and influence experienced by HRD practitioners and

concerns about fully integrating HRD into the operational unit could hinder the

integration of these complementary HRM activities (Gennard & Kelly, 1997; Renwick,

2003). This conflict and cooperation between HRM and line managers over what is

supposed to be a complementary process provided an interesting insight for this study on

SHRD barriers to integration.

Expanded trainer role. Seufert and Meier (2013) suggested that trainers take on

an extended role that provides business results in addition to training and development.

Ulrich (1998) reported that trainers should no longer focus on traditional activities and

suggested that trainers take on four new roles focused on delivering results to customers,

employees, and the organization. Specifically, Ulrich (1998) maintained that trainers of

"HR should become partner[s] with senior and line managers in strategy execution" (p.

124), agent[s] of continuous transformation, shaping processes and a culture that improve

an organization's capacity for change" (p. 125).

Gilley and Gilley (2003) identified six transformational roles that trainers must

utilize before SHRD practices may be integrated into the organizational culture. These

new roles need to be focused on organizational change, organizational performance, and

organizational learning while aiming to redesign and redevelop HRD to become results

driven. These new roles will require trainers to reflect upon their capacity and capability

and to acquire the needed competencies to serve in the expanded roles at the strategic

level (Blackwell & Blackmore, 2003).

      Recognition of culture. Culture determines the basic beliefs, values, and norms

regarding the why and how of knowledge generation, sharing, and utilization in an

organization (Zheng, Yang, & McLean, 2010). Denison and Mishra (1995) stated that

culture and organizational effectiveness are intertwined, and their findings supported "the

basic premises of many culture researchers: that the cultures of organizations have an

important influence on effectiveness" (p. 220). Tseng & McLean (2008) noted that

culture must be viewed as a central factor in the implementation of SHRD strategies and

should be examined to establish options, policies, and plans that assist SHRD function.

Understanding organizational culture is a critical component of an HRD practitioner's

role within the organization and is crucial in the development of new strategies that

elevate training and HRD (Bunch, 2007). The fire service culture provides an interesting

population for this study and one that, according to Cox (2012), is a multifaceted culture

steeped in history that may be known best for its blatantly hegemonic masculine culture.

Recognition of this culture and how to address change within the fire service were

clarified further by Cox (2012) when he stated

> Very few fire service managers fully buy into collaborative labor/management
>
> working relationships; they give the process good lip service, but they actually
>
> have very little emotionally or intellectually invested in the process. Second, the
>
> process is necessary to help facilitate the social learning process necessary for true
>
> organizational change. (p. 117)

Awareness and recognition of the special cultural attributes that the fire service holds are especially noteworthy for this study of barriers to integration of SHRD in the fire service.

Emphasis on evaluation. Kusy (1988) suggested that the days of training managers who are not conducting effective evaluation programs that convince top management that HRD contributes to the organization's bottom line are over. Foxon (1989) found that most practitioners viewed evaluation as a problem, not a solution. Kirkpatrick's four-level framework is the most popular evaluation model with level four providing some measure of training impact on organizational financial measures (Bates, 2004). Phillips (2012) addressed return on investment (ROI) for training programs and called for training programs to be carefully analyzed to provide top-level management with ROI calculations to justify the existence and benefits of training.

Garavan (2007) and Garavan and Carberry (2012) outlined the effective evaluation process for SHRD and called for evaluations that include some type of cost-benefit analysis and a clear criterion for evaluating individual and organizational HRD effectiveness. McCracken (2000) acknowledged the need for evaluation of HRD programs and investigation into their cost-effectiveness. However, McCracken (2000) also pointed out that a paradox exists if too much emphasis is placed on short-term quantifiable results by noting that "it is vital not to undermine the importance of HRD as an investment with long-term and less tangible benefits (such as culture change)" (p. 285).

Organizational Learning

McCracken and Wallace (2000) compared establishment of an organizational learning culture with the establishment of SHRD stating that "SHRD thus could be defined as the creation of a learning culture" (p. 288). Organizational learning benefits

organizational change when SHRD practices are utilized (Tseng & McLean, 2008).

Hotho, Lyles, and Easterby-Smith (2015) contended that a lack of understanding between

management and HRD practitioners is a challenge that needs to be addressed when

looking into organizational performance issues. Gilley and Maycunich (2000) contended

that workplace learning is a critical component in the transformation from a traditional

event-based training organization to a developmental organization. Tseng and McLean

(2008) reported

> Organizations that learn and develop their SHRD practices have more
>
> opportunities to obtain and integrate the nine SHRD outcomes in the learning
>
> process: organizational missions and goals, top management leadership,
>
> environmental scanning, HRD strategies and plans, strategic partnerships with
>
> line management, strategic partnerships with HRM, trainers as organizational
>
> change consultants, influence corporate culture, and emphasis on individual
>
> productivity and participation. (p. 418)

This further underscores the need to advance understanding on the nine key features

associated with SHRD outcomes proposed by Garavan (1991) and refined by McCracken

and Wallace (2000). Garavan (2007) further suggested organizational outcomes may be

maximized when organizational learning is embraced.

Organizational Performance

According to Becker and Gerhart (1996), "to impact organizational performance,

HR decisions must either improve efficiency or contribute to revenue growth" (p. 780).

"Such recommendations are unsurprising given that professionals and academics have

long asserted that the way in which an organization manages people can influence its

performance" (Delaney & Huselid, 1996, p. 949). Collins and Clark (2003) reported that HR practices support and reinforce employee-based resources and increase firm performance. Kehoe and Wright (2013) summarized the impact that SHRM contributes to organizational performance by commenting that "substantial evidence based on previous empirical work in the SHRM realm supports the relationship between high-performance HR practices and organizational performance" (p. 383).

Organizational Change

Another key concept associated with SHRD is organizational change and its ability to allow organizations to cope with change (Garavan, 2007). According to Hamlin (2016), failure to understand the principles of change is one of the root causes associated with the failure of change initiatives. Aligning organizational change interventions with organizational strategy is critical in acquiring stakeholder support and successful change (Wognum & Fond Lam, 2000). To facilitate organizational change, HRD practitioners should operate as strategic partners and strive to be key players at the executive table by considering input from multiple stakeholders (Wang, Hutchins, & Garavan, 2009).

As strategic partners, HRD practitioners perform as business partners and change agents within the organization (Gilley & Gilley, 2003). This role requires HRD professionals to obtain multiple competencies in order to facilitate organizational change. According to Gilley and Gilley (2003), the four core roles associated with a change champion are a business partner, servant leader, change expert, and future shaper. Each of these core roles encompasses five competencies. Although all four roles are critical to an HRD practitioner or change agent's success, this study focused on the barriers that

prevent HRD practitioners from becoming strategic business partners. Gilley and Gilley

(2003) further suggested five key competencies to success for an HRD practitioner

performing in a business partner role. They are stakeholder relationship skills, systems

thinking skills, organizational analysis skills, industry experience and technical skills, and

project management skills. Each of these is discussed in further detail to highlight key

concepts that are applicable to this study.

Stakeholder relationship skills. Gilley and Gilley (2003) defined stakeholder

relationship skills as "the ability to work with people and to be recognized as someone

who adds value to the organization" (p. 233). Stakeholder involvement has a positive

relationship on SHRD alignment and should involve stakeholders at every level of the

organization (Wognum & Fond Lam, 2000). This focus on stakeholders and their

contributions to success by HRD practitioners allow the organization to come to a

consensus on organizational policy and procedures which creates a deepened sense of

commitment among employees and is one of the underlying assumptions of SHRD

(Wognum & Fond Lam, 2000). By developing stakeholder relationship skills, HRD

practitioners enhance HRD credibility within the organization and create value which

enhances firm performance (Harrison & Wicks, 2013).

Systems thinking skills. Another key competency that HRD practitioners should

possess is systems theory thinking skills that allow them to fully understand the inputs,

outputs, and throughputs of an organization (Gilley & Gilley, 2003). Understanding

these skills allow HRD practitioners to provide training to others within the organization,

increases business acumen and systems theory thinking, and allows for more meaningful

contributions by those involved in strategic planning (Torraco & Swanson, 1995). Gilley

and Gilley's (2003) belief that HRD practitioners should have the ability to demonstrate competency in systems theory thinking is echoed by Yawson (2013) who postulated that systems theory should be a foundational HRD theory. Yawson (2013) also reported that systems theory thinking requires HRD practitioners to obtain a greater range of skills that are not currently offered in most HRD curricula.

Organizational analysis skills. The ability to analyze an organization, determine the needs of multiple stakeholders, and identify strategic goals and objectives is a competency that should be exhibited by HRD practitioners (Gilley & Gilley, 2003). However, Lim and Rager (2015) reported that most HRD curricula are centered on content that focuses on areas more closely associated with instructional design. This disparity between needed skills and those taught by most HRD programs highlights the need for providing HRD practitioners with the necessary organizational analysis skills.

Industry Experience and Technical Skills

HRD practitioners operating as change agents possess relevant industry experience and needed technical skills (Gilley & Gilley, 2003). However, the skills associated with these competencies (e.g., leadership development, performance management, system design and implementation) were not listed among the top four core curricula elements of U.S. graduate HRD programs (Lim & Rager, 2015). Zachmeier et al.'s (2014) analysis of HRD curricula content also revealed that only one technical skill suggested by Gilley and Gilley (2003), leadership development, was ranked in the top ten on the list of courses offered in HRD master's curricula, and that was the skill of leadership development. This apparent lack of focus on much-needed business skills was attributed to where the HRD department resided within the university (Zachmeier et al.,

2014). Zachmeier et al. (2014) found that HRD departments housed in the school of education were focused on courses closely associated with adult education. In contrast, HRD programs housed in the school of business provided coursework more closely aligned with the business acumen suggested by Gilley and Gilley (2003) that is needed to perform as a change agent within an organization.

Project management skills. Project management skills provide employees with insight on how to plan, integrate, and control endeavors that improve organizational efficiency (Pant & Baroudi, 2008). Project management skills are a critical competency needed by HRD practitioners, and Gilley and Gilley (2003) suggested these competencies are an essential component of a change agent's role. However, Zachmeier et al. (2014) reported that only "Twenty-seven percent of all programmes (23% of programmes in schools of education and 30% of programmes in schools of business) required a course that was dedicated to a 'real-world' project in an organization. Only two programmes in the sample required both an internship and a real-world project" (p. 328).

Fire Service History

The population for this study, the United States Fire Service, has several interesting and noteworthy contextual considerations that deserve special mention to aid understanding of this study. This section presents a brief overview on the fire service history, culture, leadership, HRD/training department, demographics, and a summary on each to provide the reader with a contextual frame of reference into the subtle nuances of the fire service that could impact the results of this study.

The humble beginnings of the United States Fire Service began with a single voluntary fire company organized by Benjamin Franklin in 1736 (Anderson, 1979).

These humble beginnings, however, quickly vanished and by 1850 volunteer fire departments had become undesirable organizations due to their resistance to change, negative social influence, and political power (Anderson, 1979).

The first full-time municipal career fire department in the United States was founded by the city of Cincinnati, Ohio in 1853. The department was formed after a fist fight between volunteer firefighters that involved ten fire companies. During a fire at a mill, help was called for and received; however, the call for help was to assist with the fight and the volunteers' actions resulted in the total loss of a planning mill (Anderson, 1979). Subsequently, the first career fire departments were established due to the inappropriate actions of the volunteer fire companies (Anderson, 1979).

Fast forward 150 years and modern-day fire companies still consist of volunteer and career fire departments that are largely unchanged. The fist fights are less frequent, and the equipment has been modernized; however, the underlying organizational issue and fire departments' resistance to change as reported by Anderson (1979) still exist. The old fire service adage that is embraced by the firefighting community should be kept in mind throughout this study, "the profession is 150 years of tradition unimpeded by progress" (Unknown).

Summary of Chapter Two

This chapter presented a literature review focused on finding some of the attributes, characteristics, and an organizational framework that could impede the adoption of SHRD within an organization and provided a foundation for the study. SHRD at its core combines organizational learning, organizational performance, and organizational change. The literature for all three constructs was reviewed, which

provided some insight into possible barriers to organizational acceptance and integration of SHRD.

The literature on organizational learning revealed that activity-based training is currently the predominant view of HRD practitioners and the prevalent way to deliver training. This view contrasts with the widely held views on SHRD and how it should be integrated into the everyday operations of the organization with a focus on achieving organizational objectives. An examination of organizational performance revealed that there was substantial evidence that supported the connection between high-performance HRD practices and performance outcomes of organizations, both of which could be linked to the way an organization manages people. The inability of firms to understand change was linked to the failure of change initiatives. Stakeholder support was found to be higher when organizational strategy and organizational change were aligned. Multiple competencies to support change initiatives are needed by HRD practitioners in order to perform in the roles required to become successful change agents.

For the purpose of this study, only the entry-level skills required to become a functioning business partner were reviewed. These are stakeholder relationship skills, systems thinking skills, organizational analysis skills, industry experience and technical skills, and project management skills. Multiple articles (Lim & Rager, 2015; Zachmeier et al., 2014) revealed that most of the skills associated with entry-level SHRD were not taught in HRD curricula in the United States. Furthermore, it was found that there is not a standardized HRD curricula consistent from university to university. As revealed by Garavan (1991), identification of nine key components that stakeholders should understand to allow integration of SHRD were discussed. Gilley and Gilley (2003)

confirmed the importance of all nine components to SHRD while adding considerable

value to each concept by speaking directly to how each should be integrated into the

fabric of the organization and by outlining the skillsets that SHRD practitioners should

possess.

Finally, this literature review revealed that very few studies have been conducted

on the actual barriers to implementation and integration of SHRD in an organizational

setting. Specifically, barriers to integration of SHRD practices have not been explored in

a manner that allows full understanding of variables that impede the integration of SHRD

practices into the organizational culture. Multiple authors (Garavan, 2007: Garavan &

Carberry, 2012; Gilley & Gilley, 2003; Ruona & Gilley, 2009; Ulrich, 1998) have

highlighted characteristics and attributes that SHRD practitioners can utilize as a

roadmap to provide value and performance within their organizations (Tseng & McLean,

2008). This review revealed very few qualitative or quantitative studies that have been

conducted to support or refute the key characteristics of HRD professionals and the

barriers they face in trying to integrate SHRD within the organization. This lack of

research of barriers to integration of SHRD inspired this IPA qualitative research on the

organizational barriers to SHRD.

Table 1

Literature Review Summary Table

Topic of Research	Authors
HRD	Garavan 2007; Garavan et al.,2007; Gilley & Gilley, 2003; Hamlin & Stewart, 2011; Ruona and Gilley, 2009; Zachmeier & Cho, 2014.
SHRD	Alagaraja, 2013; Garavan, (1991, 2007,) Garavan, Costine, & Heraty, 1995; Garavan & Carberry, 2012; Gilley & Gilley, 2003; Gilley & Maycunich, 2000. McCracken & Wallace, 2000; Wright, 2007.
Nine Key Features of SHRD	Alagaraja, 2013; Barrick et al., 2015; Bates, (2004); Beer, 1997; Blackwell & Blackmore, 2003; Bryson, 1988; Bunch, 2007; Chermack & Swanson,2008; Choo, 2001; Cox, 2012; Denison & Mishra, 1995; Dibrell, Craig, & Neubaum, 2014; Fox, 2013; Foxon, 1989; Garavan, 1991; Garavan, 2007; Garavan & Carberry, 2012; Gennard & Kelly, 1997; Gilley & Gilley,2003; Gong et al.,2009; Hirota et al.,2010; Holt Larsen & Brewster, 2003; Kusy,1988; Mintzberg,1994; Nonaka, et al.,2006; Pansiri & Temtime, 2008; Pearce & David, 1987; Perry & Kulik, 2008; Phillips,2012; Poister, 2010; Renwick, 2003; Renwick & MacNeil, 2002; Seufert & Meier, 2013; Temtime, 2001; Tseng & McLean, 2008; Ulrich, 1998; Wright, 2007; Zheng et al.,2010; Zula & Chermack, 2007.
Five Key Competencies of SHRD	Gilley & Gilley, 2003; Gilley & Maycunich, 2000; Harrison & Wicks, 2013; Lim & Rager, 2015; Pant & Baroudi, 2008; Torraco & Swanson, 1995; Wognum & Fond Lam, 2000; Yawson, 2013; Zachmeier et al.,2014.
Organizational Learning	Garavan (1991,2007); Gilley & Maycunich, 2000; Hotho et al., 2015; McCracken & Wallace, 2000; Tseng & McLean, 2008; Zachmeier et al., 2014.
Organizational Change	Garavan, 2007; Gilley & Gilley 2003; Hamlin 2016; Wang, Hutchins, & Garavan, 2009; Wognum & Fond Lam, 2000.
Organizational Performance	Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Collins & Clark, 2003; Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Kehoe & Wright, 2013.
Fire Service History	Anderson, 1979; Cox 2012; Haynes & Stein, 2016; Stowell, 2004.

<center>**Chapter Three**</center>

<center>**Research Design and Methods**</center>

This chapter articulates the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study on the barriers to integration of SHRD in the United States Fire Service. It also provides an overview of the research questions used to guide the study and articulates the study's design of the study. Furthermore, the rationale for the methodology, the rationale for the use of a qualitative approach, the use of a phenomenological design, and methods of data collection, and analysis are discussed. Last, limitations are presented.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of chief officers in the United States Fire Service to further understanding of the barriers to integration of SHRD practices and the strategies that have been used to overcome these barriers.

Research Questions

The study was guided by two research questions. First, the study explored the perceptions of chief officers regarding the barriers they encounter when trying to integrate SHRD practices. Second, the study examined chief officers' beliefs on how barriers to SHRD practices have been addressed. Furthermore, each research question had associated interview questions to assist in clarifying the research design.

RQ 1) What are the barriers encountered by chief officers when they try to

integrate SHRD practices?

IQ 1) Please describe the current state of SHRD in your organization.

IQ 2) Please describe the ideal state of SHRD in your organization.

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IQ 3) What is preventing your organization from transforming from the

current state to the ideal state?

RQ 2) How can chief officers overcome the barriers to integration of SHRD

practices?

IQ 4) How could these barriers to SHRD be overcome?

IQ 5) What organizational changes are needed to overcome these barriers

to SHRD?

IQ 6) If provided these resources, how would you implement the changes

in your organization?

IQ 7) How would adopting SHRD practices benefit your organization?

Design of the Study

This qualitative study utilized an IPA analysis approach, and the participants were

selected from chief fire officers currently employed full-time in departments throughout

the United States.

Rationale for using a qualitative study. A qualitative approach served as the

main methodology for this study. Creswell (2009) stated that "qualitative research is a

means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a

social or human problem" (p. 4). Terrell (2016) clarified this further by stating that

qualitative research is a means by which we can obtain a clearer picture of the research

agenda can be obtained by asking who, what, where, when, and how.

Rationale for using a phenomenological study. Phenomenological research

"aims to identify and describe the subjective experiences of respondents. It is a matter of

studying everyday experience from the point of view of the subject" (Schwandt, 2001, p.

192). A phenomenological qualitative approach also focuses on understanding the lived

experiences of the study's participants (Groenewald, 2004) to further understanding on

the central phenomenon of the study in an attempt to develop theories and strategies

(Creswell, 1998).

Research Setting and Participants

The United States Fire Service was chosen due to its unique attributes and its

extensive standardized training system. This population allowed for the collection of rich

data on chief officers' perspectives on the barriers to SHRD integration. The culture of

the fire service is unique in that it provides an interesting population for this study. In

2014, the National Fire Protection Agency estimated the fire service in the United States

employed 1,124,400 career firefighters of whom 82% are white and 95.9% were male

(Haynes & Stein, 2016). This lack of diversity has created a homogenous culture that too

often adopts programs based on cultural norms and expectations of the group. This study

offers a unique understanding of the barriers to integration of SHRD in stratified groups

resistant to change.

Role of the Researcher

Hays and Singh (2012) reported that a researcher's previous life experiences

influence observation and interpretation and should be considered before conducting

research. Examining the potential bias harbored by the researcher who served as an

instrument during this study revealed three areas in need of disclosure. They are the lived

experiences, association with the industry, and employment history.

First, as the former deputy chief of a full-time career fire department that had 110

employees and six locations scattered throughout the district served, the researcher has

lived the experience that forms a partial basis for this research. While serving as deputy

chief, the researcher tried to change the departmental training structure to one that would

have resembled an SHRD structure. However, this initiative failed, and the researcher

witnessed multiple potential barriers to SHRD adoption. As such, the researcher had to

remain cognizant of this previous lived experience to ensure bias was not introduced

during the data collection and analysis phases of the research study.

Second, the researcher has maintained a close association with the fire industry

for approximately 30 years and frequently talks with other individuals associated with the

industry in pursuit of increasing organizational performance. This familiarity with the fire

service provides this researcher with a unique insight into a group that maintains a culture

resistant to change and unaccepting of outsiders. This long-term association may also

pose challenges to the researcher, and awareness of previous personal assumptions

formed over 30 years was maintained to ensure the researcher did not insert these

assumptions during the research process.

Third, the researcher has lived his entire adult life in the fire service. The

researcher was first hired in 1988 as a firefighter and went on to hold the positions of

driver, captain, and deputy chief while working in multiple locations throughout the city

served. As such, the researcher has formed opinions over a lifetime of service that have

led the researcher to believe SHRD practices should be adopted in the fire service.

Awareness of the roles in which the researcher has served during his career and the

current close association with the fire service was self- monitored closely to ensure the

researcher did not interject personal bias during the data collection and analysis phases of

this research study.

Approaches to Data Collection

The researcher contacted the fire chiefs of departments to obtain the names and email contact details for chief officers who met the criteria for the study. Second, the researcher contacted the International Association of Fire Chiefs and obtained the names and email contact details for chief officers who met the criteria for the study. Third, as the study progressed, the researcher used a snowball sampling strategy and obtained the names of potential chief officers who met the criteria for the study from those who had agreed to participate in an effort to include participants with a deeper understanding of barriers to integration of SHRD. These three approaches for identifying potential study participants were used due to each group's potential knowledge of individuals who met the requirements for participating in this research. From the names gathered, the chief officers were then contacted by the researcher via email about the purpose of the research and invited to participate in the study.

Semi-structured interviews were the primary means of data collection for this IPA qualitative study. In total, twenty-four semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the point of saturation was reached after the twelfth interview. The additional twelve interviews were completed to honor commitments that had been scheduled.

Data Collection Procedures

Semi-structured interviews were the primary means of data collection for this qualitative study. The United States Fire Service, which operates in the public sector, was chosen due to its unique attributes and its extensive standardized training system. This population allowed for the collection of rich data on chief officers' perspectives on

the barriers to SHRD integration. In total, 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted, and data collection continued until the point of saturation was reached.

The participants of this study were selected from chief fire officers currently employed in full-time departments throughout the United States. Before data collection began, the researcher applied for Institutional Review Board approval (see Appendix A). After approval was granted and the approval letter was received (see Appendix B) from The University of Texas at Tyler's Institutional Review Board, participants were solicited (see Appendix C and K) from career fire departments throughout the United States using three specific approaches. First, the researcher contacted the fire chiefs of departments to obtain the names and email contact details for chief officers meeting the criteria for the study. Second, the researcher contacted the International Association of Fire Chiefs and obtained the names and email contact details for chief officers meeting the criteria for the study. Third, the researcher used a snowball sampling strategy and obtained the names of potential chief officers who met the criteria for the study from those that had agreed to participate in this study in an effort to include participants with a deeper understanding of barriers to integration of SHRD. These three approaches for identifying potential study participants were used due to each group's potential knowledge of individuals who met the requirements for participating in this research. From the names gathered, the chief officers were then contacted by the researcher via email about the purpose of the research and invited to participate in the study. Once the invitation to participate was accepted, the chief officers were then asked to fill out a short Qualtrics form to obtain demographic and contact information for each participant (see Appendix D).

After chief officers had completed the forms, an email (see Appendix E) outlining the details of this study and a consent form (see Appendix F) were sent to each participant selected. Upon receipt of a signed consent form, the researcher contacted each participant (see Appendix G) to arrange a date and time of convenience for each interviewee to be interviewed using Zoom or face-to-face formats.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted either face to face or electronically using Zoom. Each 45 to 60-minute interview was recorded and transcribed with the participant's permission. Upon completion of each audio and video recording, the researcher transcribed each interview to identify, code, and analyze the data for themes that were utilized to further understanding of strategies that can be used to overcome the barriers to SHRD. Interviews were conducted in a place of comfort chosen by the participants and in a manner that ensured confidentiality and cooperation. To ensure congruence in this study, the researcher used a set of semi-structured questions (see the Interview Guide in Appendix H) during each interview to facilitate a deep discussion of each question. This interview guide was underpinned by the research questions and associated interview questions of this study to facilitate a deep discussion on salient themes during each interview. Upon completion of each interview, the participants were sent an email thanking them for their participation. (see Appendix I).

Written Interview Response. Written interviews were also utilized to collect data for this study. Each written interview was conducted in a manner that ensured participants the opportunity to answer the same questions that were given to participants during the in-person interviews. The primary justification for usage of written semi-structured interviews was to collect data from chief officers who preferred to give written

responses to the interview questions or who were otherwise unable to facilitate a Zoom or in-person interview due to a disability.

Observations and Notes. Observations were noted during interview sessions to capture participants' body language, voice inflection, and other non-verbal clues that were used in this exploration of barriers to SHRD integration.

Approaches to Data Analysis

According to Pope et al. (2000), "Analyzing qualitative data is not a simple or quick task. Done properly, it is systematic and rigorous, and therefore labour-intensive and time-consuming" (p. 116). Qualitative research also produces vast amounts of data that needs to be analyzed in an ongoing sequential process to allow the researcher to continually refine questions and hypotheses in pursuit of emerging themes (Pope et al., 2000). Specific data analysis procedures for this phenomenological study followed strict guidelines. Once an interview was completed, it was transcribed, coded, and analyzed using MAXQDA qualitative analysis software to identify any pertinent themes. Successive interviews were then conducted in a manner that built upon and compared each additional interview to the repository of themes in an attempt to identify additional contributory themes. Once new themes no longer emerged, the data analysis process was deemed to be saturated and interviews concluded.

Coding Process

According to Basit (2003), "Data analysis is the most difficult and most crucial aspect of qualitative research. Coding is one of the significant steps taken during analysis to organize and make sense of textual data" (p.143). In addition, Guest and McLellan

(2003) noted that "Analysis requires organizing and often synthesizing large quantities of text" (p. 186). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) summarized these beliefs by stating

> Content analysis is a widely used qualitative research technique. Rather than being a single method, current applications of the content analysis show three distinct approaches: conventional, directed, or summative. All three approaches are used to interpret meaning from the content of text data and, hence, adhere to the naturalistic paradigm. The major differences among the approaches are coding schemes, origins of codes, and threats to trustworthiness. (p. 1277)

The following six-step process suggested by Attride-Stirling (2001) was utilized to code, interpret, and report themes revealed during the coding process.

Stage One: Breakdown of Text

Step 1: Code material. A coding framework was developed, and transcripts were coded based upon the conceptual theories that underpin this research. This thematic analysis utilized both underpinning theories. First, data were analyzed for themes that are associated with Gilley and Gilley's (2003) suggested SHRD competencies (i.e., stakeholder relationship skills, systems thinking skills, organizational analysis skills, industry experience and technical skills, and project management skills). Second, transcripts were analyzed using Garavan's (1991) stated nine essential characteristics of SHRD (i.e., integration with organizational missions and goals, top management support, environmental scanning, HRD plans and policies, line manager commitment and involvement, existence of complementary HRM activities, expanded trainer role, recognition of culture, and emphasis on evaluation).

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Step 2: Identify themes. Upon completion of the coding process, coded segments were sorted and classified using the coding framework developed in step one for this study. During this process, multiple themes associated with the two theories that underpin this research emerged regarding the barriers to integration of SHRD and the strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers. These themes were then categorized in a manner that allows clarification of themes to aid comprehension of the implication for each theme and its associated coding.

Step 3: Construct thematic networks. After themes were grouped and categorized as prescribed in step two, they were arranged in a manner that allows the theories underpinning this study to be reviewed to facilitate selection of basic themes. Accordingly, themes were then clustered and reviewed for overlapping issues, and connectedness to source codes that were not identified in steps one and two. At the conclusion of step three, all transcripts and text were broken into verifiable themes and clustered by the network to facilitate further exploration of the transcripts.

Stage Two: Exploration of Text

Step 4: Describe and explore thematic networks. Once the general themes were identified, they were described and supported with segments of text identified during the initial coding and interview processes. This reevaluation allowed the researcher to revisit the transcripts to substantiate previously identified themes and to provide detailed segments of the text to support all significant themes.

Step 5: Summarize thematic networks. Upon completion of the secondary analysis performed in step four, substantiated themes were described in detail, and excerpts of the transcripts were utilized to support each theme succinctly. This allows the

reader to fully understand the support and reasoning provided for each identified theme (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Stage Three: Analysis Stage

Step 6. Interpret patterns. Upon completion of the thematic analysis, the conceptual theories and corresponding themes were interpreted to identify potential correlations that exist between the barriers to integration of SHRD, the strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers, and the conceptual theories that underpin this study. Each research question was then revisited to provide results that establish or refute an interlinkage of identified themes to each of the research questions. These results were then reported with segments of the interview transcripts used to further understanding on the barriers to integration of SHRD.

Additionally, the coding and thematic analysis process utilized the qualitative research software MAXQDA to assist in organizing data and identifying themes. Furthermore, a detailed description of interview locations, interviewees, and behaviors deemed to be significant were maintained throughout the research process.

Validity and Reliability

As an instrument of the research, the researcher utilized techniques designed to ensure the validity and reliability of the research results in an effort to maintain the credibility of the research and to ensure it measured what it intended to measure. In addition to meticulous record keeping, the following five techniques recommended by Creswell (1998) were used to address reliability and validity concerns in this study.

Meticulous record keeping. As suggested by Noble and Smith (2015), meticulous record keeping was maintained throughout this study to allow for

transparency. These records demonstrate the decision-making process and basis from which interpretations were made during this study. Maintaining meticulous records also served as a guide to the research by allowing the researcher to reflect upon the decision-making process critically. By critically reflecting upon the records, transparency and credibility were enhanced.

Accounting for personal bias. Creswell (2009) suggested that a researcher should disclose any potential source of bias that may be interjected into the study. Items that Creswell (2009) suggested should be reported are assumptions, beliefs, and bias that the researcher harbors that could impact the research. Accounting for personal bias in this study was carried out by including a section in chapter three entitled *Role of the Researcher*. In this section, the researcher has considered his role as suggested by Hays and Singh (2012) and reported the researcher's previous life experiences that could potentially influence observations and interpretations while this research was conducted.

Rich and thick verbatim data transcription. This study utilized rich and thick data reporting as suggested by Creswell (1998). This aids in reader comprehension and allows readers to feel as if they have experienced the research (Creswell & Miller 2000). This procedure further aids credibility by providing as much detail as possible, which allows placement of the research subjects in context and describes the part they play in the research. According to Creswell (1998), this detail also allows readers to determine if the research is useful to the situations that they may face.

Respondent validation. Allowing interviewees to read and validate the final transcriptions also enhances credibility (Creswell, 2009). This study utilized these techniques to ensure interviewees confirmed that the transcriptions contained the

thoughts and beliefs they have conveyed during the interview process. By allowing participants (see Appendix J for the Respondent Validation Email) to comment on the final transcribed interviews and correct any misinterpreted transcription, credibility is added to the research process (Creswell, 1998).

Data triangulation. Triangulation, as interpreted by Creswell (2009), is a validation technique that allows a qualitative researcher to use multiple sources to form themes during the research process. The data collection process during this research used multiple techniques that lent themselves to data triangulation. These include interviews, observations, and survey data collected from the respondents. Throughout this study, a triangulation procedure was utilized to constantly compare, record, and analyze multiple sources of data for emergent themes or information that furthers this research.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include potential researcher bias, small sample size, and the interviewees' overstatement of their HR competency. First, the researcher's lifelong involvement with the fire service presents an opportunity for bias when transcribing the audio recorded interviews due to potential clarification of themes based upon the researcher's personal experiences in the fire service. Second, according to Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013), a small qualitative sample size that is arbitrarily deemed to have reached the point of data saturation by a researcher is a limitation inherent to most qualitative research and limits the ability to generalize the results of this qualitative research. Third, interviewees' overstatement of HR competency could lead to failed interviews due to a lack of understanding of HR practices.

Summary of Chapter Three

      The chapter began with an introduction and an overview of this study of barriers to integration of SHRD and the strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers. Two research questions that guided this study were then presented along with the associated interview questions. An extensive overview of the design of the study was presented highlighting both the interview process and the participants. The research setting was then presented including demographics of the fire service. The role of the researcher was then discussed followed by multiple sections on data collection, the rationale for using a qualitative methodology, and data collection procedures including discussion of interviews, surveys, and observations. Data analysis techniques were then outlined highlighting the coding process and the six-step process that was used to code, interpret, and report the themes revealed during the coding process. The chapter also discussed reliability and validity issues and the use of five techniques suggested by Creswell (1998, 2009) that included meticulous record keeping, accounting for personal bias, rich and thick verbatim data transcription, respondent validation, and data triangulation. The chapter concluded with a brief discussion of potential limitations of this research, including potential researcher bias, sample size, and the interviewees' potential overstatement of HR competency.

Chapter Four

Findings

This chapter presents the results of the data collection and analysis process of this study. First, the purpose of this study is presented. Second, an overview of the research participants, chief officer demographics, and organizational demographics is presented and discussed to provide clarity and background to this study. Third, segments of transcripts are presented for each research question and its associated interview questions. Fourth, substantiated themes are described in detail after identification and supported with relevant sections of the coded transcript. The chapter then concludes with a summary of the chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of chief officers in the United States Fire Service to further understanding of the barriers to integration of SHRD practices and the strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers.

Research Participants

The 24 research participants chosen for this study were purposely selected from a pool of chief officers to provide a diverse geographic sample for the purpose of comparing and contrasting perceptions of SHRD based upon the organization's size and geographic location. All 24 participants were full-time chief officers located throughout the United States (see Figure 1). An interview was conducted with each participant over a four-week time period with each participant providing a signed IRB consent form (see Appendix F) prior to each interview. In addition, after each interview, each participant

was emailed a copy of the transcript to review and clarify comments to ensure accurate interpretation of their statements.

Figure 1 *Geographic Location of Participants N=24*

Chief officer demographics. During this study, 24 chief officers were selected and interviewed. Each participant held the rank of battalion chief or higher. Ten individuals (42%) were chiefs of their department, four individuals (16%) were assistant chiefs, four individuals (16%) were deputy chiefs, three individuals (13%) were division chiefs, three individuals (13%) were battalion chiefs. All were currently working full-time in their department. Participants were also asked about their birth year. Of the 24 respondents, fifteen (62%) identified as Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1964 and nine (38%) identified as Generation X born between 1965 and 1979. The 24 chief officers were then asked their highest level of education. Three (13 %) had attended some

college, 12 (50 %) held a four-year degree, eight (33%) held a master's degree, and one

(4 %) chief officer held a doctorate degree. Participants were also asked about their

tenure with their current department. Of the 24 chief officers interviewed, sixteen (68 %)

had been with their current department for over 20 years, four (16%) reported tenure of

15-20 years, one (4%) reported tenure of 11-15 years, two (8%) reported 6 - 10 years of

departmental tenure, and one (4%) reported 1-5 years with his or her current department

(see Table 2).

Table 2

Chief Officer Demographics

N = 24	
Gender	
Male	*23*
Female	*1*
Education Level	
Some college	*3*
Four-year degree	*12*
Master's degree	*8*
Doctorate	*1*
Birth year	
1946 - 1964	*15*
1965 -1979	*9*
Years of service with the current department	
1 – 5 years	*1*
6 – 10 years	*2*
11 – 15 years	*1*
15 – 20 years	*4*
Over 20 years	*16*
Current Rank	
Chief	*10*
Assistant Chief	*4*
Deputy Chief	*4*
Division Chief	*3*
Battalion Chief	*3*

Organization demographics. The 24 chief officers were then asked about the number of employees in their organization. Six (25%) reported that their organization employed over 1,000 firefighters, one chief officer (4%) reported 501-1,000 firefighters, three (13 %) reported employing 201-500, four (16%) reported employment of 101-201 firefighters in their department, five (21%) reported departmental employment of 51-100 firefighters, and five (21%) reported employing 0-50 firefighters. The participants were then asked their approximate annual budget. Six (25%) reported their departmental budget as over 100 million, one (4%) reported an annual budget of 51-100 million, four (16%) reported their department budget as 21-50 million, four (16%) reported an annual budget of 11-20 million, five (21%) reported an annual budget of 6-10 million, and four (16%) reported budget estimates of 0-5 million (see Table 3).

Table 3

Organization Demographics

N = 24

Number of Employees

0 - 50	*5*
51 - 100	*5*
101 - 200	*4*
201 - 500	*3*
501 - 1000	*1*
Over 1000	*6*

Annual Budget

0 - 5 Million	*4*
6 - 10 Million	*5*
11 – 20 Million	*4*
21-50 Million	*4*
51-100 Million	*1*
Over 100 Million	*6*

Research Findings

To explore the perceptions of the 24 chief officers who were interviewed during this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide (see Appendix H). The interview questions were developed to answer the two main research questions of this study. Seven main interview questions were used to explore chief officers' perceptions of the barriers to SHRD and strategies to overcome the barriers. When necessary to further understanding, probing and follow up questions were also used to facilitate a deep discussion. The research questions and related seven main interview questions are presented below.

Research Question One. What are the barriers encountered by chief officers when they try to integrate SHRD practices?

Interview Question One. Please describe the current state of SHRD in your organization.

Interview Question Two. Please describe the ideal state of SHRD in your organization.

Interview Question Three What is preventing your organization from transforming from the current state to the ideal state?

Research Question Two. How can chief officers overcome the barriers to integration of SHRD practices?

Interview Question Four. How could these barriers to SHRD be overcome?

Interview Question Five. What are the organizational changes needed to overcome these barriers to SHRD?

Interview Question Six. If provided these resources, how would you implement the changes in your organization?

Interview Question Seven. How would adopting SHRD practices benefit your organization?

Before each interview, participants were asked if they were familiar with the term SHRD and their responses were noted. All participants were then read a short definition of SHRD to deepen discussion and to aid participants' understanding. Each interview was recorded and transcribed, and respondents were given the opportunity to validate the transcriptions to ensure an accurate representation of their perceptions. Transcripts were then systematically coded using MAXQDA qualitative analysis software to aid in revealing the underlying themes associated with each question. The results for each interview question and all associated probing questions and the resulting themes that were discovered during the research process are presented below.

Themes for Interview Question One

Research Question One. What are the barriers encountered by chief officers when they try to integrate SHRD practices?

Interview Question One. Please describe the current state of SHRD in your organization.

Probing Question One. How would you describe the trainer's role in your organization?

Probing Question Two. What are the trainer's responsibilities?

Chief officers were asked to describe the current state of SHRD to further understanding of the current state of SHRD within each organization. Two probing questions were then asked to clarify understanding of how training and development functions were used in conjunction with organizational strategy to form a learning culture within the organization. After the coding process was complete, three themes were

identified: (a) tactical focus, (b) developmental focus, (c) blended focus. Table 4 presents the number of responses for each theme associated with interview question one.

Table 4

Themes for Interview Question One

Themes	*N*
Tactical focus	12
Developmental focus	6
Blended focus	6

Interview question one, theme one: tactical focus. After the coding process was complete, it was determined that 12 participants had responded to interview question one and indicated that the current state of SHRD within their organization had a tactical focus. This theme was identified by looking at the manner in which organizations utilized their training activities and the value they placed upon technical competencies and training based on task skills. Most of these participants emphasized the importance of state regulations and skill development based upon tactical considerations. Table 5 presents a brief overview of the responses coded for the theme *tactical focus*.

Table 5

Interview Question One, Theme One: Tactical Focus

Responses	
Participant	
P. 13	Looking at our positions, they are based on the technical competencies.
P. 1	Most of the trainer's role is the coordination of training records for the state.
P. 20	We are geared towards technical training.

P. 5	We try and tailor a lot of our training to the specific requirements of the state.
P. 10	We provide our officers and apparatus operators with the aerial classes. Training is company based, and that is done by the company officers. We do that to keep records for ISO rating, and we utilize that to justify training.

Interview question one, theme two: developmental focus. Six participants of this study who responded to interview question one indicated that the current state of SHRD within their organization had a developmental focus. This theme was identified by looking at the emphasis the organization placed upon technical training and development of technical skills. These organizations trained their employees to state-mandated training standards and actively taught employees on human resources. However, the overall training emphasis remained primarily focused on tactical considerations, and the developmental activities were centered on developing task-related skills over the course of the employee's career. Most of these participants still emphasized the importance of state regulations and associated development with knowledge and skills primarily based upon tactical considerations. Table 6 presents a brief overview of the responses coded for the theme *developmental focus*.

Table 6

Interview Question One, Theme Two: Developmental Focus

Responses	
Participant	
P. 6	We do records for ISO rating and manuals that our personnel can strive to fulfill. A firefighter could fulfill a lieutenant's, captain's, driver's, or a battalion chief's task manual all the way up to chief, and we actually do shadowing to let firefighters shadow officers and be coached or mentored by the seasoned officers. We pay the extra overtime comp and overtime expenditure to get that experience.

	Training on fire events is common, and we have a monthly drill schedule. We also use a series of task books that are based on company evolutions, and we have extended the company evolutions into the HR side, but that is not very prevalent yet.
P. 12	
P. 22	I would say a blend of the tactical and developmental, leaning more heavily towards developmental.

Interview question one, theme three: blended focus. The coding process

revealed that six participants of this study who responded to interview question one

indicated that the current state of SHRD within their organizations had a blended focus.

This theme was identified by looking at the emphasis the organization placed upon

growing organizational knowledge, human resource soft skills, and employee

development. These organizations trained their employees to state-mandated training

standards and actively taught employees on human resources and their overall

organizational strategy. This theme is differentiated from the previous two by the

emphasis placed upon employee development and the interconnection with the overall

mission, vision, values, and objectives of the organization. Most of these participants

emphasized the importance of state regulations and skill development and also tied their

organizational strategies into their training efforts. Table 7 presents a brief overview of

the responses coded for the theme *blended focus*.

Table 7

Interview Question One, Theme Three: Blended Focus

Responses	
Participant	
P. 17	We are an accredited agency. So, we try and use our strategic plan as a roadmap.
P. 16	I would say we're more blended; we're trying to not only enhance the technical aspects of training, we're also trying to work on individual behaviors so that they're able to work together as a team and have better

	interpersonal dynamics to be able to have more of a cohesive and a more 21st century fire department.
P. 8	We have very specific laws on what's required for training. So, obviously we're hitting those marks, but we also have our training officers go out externally and find out what are best practices, to find out what they can learn from others. Both, at conferences, meetings, and other departments. To see what they can bring back. It's important to for us to find out what works and more importantly what doesn't work. It's not wasted time either.
P. 2	We need to make sure our strategy is out there for our people. There is a whole lot more to it than just knowing how to make a hydrant connection.
P. 21	We have a blended focus right now. We are very big on building the future leaders of the department, the chief and I both strongly agree that we have a succession plan for the next five to 10 years and that we provide the education and the training for employees to move up. We do have educational requirements for the chief officers. So, we're working with some of the captains to get them the education they need to move up.
P. 23	I don't see any difference between training, on the one hand, and everything else on the other hand. I think we're very integrated into how we teach people how we try to integrate our core values and our mission statement into everything that we do including training and hiring promoting, all of those kinds of things.

Themes for Interview Question Two

Research Question One. What are the barriers encountered by chief officers when they try to integrate SHRD practices?

Interview Question Two. Please describe the ideal state of SHRD in your organization.

Chief officers were asked to describe their ideal state of SHRD to further understanding of the ideal state of SHRD within each organization. Upon completion of the coding process, two themes were identified: (a) *Ideal State Blended* and (b) *Ideal State Developmental*. Table 8 presents the number of responses for each theme associated with interview question two.

Table 8

Themes for Interview Question Two

Themes	N
Ideal State Blended	3
Ideal State Developmental	21

Interview question two, theme one: ideal state blended. The coding process revealed that three participants indicated that their ideal state of SHRD within their organization had a blended focus. This theme was identified by looking at the emphasis the organization placed on the creation of a learning culture to grow organizational knowledge, human resource soft skills, and employee development. These types of organizations train their employees to state-mandated training standards and actively teach employees on human resources while using their overall organizational strategy as a guide. This theme is differentiated from the theme *ideal state developmental* by the emphasis placed upon learning strategy and the interconnection with the overall mission, vision, values, and objectives of the organization. Most of these participants emphasized the importance of state regulations and skill development and tied their organizational strategy to their training effort. Table 9 presents a brief overview of the responses coded for the theme *Ideal State Blended*.

Table 9

Interview Question Two, Theme One: Ideal State Blended.

Responses	
Participant	
P. 10	The ideal organization would focus on individual wants and needs and appreciating and promoting the individual into the proper culture, so I'd

	say right there is where it starts. First of all, assessing what we have right now. The department would be based on I guess the right organizational culture and then combining what our needs are as far as fulfilling the educational needs and fulfilling our strategic needs.
P. 16	Using the best ideas based on best practices using evidence-based practices if possible and trying to use everybody to their fullest potential.
P. 1	In the future, I would like to see us kind of move away from the tactical training and actually into the administrative training based on the overall strategy of the organization.

Interview question two, theme two: ideal state developmental. For 21 participants of this study, the ideal state of SHRD within their organization had a developmental focus. This theme was identified by looking at the emphasis the organization placed upon technical training and the development of technical skills. These organizations trained their employees to state-mandated training standards and taught employees on human resources. However, they viewed development as a training activity that remained primarily focused on tactical considerations, and the developmental activities were centered on developing task-related skills over the course of the employee's career. Table 10 presents a brief overview of the responses coded for the theme *Ideal State Developmental*.

Table 10

Interview Question Two, Theme Two: Ideal State Developmental

Responses	
Participant	
P. 2	What we're working towards is that each level, rank, certification, or years can understand exactly where they should be as they mature within the fire service.
P. 6	I would like to see every single battalion chief be a training officer for two to three years to integrate both functions: operations and training. I think that would make them a little bit more solid as a unit. If they could rotate through, I'd like to see all of our captains on the line rotate through as captain of training. I think that would be really healthy for the organization.

P. 9	It would be a fully integrated task-book system for every position that would include every officer down to the entry-level firefighter. This would be based on policies and procedures, standard operating guidelines, and company evolutions. That we could reference back to and it would be a very redundant, repetitive system and by the time a person completed it they truly would have the skill and the knowledge to be able to do the job in addition to that it would be reinforced with a lot of hands-on training

Themes for Interview Question Three

Research Question One. What are the barriers encountered by chief officers when they try to integrate SHRD practices?

Interview Question Three. What is preventing your organization from transforming from the current state to the ideal state?

Summary of the data for interview question three revealed 11 themes associated with barriers: (a) Barrier Resistance to Change, (b) Barrier Communication, (c) Barrier Collaboration, (d) Barrier Culture, (e) Barrier Finances, (f) Barrier Knowledge, (g) Barrier Stress, (h) Barrier Top Management Support, (i) Barrier Trainer Focus, (j) Barrier Reporting Relationships, and (k) Barrier Time. Table 11 presents the number of participants that indicated each theme in response to interview question three.

Table 11

Themes for Interview Question Three

Themes	N
Barrier Resistance to Change	22
Barrier Communication	23
Barrier Collaboration	20
Barrier Culture	23
Barrier Knowledge	16
Barrier Stress	17
Barrier Top Management Support	11
Barrier Trainer Focus	16
Barrier Reporting Relationships	18
Barrier Time	19
Barrier Finances	21

Interview question three, theme one: barrier resistance to change. The theme *Barrier Resistance to Change* was described by multiple participants as an individual resistance to change and was often associated with members who had tenure with the organization. Many of the coded segments for this theme referred to individuals who

61

were set in their ways and older in age. This theme seemed to produce particular angst

among the chief officers interviewed as they tried to temper their thoughts on an

individual's resistance to change and their respect for the years of service the employee

had given to the organization. Many exhibited deep compassion for this service while

maintaining that older employees resistant to change were a major impediment to

organizational change. Table 12 presents a few of the responses coded for the theme

Barrier Resistance to Change.

Table 12

Interview Question Three, Theme One: Barrier Resistance to Change

Responses	
Participant	
P. 9	The challenge we are having is some older officers dealing with the concept that there might actually be someone in their 20s in the front right seat and trying to get them to accept that is a bit of a challenge. The irony in this is that they had no task book. They were just promoted, and I don't know that they were even trained after they were promoted. It was just sort of assumed that you've been around, and we like you, and you know what you're doing. So, here's an officers helmet. Where what we do now is actually ensuring that the individual has the skill and so I think to a certain level that creates some problems in the sense that I think they might actually be intimidated by these younger folks because in many ways they're better prepared to do their jobs than they were.
P. 7	The older more tenured people were more resistant to the change.
P. 14	The older guys always say that is how we've always done it, is what you hear.
P. 13	One of the problems we faced is that the higher you go in the organization and when they are reaching the end of their career. They get to a point where they don't want to be away from their job, families, or whatever to get that education. The other piece of this I should mention is the favoritism was clear they would shuffle employees around to kind of protect them and shield them.
P. 6	I think one of the barriers is basically a personal preference kind of thing.

Interview question three, theme two: barrier communication. Problems with communication within the organization were mentioned by almost every participant in this is study. Most participants talked about the difficulties associated with having three shifts of employees working on different days and at multiple locations. One noteworthy observation associated with the theme *Barrier Communication* was that only two participants suggested they had utilized technology to facilitate improved communication, and both were centered on email usage. Table 13 presents a few of the responses coded for the theme *Barrier Communication.*

Table 13

Interview Question Three, Theme Two: Barrier Communication

Responses	
Participant	
P. 1	Sometimes I shout into a void and nobody answers.
P. 5	You do tend to lose a little bit in translation like the telegraph game, you know? You lose a little bit in the translation as it goes to each group.
P. 11	We're still kind of battling the three different ways of doing things and trying to get people on the same page and understand.
P. 12	One of our bigger problems was having each station and shift act like different little departments.
P. 17	One of our bigger problems right now is having multiple stations on three shifts and several different little departments.

Interview question three, theme three: barrier collaboration. This theme was often closely associated with the inability to have meaningful interaction with external groups such as unions, city managers, mayors, councils or boards. Internal collaboration problems were occasionally mentioned. However, most of the barriers associated with the theme *Barrier Collaboration* were with external stakeholders who did not fully

appreciate the need or function of the chief officer's organizational initiatives. Table 14

presents responses coded for the theme *Barrier Collaboration.*

Table 14

Interview Question Three, Theme Three: Barrier Collaboration

Responses	
Participant	
P. 5	If you have two different mindsets and one is equipping your apparatus to do things one way, and the other is training people to do in another way, it's going to be chaos. Even if they don't agree 100 %, they have to be willing to buy into one philosophy.
P. 12	Philosophical differences amongst internal elements such as union management and the senior leadership have, at times, been some of the impediment.
P. 16	We used to be very contentious with the union and used to when we'd negotiate we'd have our headhunter, and they'd have theirs, and they'd go at it.
P. 20	We didn't have a credit card to fuel our apparatus with. We trust our guys with a million-dollar piece of apparatus, but they don't trust them with a credit card with a $500 limit on it.
P. 19	There's so many people and so many moving parts that getting people together is a big deal. It takes so much time and effort and coordination and integration to get that message all the way down to the folks that are doing the work.

Interview question three, theme four: barrier culture. The theme *Barrier*

Culture was mentioned frequently by the respondents. This theme highlights the

resistance of the group and their refusal to accept anything that does not confirm or

substantiate the group norms. Many of the chiefs indicated that this was the biggest

barrier and that it took an incredible amount of work and time to overcome it or they

were still trying to work through this barrier. Many of the chief officers also noted the

depth and incredible strength and bond of a culture that was formed under shared duress.

Table 15 presents responses coded for the theme *Barrier Culture.*

Table 15

Interview Question Three, Theme Four: Barrier Culture

Responses	
Participant	
P. 10	Anything coming from outside of our organization is suspect to the organization.
P. 11	When I came to this organization, they had no point of reference. Their idea of training was jumping in the trucks, driving around for an hour and a half, and calling it a night. Departmental training, when I started, was washing the trucks.
P. 2	It's the culture.
P. 22	It's always been a struggle to try and encourage others when your counterparts haven't been doing the same thing.
P. 20	The culture is strong here, and there's more to it than meets the eye. It's just how we operate. It's a significant challenge.
P. 9	My organizational strategy has been challenging. The department was a very small, closed organization and their focus was not on community liability; the community was not at the forefront. It was more of a social club.
P. 16	Generational differences are a big barrier for us in that we've got several generations within the same firehouses and they learn differently. They have different skillsets that they bring to the table, and we try and put them together for a common goal. Often, we have challenges where we can't teach the same topic the same way to everybody. So, we have challenges in our delivery model.
P. 13	The culture within our organization. You know there's a saying in the fire service that we are 20 years behind. Well here, we're 20 years behind that 20-year curve.

Interview question three, theme five: barrier knowledge. The theme *Barrier Knowledge* was based on the participants' recommendations that employees need to be educated to a higher level. Many of the officers interviewed discussed the changing nature of work within the fire service and the need for increased knowledge due to the complexity of work that was now performed. Several mentioned that, years ago, the typical skill set for a firefighter was brawn and how that has changed over time and now

knowledge was considered the most important skillset. They attributed this change to the

requirements needed for medical and hazmat responses and the need to understand the

regulations associated with the inspection process and administrative functions required

of modern-day fire service. Table 16 presents responses coded for the theme *Barrier*

Knowledge.

Table 16

Interview Question Three, Theme Five: Barrier Knowledge

Responses	
Participant	
P. 2	First one is education.
P. 13	One of the problems that we've got in our organization right now is the people applying for the positions do not have the knowledge for the position, and they don't see the need for that higher education.
P. 7	The state as a whole is not geared towards higher education, at this time
P. 24	Command-staff level personnel needs to get out of the mindset of "well, I'm a battalion chief, so all I've got to worry about is tactical." They need to be more involved in the strategic planning process of the department. They understand the very basics, but, when it comes down to the nuts and bolts, there's a lot lost in translation, and they don't understand.
P. 3	Our biggest problem right now is a lack of human resource understanding on various levels.

Interview question three, theme six: barrier stress. This theme was associated

with the participants' revelations that their departments had suffered a suicide or other

behaviors that were attributed to extreme stress. Many of the respondents associated this

stress to the increased number of responses per shift and the traumatic nature of the

incidents that employees were required to deal with on a daily basis. When reciting their

stories, chief officers were often visibly troubled by the role that stress had played in their

organization. Table 17 presents responses coded for the theme *Barrier Stress.*

Table 17

Interview Question Three, Theme Six: Barrier Stress

Responses	
Participant	
P. 7	A lot of problems with this substance abuse (pause) I think this is a stress release.
P. 10	Everyone is suffering from a high degree of depression, anxiety, and stress.
P. 18	We have had multiple suicides in our department in the last few years.
P. 12	We have had several situations with the suicide threats and mental wellness issues.
P. 13	I have seen more stress. I would say four or five years ago we kind of had better morale.
P. 24	In our area, we had several firefighters commit suicide.

Interview question three, theme seven: barrier top management support.

This theme was based on the participants' perceptions of top management support both internal and external to the organization on issues associated with SHRD integration. Many of the participants closely associated this theme with a lack of funding that would allow for the creation of educational programs. Table 18 presents responses coded for the theme *Barrier Top Management Support.*

Table 18

Interview Question Three, Theme Seven: Barrier Top Management Support

Responses	
Participant	
P. 14	The mayor has beaten up on all of us, especially the public safety side.
P. 6	Our city council.
P. 10	My chief.
P. 9	The board.
P. 13	It takes some commitment on the city administration's part. But again, it fell on deaf ears.

P. 21	Mayors come and go, administrations come and go. We just got to buckle down and worry about doing our jobs.

Interview question three, theme eight: barrier trainer focus.

Probing Question One. What interpersonal skills would your ideal trainer have?

Probing Question Two. Who does the training in your organization?

For the theme *Barrier Trainer Focus,* the participants primarily expressed the need for trainers to acquire and utilize additional knowledge. Several spoke of the difficulties associated with finding trainers who had a broad focus outside of the tactical realm. When probing questions were asked about the roles and abilities trainers should have, many suggested the need for trainers to have a broad range of interpersonal skills to fulfill the needs of the position. Many of the chief officers also tied this theme closely to the theme *Barrier Knowledge* and provided very succinct characteristics that a trainer should possess. Table 19 presents responses coded for the theme *Barrier Trainer Focus.*

Table 19

Interview Question Three, Theme Eight: Barrier Trainer Focus

Responses	
Participant	
P. 6	Forty years ago, people just kind of figured well you know training is for people who don't know what they're doing and people who aren't very smart, so we'll just not do it since we're smart and we will figure it out. It didn't work very well.
P. 3	It is difficult to find a trainer like that who knows a little about the politics side of it.
P. 11	We need to change our structure, we have ignored the training division for a while.
P. 2	The ultimate in people skills. They get things done and are a good coordinator or coach to make sure that people understand and practice what they believe in and make sure they're fully aware of what the goal is.

Interview question three, theme nine: barrier reporting relationships.

Probing Question One. Who is involved in strategy development?

This theme was developed based on the participants' comments that addressed issues with designated reporting relationships. Most of the organizational charts reviewed had primary trainers, inspectors, line officers and other members of their staff listed as reporting to areas that were not in line with their function. In addition, a probing question was asked to discern further the involvement of the organizations' employees in the development of the strategy with each organization. Most of those interviewed indicated that reporting relationships were misaligned and could create confusion in the organization when things were interpreted in different ways. Table 20 presents responses coded for the theme *Barrier Reporting Relationships.*

Table 20

Interview Question Three, Theme Nine: Barrier Reporting Relationships

Responses	
Participant	
P. 1	Maybe this guy should be included in a little bit different way. As I said, he's a wonderfully intelligent guy, and he gives me more feedback than most.
P. 6	There is kind of a little bit of a disconnect I think between the line personnel who are task- oriented and they have certain tasks they have to do, and the chief officers who basically are more conceptual and don't do those tasks but develop a strategy.
P. 2	There was a time when there was a deputy chief of training and administration and deputy chief of operations. It didn't fit well together; it seemed that things taught by the chief of training did not get adopted by operations section and little things like the way we carried high rise packs and how we deployed hose in training evolutions wouldn't necessarily be adopted by the operations chief.

Interview question three, theme ten: barrier time. Almost every participant in this study mentioned time as one of the barriers to integration of SHRD in their

organization. Most of these comments centered on their inability to complete or start

additional programs due to a lack of time. It was interesting to note that very few of the

participants referenced the ability to have other members of the department participate in

these procedures. In addition, participants who did reference using other staff members

often had additional comments tied closely to the theme *Barrier Knowledge.* Table 21

presents responses coded for the theme *Barrier Time.*

Table 21

Interview Question Three, Theme Ten: Barrier Time

Responses	
Participant	
P. 14	One of the biggest barriers is time constraints.
P. 3	The next part is taking the time and staffing.
P. 24	A lot more demands on our time.
P. 5	Which basically takes time away from what they're doing.
P. 13	I don't have the time that I would like to have to spend with the future officers and the officers that we have now that want to move up through the ranks.
P. 21	It takes a lot of time to get people.
P. 12	I just don't have the staff time to do that.

Interview question three, theme eleven: barrier finances. For the theme

Barrier Finances, the participants primarily expressed the need for additional money to

implement additional programming or to enable them to send individuals to receive the

education needed to address the *Barrier Knowledge* also revealed in this study. Several

spoke of the difficulties associated with shrinking budgets and the need to transform a

workforce that was once based upon brawn to one that is faced with understanding

multiple disciplines such as medicine and hazardous materials response. The lack of

70

funding and the constant juggling of finances was mentioned by multiple participants of

this study. Table 22 presents responses coded for the theme *Barrier Finances.*

Table 22

Interview Question Three, Theme Eleven: Barrier Finances

Responses	
Participant	
P. 18	It's the budget.
P. 24	Over the last ten years, our operating budget has been cut and our calls have gone up during the same time period.
P. 2	Another barrier was to get people to understand we are a multimillion-dollar business, and we are responsible to the taxpayer and our manager expects professional management. We had to be able to show an output aligned with expectations, and that's a good thing for us because it allows us to be able to address our needs and say, "Look here's your performance expectations, and we're meeting them!"
P. 3	It is going to take a little bit of time and money.
P. 14	Unfortunately, our current mayor is a financial adviser, so he thinks he knows numbers well, and, you know the old saying, "figures lie, and liars figure," so they make the numbers say whatever they want them to say.

Themes for Interview Question Four

Research Question Two. How can chief officers overcome the barriers to integration of

SHRD practices?

Interview Question Four. How could these barriers to SHRD be overcome?

Summary of the data for interview question four revealed 11 themes associated

with how the barriers to SHRD could be overcome. These strategies to overcome the

barriers to SHRD are (a) Strategy Change Process, (b) Strategy Communication, (c)

Strategy Collaboration, (d) Strategy Culture Management, (e) Strategy Finances, (f)

Strategy Knowledge, (g) Strategy Stress, (h) Strategy Top Management Support, (i)

Strategy Expanded Trainer Focus, (j) Strategy Reporting Relationships, (k) Strategy

Time. All of these strategies and the resulting themes were coded during the analysis

process of this study. Many of the chief officers suggested during their interviews that it

was their deepest desire to both share and learn about these strategies, so they could use

them to transform from the current state of the organization to an ideal state. Table 23

presents the number of participants who indicated each theme during their interview and

the associated strategies revealed in response to interview question four.

Table 23

Themes for Interview Question Four

Themes	*N*
Strategy Change Process	6
Strategy Communication	5
Strategy Collaboration	8
Strategy Culture Management	9
Strategy Knowledge	11
Strategy Stress	7
Strategy Top Management Support	11
Strategy Trainer Focus	10
Strategy Reporting Relationships	4
Strategy Time	3
Strategy Finances	7

Interview question four, theme one: strategy change process. This theme

centered on the participants' strategies to bring the individual employees that were

resistant to change into alignment with the organizational goals, mission, and vision. The

corresponding theme *Barrier Resistance to Change* was correlated multiple times with

senior employees and their reluctance to buy into the present-day agenda. It is noteworthy

that multiple chief officers who were also near the apex of their career were visibly

disturbed as they thought about this question. Many simply wondered out loud about the

proper manner in which to address individuals who had given their lives to the fire

service and the strategies they should use to address the resistance to change. The

primary sub-theme for this strategy was attrition. Older individuals were simply allowed

to finish their careers and not forced to adopt change. Table 24 presents responses coded

for the theme *Strategy Change Process.*

Table 24

Interview Question Four, Theme One: Strategy Change Process

Responses	
Participant	
P. 6	I think there are times when you have to say this is what you have to do. But I think you can do that without forcing them into coming to an agreement. Breaking down that barrier would be basically bringing that outlying person who doesn't want to be a part of something into the fold by presenting what the advantages are to them and also to the organization.
P. 9	We have to reinforce some of these concepts over and over and over again to get people to accept them.
P. 7	Part of it was attrition. Probably most of it was attrition.
P. 24	We're just going to be you know persistent with it and firm. But you know in a friendly and loving and respectful way you know we don't want to just shove it down and say that is how it is. But at the same time, we know that this is the direction that we have to go, and we can't let up on it either.
P. 11	We used attrition. People are retiring, finally leaving.

P. 15	The super reluctant people changed, I think at some point due to attrition. Honestly, it was because they saw the pace picking up and that we were headed in a new direction and they decided it was time to get off the bus.

Interview question four, theme two: strategy communication. The theme

Strategy Communication was noted throughout the interview responses. It is noteworthy

that many of the participants mentioned poor communication between multiple stations

and locations spread over three work days for the theme *Barrier Communication.*

However, none of the participants offered specific strategies on how to address this sub-

theme of *Barrier Communication* during the interview process. Most of the strategies

recommended centered on open-door meetings or written correspondence. Table 25

presents responses coded for the theme *Strategy Communication.*

Table 25

Interview Question Four, Theme Two: Strategy Communication

Responses	
Participant	
P. 2	In my admin building, our strategic plan is on the wall, and everybody knows what it is.
P. 8	One thing we have done in our department was start a weekly newsletter sent out by the administration. However, anybody can add content to it, but every Friday the newsletter goes out, and we let everyone know what we've done. Here's what we're looking at, here's the meetings we've attended, here's what's coming down the pike, why are we doing this, or what value does this bring to the organization or to me.
P. 5	We actually have a conference call once a week where all the deputy chiefs and myself get on to talk about general things.
P. 6	We make sure everybody knows what we are out there doing and that we are doing our best and trying to get better and it has developed more and more community support.

P. 16	We have open meetings with the chiefs, but I also go out and meet with each shift monthly to try to open up communication and let people know that any idea is a good idea and find out if there is something we can discuss and explore to see if it's something better that we can try on a trial basis and to see if it will work on a larger scale.

Interview question four, theme three: strategy collaboration. The theme

Strategy Collaboration was discovered during the coding process and is centered on the

chief officers' responses that included strategies to increase internal and external

stakeholder support. Many of these responses were closely tied to strategies on how to

overcome the *Barrier Top Management Support, Barrier Finances,* and *Barrier*

Communication. Additionally, many of the officers offering successful strategies reported

that to achieve success it took a lot of effort and time to build these relationships. Table

26 presents responses coded for the theme *Strategy Collaboration.*

Table 26

Interview Question Four, Theme Three: Strategy Collaboration

Responses	
Participant	
P. 2	One of the things that we absolutely need is total community support.
P. 6	We understand we have got to build relationships. If we want to do anything, you have to build the relationships with the people who can help with things and do not burn bridges. Always try to build relationships with people and understand how to talk to city council. We have reached out to the rural fire districts and building those relationships has made it possible for us to get enough funding to do the things that we need to do. So, have a really clear idea of how all these things work and be very strategic.

P. 12	I would use a multi-tiered approach. There's a political element, there's a relationship with the labor union, there are the public service announcements and the public interactions we could get out through various outlets like social media, print media, visual media and then there are interactions with the crews on a daily basis and with the people that we serve to lead to it all working in concert.
P. 14	We find that if we keep labor informed and labor keeps us informed a lot of the problems just go away.
P. 16	We are not a really a coercive organization, and we don't force people to do things that they absolutely don't want to do. Some organizations are; we're not like that. We work more with people's values, and we try to know. We were a very collaborative organization.
P. 11	It's been quite a ride, so we've really changed our standing in the community. We've accomplished all of those things by becoming leaders within the city, and by becoming leaders within our neighborhoods. We became leaders within the county. We become leaders in the state.
P. 21	So, you know, the more we can make those kinds of connections and those links with each other both functionally and just relationally, you know, the more the barriers come crashing down.

Interview question four, theme four: strategy culture management. All of the participants mentioned something in their interview related to culture concerning the themes *Barrier Culture* and *Strategy Culture Management.* Many stated that culture was the most significant challenge and most rewarding aspect of their job when they found successful strategies to manage the cultural elements of a cohesive group formed under shared duress. Most of the successful strategies and reported success centered on the human aspect of relationships and the ability to understand the importance of employees to the organization. Table 27 presents responses coded for the theme *Strategy Culture Management.*

Table 27

Interview Question Four, Theme Four: Strategy Culture Management

Responses	
Participant	
P. 24	We are taking care of our people rather than just buildings.
P. 10	We're focusing on celebrating little wins; we are celebrating achievements; the culture is important here. We decided years ago that we didn't want anybody to leave here pissed off and unappreciated anymore. So, we started celebrating wins. We created a medal day. We just looked inward towards the culture.
P. 4	The simple things like meeting with the firefighters every day and talking to them about what they need to do for education, for training, and development, personal growth just spending time with them every day and letting them know that I care about them and that I want them to grow personally in their careers and where they need to go with that. As chief officers, we all need to be doing that and spending more time caring about our people than we do about equipment and fire trucks.
P. 12	We hire really good people, very talented people, and I think their ability to keep their eye on the ball has been one of our strong features as an organization.
P. 6	So, what we try to do to break down some of those barriers is we use our values and our mission statement and our credo what we believe about ourselves, and we use that extensively to hire people. I mean that's part of our hiring process, we see where their values are and then see if there is a connection between our values and what our values include. Our values include self-improvement and optimism looking forward and resilience those kinds of things that you won't find in an organization that does not value training. So, for me, that is a huge part of how our organization sees the world it is through a prism of our values.
P. 19	We go into the stations and celebrate the small wins and have coffee with these guys or to jump on the truck and say hey it is take your chief to work day, bring it back down to the individual level. In other words, to get over the other challenges, we always try to make this a great place to work. We can't always give you the money that you might be asked for, but we can make it a great place to work. So, cultural management is huge in our game right now. So, we're tending to the culture, when people retire we do a pig roast behind the station when somebody fixes something or goes above and beyond their duties. We go to the station and recognize that. We celebrate birthdays. No matter how many personnel we have, we want to keep this small-town department mentality. So, the culture is huge and showing the appreciation letting everybody become part of the group is the biggest part of that.

P. 9	If you bring up people, the right way in the right environment and you have the right culture, it spreads through the organization in a lasting way, and it becomes part of that organization. That benefits the department by providing future leaders that are ready to go. Plus, you've got people that are thinking about things in the right way. We've all been in fire stations with people that are burned out and have really negative attitudes. Development paints a picture of whom we want to be and what we want to be like, and once it's ingrained in a culture it takes some of that negativity away from a fire service perspective, and I think just overall, we should teach people how to be decent human beings.

Interview question four, theme five: strategy knowledge. Numerous participants of this study mentioned the need for education and, specifically, education from outside the fire service. The call for higher education and exposure to outside entities was often repeated. Several individuals identified outside education as one of the strategies that could be utilized to address the theme *Barrier Resistance to Change* and *Barrier Culture* in addition to the theme *Barrier Knowledge.* It was also frequently mentioned that the role of fire organizations had changed from a model based on brawn to one that required the ability to understand advance medical, hazmat, and regulatory issues that are part of the daily function of a modern fire organization. Table 28 presents responses coded for the theme *Strategy Knowledge.*

Table 28

Interview Question Four, Theme Five: Strategy Knowledge

Responses	
Participant	
P. 23	We needed to provide a lot more educational opportunity for people if they want them.
P. 21	I think that education in the fire service is absolutely critical.

P. 12	We bring people in on a regular basis from the outside that is subject matter expertise in regard to some of the softer skills as it were. We have task books that are associated with all of our development programs and selection criteria, and the candidates have to go through these with a company officer and touch on each of the soft skill sections and speak to that and discuss those skills, and so they have a frame reference as they move through the program. We set up scenarios with actors to practice the hard conversation with one of your co-workers or a member of the public, so they get the practice of interfacing with these people and utilizing some of this skill sets. We have a curriculum within our officer development program with books for them to read and report back on. We also have didactic portion that also is attributed to this where you find a mentor, when it comes to the officer portion and being able to navigate that learning process of how you're going to have to integrate being a coach to your co-workers, subordinates, superiors, and everyone that you come into contact with.
P. 4	I've always been progressive and had a different attitude about growth and development and education.
P. 24	Having defined development programs has really helped bring people onboard because they see the success of the people that are involved. The people that complete the programs are very capable and competent and I think people see that growth and see that people's competencies and abilities have grown during the program. They see the competence that individuals have gained, and I think that's the biggest thing that's allowed us to overcome a lot of the naysayers.

Interview question four, theme six: strategy stress. This theme *Strategy Stress*

and its corresponding theme *Barrier Stress* unfortunately emerged as themes that are in

themselves worthy of significant additional study. Multiple participants of this study

related stories about their department and an employee suicide or other illicit behaviors

that were attributed to extreme stress. Strategies offered to address this barrier frequently

mentioned chaplains and their support role for members facing stress-related issues.

Many of the interviewees also seemed to correlate stress and morale to the extreme

number of calls individual employees handled during a shift. Several stated that they

tracked unit utilization hours for their apparatus. However, they did not track employee

utilization hours. One respondent who did track employee utilization hours stated he or

she saw an improvement in morale and stress levels when employees' time on the busiest units was limited. The participant reported that this was accomplished by rotating employees to slower units during the shift. Table 29 presents responses coded for the theme *Strategy Stress.*

Table 29

Interview Question Four, Theme Six: Strategy Stress

Responses	
Participant	
P. 7	Now our big push is on peer support.
P. 18	One of the things that we're really pursuing is mental health resources for our members to make sure we can prevent those kinds of tragedies from happening.
P. 9	We have developed a very strong chaplain program that right now focuses on interacting with our people and helping them deal with stress issues.
P. 10	We have our employee assistance program, and we have chaplains in to speak about how to handle those things.
P. 17	The chaplain services and the critical incident stress management which is the mental health aspect. There's a lot of stress that goes with our job.

Interview question four, theme seven: strategy top management support.
Strategies associated with the theme *Strategy Top Management Support* were provided by multiple participants of this study with many attributing their successes in this area with strategies that address issues with the themes *Barrier Collaboration, Barrier Finances,* and *Barrier Culture.* The focus on top management support and the work required to build essential internal and external support networks provided the basis for this theme. Many of the participants who stated they were successful in this regard had spent years cultivating relationships and educating others outside their organizations. The ability to open their organizations up and allow external stakeholders to assist in setting

strategy initiatives seemed to be pivotal. Table 30 presents responses coded for the theme

Strategy Top Management Support.

Table 30

Interview Question Four, Theme Seven: Strategy Top Management Support

Responses	
Participant	
P. 2	The fire service doesn't exist as a silo within city government.
P. 14	We bring in council members and do a one-day citizen's academy on a day in the life of a firefighter. We run them through the paces and everything. We've had very good luck with a couple council members, you know? It really changes their outlook on what we do and the skill level and the knowledge level that we have to have and helped them to understand that we are not just knuckle draggers and that we are a well-educated well-trained group of people.
P. 9	I think there is an educational component that needs to go to the politicians and to other folks, I think that would probably serve the fire service well in the future.
P. 24	I think it is very important to involve people at all levels so again without trying to use to any buzz word we utilize internal and external stakeholders, rank and file folks, the board of director's management team. We use all these folks to develop the plans to ensure that they really reflect what their community needs are and then we have them adopted as policy, and then we execute them on a monthly basis.
P. 22	The fire chief has an excellent relationship with the city manager.

Interview question four, theme eight: strategy trainer focus. The theme

Strategy Trainer Focus is based on the respondents' repeated recommendation that

training should no longer be a position held by one person or one group. Those who

offered strategies often stated that the training function should include every member of

the department including chief officers. Many spoke about the time they had a solitary

individual appointed to be the sole trainer and the inability of one individual to conduct

the magnitude of training necessary for larger organizations or be a subject matter expert

on all the issues. Many of these organizations reported that they had increased reliance on

outside agencies to provide training to ensure that they were using subject matter experts.

Others reported that due to their call volume they could no longer schedule training in the

typical fashion and had switched to a model that required a station officer to provide and

coordinate all tactical training and brought in individuals from the outside to teach soft

skills. Table 31 presents responses coded for the theme *Strategy Trainer Focus.*

Table 31

Interview Question Four, Theme Eight: Strategy Trainer Focus

Responses	
Participant	
P. 12	There's a multitude of trainers. I think everybody is a trainer from day one. It's like see one do one teach one kind of mentality in the department you get here you crawl, walk, trot, run, kind of progression through it all and everybody from the new firefighter to the most senior battalion chief, deputy chief, and our chief, are integrated in the overall training of the department.
P. 24	Now we're making assignments to the company officers, and they are the ones that are responsible for making sure their crew gets the training that's assigned in the syllabus. It's not spoon-fed to the officers anymore. Now we're giving them the ingredients, and they have to deliver the training to the others around them. We just don't have the capacity to spread ourselves out to be able to do the training in the same manner that we had before. This also helps with our response liability, keeping our rigs in their assigned area allows them to respond to a cardiac arrest in a timely manner, we've made an extreme effort to keep crews in their area and by doing that that we've had a corresponding increase in the number of cardiac saves. You know, people still walking around out there and still with their families because of that.
P. 6	I see our trainer training division especially our two people in training as really critical and integral part of our operations.
P. 8	We look to our train officers to go out externally and find out what best practices they can learn from others, both at conferences and by meeting with other departments.

Interview question four, theme nine: strategy reporting relationships.

Probing Question One. Do chief officers actively lead training?

The theme *Strategy Reporting Relationships* and the corresponding theme *Barrier Reporting Relationships* was discovered in this study through analysis of the transcripts. Many respondents provided feedback during interviews that indicated that some of the reporting relationships in their organization were misaligned and caused confusion within the organization. The probing questions of top leadership and their role in training provided insightful feedback on views within the fire service on reporting relationships. Given the nature of the profession and the extreme nature of the work, a very hierarchical system is used during emergency response. These same reporting relationships are maintained in most fire service organizations during non-emergency situations. Most of the suggested strategies involved minor adjustments to the reporting relationships that would also lead to addressing some of the issues associated with *Barrier Communication*. Table 32 presents responses coded for the theme *Strategy Reporting Relationships*.

Table 32

Interview Question Four, Theme Nine: Strategy Reporting Relationships

Responses	
Participant	
P. 15	We had to overcome the traditional way of doing things. We had a guy that was called the training officer, and they would create and then would deliver all of the training and if they did not do it, it wasn't happening. We changed that, and now, his primary goal is to manage the training division or manage training functions and facilitate the training. And we changed our rules so that those people that were stagnated have the ability for upward mobility and a change in their position. That invigorated them to seek training and development, and one additional thing is over the past two years we've rewritten every job description in the organization.
P. 6	The head of training is at the same level as the shift battalion chiefs, and I would like to see the battalion chief of training communicate with the three shift's battalion chiefs. I would like to see them actually rotate through and serve as the battalion chief of training for two to three years. That would probably integrate both functions (operations and training),

	and they would be, I think, a little bit more solid as a unit. I think that would be really healthy for the organization.
P. 20	The training section puts together the basics of the programs, but, the crews out on the line are the ones that implement the core of the training program in a consistent manner.

Interview question four, theme ten: strategy time. As a theme, *Barrier Time*

was reported often by the chief officers interviewed. Only a few chief officers had a

strategy to address the lack of suggested time management strategies. This lack of

suggested strategies may be a result of many of those being interviewed correlated the

strategies to improve time management with the strategies suggested to improve

communication. One respondent spoke about the need to use outside expertise to assist in

developing a data-driven budget request. Table 33 presents responses coded for the theme

Strategy Time.

Table 33

Interview Question Four, Theme Ten: Strategy Time

Responses	
Participant	
P. 14	I need to manage my time better, and I need to work smarter not harder that type of thing and just get a good plan and make sure that everyone understands what the plan is and why it's there and how we're going to implement it.
P. 13	We are actually working with a university on a study for our department to see how we can achieve additional staffing and have a staffing model that allows us to address operational issues, public relations, education, and internal training, to develop our people during the day.
P. 20	So, reinforcing the chain of command within our organization so that we can begin institute some institutional control and that frees up some time, as an example.
P. 11	We hired a civilian administrative assistant to perform the clerical functions, that freed up a bunch of time.

Interview question four, theme eleven: strategy finances. The strategies

suggested for the theme *Strategy Finances* were highly correlated to the theme *Strategy*

Collaboration. The chief officers who were successful at overcoming the budget issues

spoke about the need to build relationships with budgetary decision makers and the need

to build and maintain relationships based on collaboration and trust. Most chief officers

also included comments on the need to have individuals outside of the fire department

assist with strategy development to ensure the fire organization's goals and objectives

were in alignment with those of the external stakeholders. Others frequently spoke about

the need to develop budgets based on data that was realistic and the need to be a team

player. Most mentioned that it takes a significant amount time and effort to build and

maintain the relationships required for successful budget requests. Table 34 presents

responses coded for the theme *Strategy Finances.*

Table 34

Interview Question Four, Theme Eleven: Strategy Finances

Responses	
Participant	
P. 6	We needed new apparatus because everything we had was junk and it was all different. We needed new stations, because all the stations were falling apart and looked terrible and they did not work well, and we needed more people. We knew we would not get a lot of money, so we decided to go for one thing and went for the apparatus first. Then went for a get a place to put them and then went after the people and we methodically went about developing innovative ways to fund all of those things and the results we now have nice stations that are very functional with more people in them and we now buy fleet at a time and by doing that and looking at the problem strategically and looking at what were problems and what do we need and how are we going to get there allowed us to get the money to make those barriers come down. That takes a long time, and it takes a lot of collaboration, and it takes an innovative mind.

P. 14	We have been going after a lot of grants, and we were able to get a firefighter grant we got a big one here a couple years ago. We are also going after the smaller grants, and we are getting creative in funding looking for different ways. This past budget year we implemented a new fee schedule. We have an inspect inspection bureau, and they are now charging requiring occupancy permits for the businesses and depending on the business it's either good for one year to three years. We are also implementing motor vehicle accident fees and charge for the engine company. If they need extrication, there's an extra charge for that. We haven't gone to charging for structure fires yet. We've looked at it. Timing's not right politically for that. So, you know we have looked at adding new fees to help offset some of our costs.
P. 16	We had to market ourselves better internally within the city and become a team player. Being open to them when there were cuts. We developed an attitude of being a team player before it seemed like the fire department thought we were our own universe. We came out and said no we are a team player. I think it really opened some doors by being humble to that concept and it's why we are where we are today.
P. 24	It was a lot of networking, lots. Understanding that we had to open ourselves up to criticism and being a good listener and working with the community. Literally, it was going out and meeting with and having lunch with the department heads and other organizational heads to say hey we would like to get a fresh start. We want to be partners in our community. We want to provide the best service that we can, and we want to help you do your job. And we're asking for your help.
P. 11	There had never been a successful levy campaign because the community recognized the fire department for what it was. So, we had to go to work and build relationships that allowed us to get the finances to grow the organization, to where it needed to be. So, we had to really shift what was happening, and we were able to do that, we got the community to trust us with a multi-million-dollar levy.

Themes for Interview Question Five

Research Question Two. How can chief officers overcome the barriers to integration of

SHRD practices?

Interview Question Five. What are the organizational changes needed to overcome these

barriers to SHRD?

Summary of the data for interview question five revealed multiple themes associated with organizational change that were needed to overcome the barriers to SHRD. The three strategies coded to overcome the barriers to SHRD were (a) *Organizational Strategy Development,* (b) *Organizational Stakeholder Involvement,* and (c) *Organizational Focus*. These themes were revealed during the data coding process and reflect the perceptions of chief officers on the change strategies that can be used to remove organizational barriers to SHRD. Table 35 presents the number of participants who indicated each theme during their interview and the organizational change strategies revealed in response to interview question five.

Table 35

Themes for Interview Question Five

Themes	N
Organizational Strategy Development	13
Organizational Stakeholder Involvement	7
Organizational Focus	21

Interview question five, theme one: organizational strategy development. The theme *Organizational Strategy Development* evolved from the coding process and revealed that most of the participants had a top-down view of strategy development. Several reflected openly about including internal employees. Strikingly, very few of the participants mentioned the role of external stakeholders in their strategy development process. Table 36 presents responses coded for the theme *Organizational Strategy Development.*

Table 36

Interview Question Five, Theme One: Organizational Strategy Development

Responses	
Participant	
P. 1	The training officer could have been part of the strategy development process but also part of the presentation of those plans to do their respective shifts to the public that we serve. I think the trainers are often articulate, intelligent folks and I think that intelligence and have the ability to see, and if they're up there cooperating with operations and talking about the strategy that we've developed together, I think that that would certainly overcome some fear.
P. 17	It is supposed to be the executive staff that sits down to develop strategy, but there are certainly some gaps. In our strategy that development process and following what we say our strategy is, we say it on paper, but we don't follow it like we need to.
P. 21	It's the entire management team which includes the fire chief, myself, our administrative assistant that manages the office, our finance manager, and our fire safety manager who also performs the fire marshal roles. We are responsible for strategic planning and strategic management, and we solicit a lot of input from our line staff before we set any strategic priorities.
P. 20	The chief and the two deputy chiefs pretty much develop the overall strategy it has been modified a couple times by us and pretty much it's the three of us setting the direction. Unfortunately, I believe we are focusing on this initiative and that initiative instead of the overarching goal. We have disconnected a little bit from our strategic plan.

Interview question five, theme two: organizational stakeholder involvement.

The theme *Organizational Stakeholder Involvement* provides an interesting

paradox to the theme *Organizational Strategy Development* to which very few

respondents mentioned outside stakeholders. In contrast, several of the chief officers

spoke about the need to involve external stakeholders. However, most of these

discussions centered on the need to have employees go out into the community and

gather information to bring back to the organization. Very few individual chief officers

discussed the need to have external stakeholders come into the organization. This theme

appears to be linked closely to the *Barrier Culture.* Table 37 presents responses coded for

the theme *Organizational Stakeholder Involvement.*

Table 37

Interview Question Five, Theme Two: Organizational Stakeholder Involvement

Responses	
Participant	
P. 6	We make sure everybody knows we are out there doing what we can, doing our best, and trying to get better. It has developed more and more community support.
P. 8	I think working in the planning department for a day or spend a day in a public works department spend a day in a police department or parks and recreation and just be able to go out and look and see where other people are doing as well. Go ride along with other fire departments to try to see if someone else does something well that we should try. Spend time with private industry to see what some of the best practices they are doing, and it doesn't have to be just firefighting. You are going to gain something from other outlooks. I used to go to different conferences. My previous boss always required us to go to one conference that was not related to the fire service. Just associate with different organizations and see what they're doing and see what's important to them and what we can gain or what will actually work.
P. 24	It was a lot of networking, lots. Understanding that we had to open ourselves up to criticism and being a good listener and working with the community.
P. 16	There were a lot of bridges that we had to rebuild that had been burnt down from past administrations. We re-established those relationships and developed that trust which takes time. And it was slow moving. I am very appreciative that we were able to get there, but it took a lot of time to do that and just rebuilding those networks with other community organizations or health department senior services job and family services the county. Other fire departments to where we were actively involved with them and supported them in their roles and subsequently asking for support from them, for years.
P. 11	We will highlight certain achievements at council meetings and give letters of recognition in front of council. That kind of thing, but really, social media tends to be the biggest thing because it gets the message out

| | there and then all of the friends and family kind of build upon that and it takes off from there so social media has been a good thing. |

Interview question five, theme three: organizational focus. The theme *Organizational Focus* primarily centered on the participants' view of the need to change the focus of training and development activities within their organizations. Most participants stated a desire to move away from training that was based upon tactical considerations and expressed their interest in incorporating training based on employee development activities and organizational strategy. They emphasized the need to use external resources to assist in this pursuit. Table 38 presents responses coded for the theme *Organizational Focus.*

Table 38

Interview Question Five, Theme Three: Organizational Focus

Responses	
Participant	
P. 12	Some overlap with your predecessor would be nice where you had a period of time with the person that was here prior to you, to communicate, pass it on, and be able to understand where the strategy came from and where it was intended to go and then meld it into your own strategy. I think that would really help with the succession and continuity of the organization moving forward.
P. 13	What we have tried to do as an organization is identify the skill sets needed at the command or the executive level and look at the training that's available. We try to develop an overall process to put in place to give the people the skills needed in that position, and now we're grooming our future leaders in the department and being proactive, and we start them in that process sooner.
P. 8	We also encourage them to take some nontraditional supervisory classes, something that's not necessarily fire-related or not National Fire Academy. We try to go out and see what other people are doing and encourage them to take non-governmental classes to kind of see a broader range of the private industry that might be a little bit better or might make you appreciate what you have. It works both ways.

P. 24	I think many very trainable people may be bored in their career and looking for something new, giving them the opportunities. I would tell you most of the positive things that have happened for me has come from me saying yes to people not necessarily knowing what the outcome is going to be. If they have a passion, let them flow with that passion and bring it back to the department and see what happens to their attitude.
P. 23	I would like to see future training kind of move away from the tactical training and actually into the administrative training on the strategy or the overall strategy of the organization. Maybe not on the operational side but the overall organizational strategy.

Themes for Interview Question Six

Research Question Two. How can chief officers overcome the barriers to integration of SHRD practices?

Interview Question Six. If provided these resources, how would you implement the changes in your organization?

Probing Question One. How often do you perform employee evaluations?

Interview question six asked participants for their perceptions on how they would implement the changes to their organization. Three themes were revealed during the coding process: (a) *Implementation Education,* (b) *Implementation Communication,* and (c) *Implementation Evaluation*. In addition, a probing question was asked on current practices of employee evaluations to discern the current utilization of evaluations in each organization. Table 39 presents the number of participants who indicated each theme during their interview and the implementation procedures revealed in response to interview question six.

Table 39

Themes for Interview Question Six

Themes	N
Implementation Education	17
Implementation Communication	5
Implementation Evaluation	19

Interview question six, theme one: implementation education.

Implementation of higher education and the need for higher education was one area that

most of the participants of this study seemed passionate about. The resulting theme

Implementation Education and the underlying emphasis on higher education were seen as

a necessary path for future leaders and firefighters in the fire service. Several chief

officers stated that the days of being all brawn were gone, and higher education outside of

the traditional fire service education was needed to provide better service and to grasp the

advanced concepts they now faced. Table 40 presents responses coded for the theme

Implementation Education.

Table 40

Interview Question Six, Theme One: Implementation Education

Responses	
Participant	
P. 13	We have a local university that has agreed to set aside a bank of hours free of charge that our firefighters can use to work towards their degrees.
P. 2	I would want to do my own research and see what other people have done, to not recreate the wheel.

P. 9	We believe that employee development is involved in every single thing we do. So, it's not just, "okay we're going to do some leadership training." Sometimes it's just that one on one interaction with how you help the young man or young lady become a good member of society. So that is integrated at every level that we do. Our training officer, who also works off of the strategic plan, works at several different levels. They do firefighting training and career development which is probably about 33 % of their time, but, again, individual development incorporates into everything that we do.
P. 13	It's about changing the culture. Trying to put them in positions or tasks that require the higher education, so they see the need for classes.
P. 3	It's not going to be always the firefighting education; it's going to be about human resources. It can be about public policy and not always be about gallons permitted.
P. 14	We had kind of gotten away from the tactical and were going more for the developmental, but we saw a trend and a lack of the skills. So, we're refocusing and getting more back into the tactical. I have been building new classes for the tactical, but we are also very big on building future leaders for the department. We have a succession plan, and we look at the next five to ten years and who has the education and the training to move up because we do have educational requirements for the chief officers.

Interview question six, theme two: implementation communication. The theme *Implementation Communication* centered on how to implement the changes suggested for the theme *Strategy Communication*. However, very few respondents offered suggestions on how to improve communications for the theme *Strategy Communication.* Most participants who offered suggestions for improved communication spoke about or referenced using email, posting information on a duty board, or simply talking to individuals. The theme *Implementation Communication* contains several references to the firefighters' union and working with the union as one of the first steps. Table 41 presents responses coded for the theme *Implementation Communication.*

Table 41

Interview Question Six, Theme Two: Implementation Communication

Responses	
Participant	
P. 8	We had conversations about how we get there with the union and talked about ways to get people to want to do the journeymen program; how do we help set people up for success? The union was hungry for a change, and they were looking to leadership for an opportunity to change what they were doing. I think the opportunity to participate gave them that. We also committed to not filling a vacancy in the first two years. If we had a vacancy, we would not fill it until everybody had the opportunity to get to the new requirements and we provided all of this in-house. Now, we make sure when we change requirements, we offer the classes and give everyone the opportunity to attend.
P. 5	I want everybody to be fluent in all those levels of our own personnel policies and at each level.
P. 22	We are really a values-based organization, and we've done a lot of work around actually developing our values and making sure everybody is on board.
P. 13	What we really have to work on is getting buy-in from the current leaders and the next generation.
P. 16	I went to the union president and said you know we are both spending tons of money and tons of emotional effort into trying to compete with each other to get the best deal. I realized that the union had people to respond to and I had people respond to. I asked them is there a better way, can we just sit down and see if we can just find answers to the problems and try and come to an equitable solution that both of us agree to and that worked.

Interview question six, theme three: implementation evaluation. The theme

Implementation Evaluation is noteworthy due to the diverse nature of the responses.

Many of the participants stated they needed to start the evaluation process or had tried the

evaluation process, and it had failed. It was suggested that these failures were due to

subjective evaluations on the part of supervisors and the inability to formalize the process

in a manner that was objective. The *Barrier Knowledge* theme was also mentioned

frequently by those who had been unsuccessful in their attempts to use evaluations.

Multiple participants also automatically equated evaluations with the outdated, check-the-

box type evaluation that was used as a coercive tool to motivate employees. The excerpts

below are from those respondents who stated they had successfully used evaluations.

Most of these individuals understood the need for employee involvement and the need for

true developmental evaluations focused on employee growth. Table 42 presents

responses coded for the theme *Implementation Evaluation.*

Table 42

Interview Question Six, Theme Three: Implementation Evaluation

Responses	
Participant	
P. 2	On an entry-level employee that's performed monthly up until their 12th month, which is the end of their probation, then quarterly the rest of their career.
P. 8	We also do a professional development evaluation outside of the performance evaluation to set them up for success and to say, "This is where you need to be when you walk in the door and here's the plan for the next five years, and here is how it is going to delivered."
P. 7	There is an evaluation process on everything. Just to make sure they can demonstrate that they've been trained properly and to see if there is an area where we're lacking.
P. 3	So, the goal here for the next two years is to develop a professional development plan for each level in the fire service or each year of service.
P. 16	We have both required and preferred job development standards for each employee so that they know what the minimum is that we want them to achieve as far certifications and outside training. Then we have recommended or preferred, which are goals that people can set.

Themes for Interview Question Seven

Research Question Two. How can chief officers overcome the barriers to integration of SHRD practices?

Interview Question Seven. How would adopting SHRD practices benefit your organization?

Summary of the data for interview question seven revealed two themes associated with the benefits of SHRD to employees and the organization if SHRD practices were adopted. The benefits of SHRD are (a) *Benefits Effectiveness/Performance*, and (b) *Benefits Morale/Stress.* Table 43 presents the number of participants who indicated each theme during their interview and the associated benefits revealed in response to interview question seven.

Table 43

Themes for Interview Question Seven

Themes	N
Benefits Effectiveness/Performance	23
Benefits Morale/Stress	11

Interview question seven, theme one: benefits effectiveness/performance.
The primary response to this question included the words *performance*, *effectiveness*, and *efficiency* to describe the benefits of SHRD, which provided the basis for the theme *Benefits Effectiveness/Performance*. It is noteworthy that several of the participants took the time to address the human element and the importance of human beings when looking at the benefits. Table 44 presents responses coded for the theme *Benefits Effectiveness/ Performance*.

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Table 44

Interview Question Seven, Theme one: Benefits Effectiveness/Performance

Responses	
Participant	
P. 1	Maximizing each human being would be a clear benefit of implementing strategic human resources development.
P. 10	A better standard of coverage and better execution.
P. 13	I think one benefit would be the vision of the department looking at the strategic aspect of it. We could figure out, this is where we're at now, and this is where we want to go, and this is what needs to occur to get to that next level.
P. 3	I think a professional model fire department is a much better fire department.
P. 5	I think the primary benefit is just consistency.
P. 14	The biggest benefit is going to be continuity.

Interview question seven, theme two: benefits morale/stress. The theme

Benefits Morale/ Stress was mentioned as one of the biggest benefits that participants had

seen by utilizing SHRD practices. It is especially noteworthy due to the issues associated

with *Barrier Stress*. The issue of low morale and stress is a challenge of critical

importance. Table 45 presents responses coded for the theme *Benefits Morale/Stress.*

Table 45

Interview Question Seven, Theme Two: Benefits Morale/Stress

Responses	
Participant	
P. 10	The benefit that we've seen is people are happy to come to work. I've seen our sick leave go down significantly, an uptick in compliments about how they're doing business and going above and beyond.

P. 9	I think one benefit is to the fire service and really society in general. Sorry, if I sound too lofty, I apologize, but, you know, if you bring up people the right way and you have the right environment, and you have the right culture, it spreads through the organization. It becomes part of that organization, and that benefits the place, when you've got future leaders there ready to go, plus you've got people that are thinking about things, you know the right way, and it's ingrained in the culture and takes some of that negativity away. Personal satisfaction would be one benefit.
P. 11	I wouldn't worry about their safety as much or worry that they're in over their heads.
P. 16	Retention of good employees.
P. 23	I definitely think it would be a huge morale booster
P. 22	Better educated, safer and better morale within the department employees.

Summary of the Findings

This research was guided by two research questions and utilized seven primary interview questions to further understanding on each of the research questions.

Research question one. Research question one (i.e., What are the barriers encountered by chief officers when they try to integrate SHRD practices?) explored the perceived barriers to integration of SHRD practices in the United States Fire Service. Once saturation was reached, the coding process was deemed complete, and all relevant themes were analyzed. Five major themes associated with barriers were revealed. Each of these themes was then compared to all other themes and the resulting percentage of respondent responses was tabulated (see Table 47). They are listed by the number and percentage of participants who mentioned the barrier during their interview. They are (a) *Barrier Culture* (95 %), (b) *Barrier Communication* (95 %), (c) *Barrier Knowledge* (67 %), (d) *Barrier Stress* (71 %), and (e) *Barrier Collaboration* (83 %).

Research question two. Research question two (i.e., How can chief officers overcome the barriers to integration of SHRD practices?) explored chief officers' perceptions of strategies on how to overcome the barriers to integration of SHRD. After saturation was achieved, the coding process was deemed complete, and five major strategy themes were identified and linked to research question two. These strategies are listed by the number and percentage of participants that mentioned the strategy during their interview (See Table 47). They are: (a) *Strategy Culture Management* (38 %), (b) *Strategy Knowledge* (46 %), (c) *Strategy Collaboration* (33 %), (d) *Strategy Communication* (21 %), and (e) *Strategy Stress* (30 %).

Aggregated Major Themes

After major barrier themes and strategy themes were identified, it was determined that each of the barrier themes had a corresponding strategy theme and aggregation of the major themes was based upon the number and percentage of respondents that perceived each to be significant. The aggregated major themes (see Table 46) are (a) *Organizational Culture,* (b) *Organizational Knowledge,* (c) *Organizational Collaboration,* (d) *Organizational Communication,* and (e) *Organizational Health*. Each theme is discussed further in chapter five. Although *Barrier Time/Staffing* and *Barrier Finances* were often reported, neither theme made the list of most significant themes perceived by chief officers as barriers or strategies to overcome barriers of SHRD by percentage or by coded segments during this research study.

Table 46

Aggregated Major Themes.

Strategy Themes	N	Barrier Themes	N	Aggregated Major Themes
Culture Management	9	Culture	23	Organizational Culture
Communication	5	Communication	23	Organizational Communication
Knowledge	11	Knowledge	16	Organizational Knowledge
Collaboration	8	Collaboration	20	Organizational Collaboration
Stress	7	Stress	17	Organizational Health

N=participants out of 24 total that had a coded response for the theme.

Summary of Chapter Four

Chapter four presented the results of the data collection and analysis processes for this study. First, the purpose of this study was presented. Second, an overview of the research participants, chief officer demographics, and organizational demographics were given and discussed to provide clarity and background to this study. Third, segments of transcripts were presented for each research question, associated interview questions, and resulting themes. Fourth, substantiated themes were described in detail after they were identified during the coding process and supported by relevant sections of the coded transcripts. Fifth, a summary of the findings and the basis for the aggregation of themes were presented. Chapter five includes a discussion on the aggregated themes and their implications for practice, theory, research and concludes with a brief discussion on limitations of this research.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of chief officers in the United States Fire Service to further understanding of the barriers to integration of SHRD practices and the strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers. Chapter five provides a brief discussion of the findings and an overview of the five aggregated major themes discovered during this research. Implications for practice are then provided for chief officers, fire service organizations, city administrators, and HRD professionals. Additionally, implications for theory and research are provided with a brief discussion of the limitations of this research. The chapter then concludes with suggestions for future research and a brief summary of the chapter.

Aggregated Major Themes

This research revealed five major themes associated with barriers to SHRD and five major themes associated with strategies to overcome these barriers. Each of these themes was then compared to each other and aggregated into five major themes. The five resulting aggregated themes are (a) *Organizational Culture,* (b) *Organizational Communication,* (c) *Organizational Knowledge,* (d) *Organizational Collaboration,* and (e) *Organizational Health.*

Organizational culture (theme one). The chief officers participating in this study cited organizational culture barriers such as employee reluctance to engage outsiders in business decisions, resistance to any change, and tenured employee complacency as the greatest challenges they had encountered while trying to integrate SHRD practices within their organizations. Ninety-five percent of the participants interviewed indicated that culture was a significant barrier, although only 38 % of chief

officers offered strategies to overcome these barriers. This disparity seemed to reflect the genuine difficulties associated with cultural issues while trying to introduce new concepts into a group that is resistant to outside influence. Many attributed this resistance to the nature of the work and the shared experiences of employees over a long duration of time.

The perceived difficulties of dealing with an ingrained culture resistant to change were evident throughout this study. Many of the chief officers recounted stories of how tenured employees no longer wanted to engage in the organization. Others attributed cultural resistance to those just wanting to finish their career and retire. A few mentioned generational differences and the struggle to balance learning preferences based on generational choices. Some just mused and affirmed that culture is an issue and attrition, time, and patience were how it had been dealt with. Attrition was mentioned so frequently that one could believe that it was a viable strategy theme. Fortunately, most of the respondents also mentioned that attrition was not a useful strategy that should be considered in a functional organization.

The respondents who offered strategies often suggested that managing human relationships was a critical component of success when managing the culture. Several stated sharing information was an important first step in starting the change process. This included explaining to the individuals who are resistant to change the role that they would play in the future and the long-term benefits to the organization. Many of the chief officers also advocated the need to establish a reward system focused on small victories that incrementally reinforced the desired behaviors while refocusing and changing the culture. Several suggested the rewards component was extremely important if individual and group buy-in were going to be achieved. Others noted the need for constant

communication of the organization mission, vision, and goals, and the need to tie each to the overall organizational strategy.

Hiring practices were often mentioned as another management tool that could be used to assist long-term culture adjustment. It is recommended that chief officers adopt a comprehensive hiring model based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the duties of the position. A few of the chief officers mentioned that they evaluated employees once a month during their initial year. Some used a cadet academy prior to the actual hiring process to allow significant exposure to each individual and to allow for an informed hiring decision. However, most chief officers indicated that their formal evaluation processes were non-existent, inadequate, or based on a performance metric that had caused more harm than good. Very few of the chief officers indicated that their organizations' performance evaluations included a developmental growth plan for employees. Those who had implemented employee developmental growth plans also included the employee's input into the design, analysis, and evaluation of his or her performance.

The research revealed three pertinent strategies that may be employed to begin the process of culture change. First, the sharing of information on the change should be spread throughout the organization and to external stakeholders to promote understanding of the needed organizational changes. Special emphasis should be placed upon individual roles, and each employee should be allowed to discuss his or her new role and the importance of the change in the overall organizational strategy.

Second, a reward system should be utilized to reinforce the desired behaviors and support the cultural change initiatives. Many of the respondents in this research

recommended that small victories be rewarded frequently and emphasized that these rewards had to be personalized in a meaningful way. This was suggested to support the change initiatives while building the overall culture of caring within the organization.

Third, talent acquisition, training, and evaluation strategies should reflect and promote the organization's strategy and be incorporated into a performance management system. This would allow long-term culture changes to be based on the individual employee's growth plan while still maintaining a focus on the organization's strategic goals. This would allow all new employees to fully understand the expectations and mission of the organization while permitting current employees to shape their developmental goals to strengthen and complement the department's goals. The current lack of developmental performance evaluations based on the needs of both the employees and the organization is a significant problem. Adopting developmental growth plans and educating employees on how to use them in an objective manner would allow organizations and the employees to remove a significant barrier to culture change.

Organizational communication (Theme two). The second theme *Organizational Communication* is comprised of three aggregated sub-themes: barrier communication, strategy communication, and implementation communication. Barrier communication was defined as the inability to facilitate adequate communication throughout the organization. One chief officer summarized barrier communication and stated, "one of our bigger problems was having each station and shift act like different little departments." Strategy communication was defined as the strategies utilized by organizations to overcome issues with communication. Implementation communication

was defined as a physical process that was utilized to implement and improve communication throughout the organization.

   Almost every participant mentioned the need for enhanced departmental communication. A contributing factor of the poor communication was having employees spread out geographically and working three shifts with a rotating three-day schedule. This theme provided an interesting paradox in that smaller departments seemed to be reliant on face-to-face communication, an option that larger departments cannot effectively utilize due to the impossibility of physically going to multiple locations over a three-day time frame. The strategies suggested to alleviate communication issues included conference calls, weekly newsletters, and face-to-face meetings. Interestingly, very few individuals mentioned the use of technology to enhance communication, and those who did normally referred to email. One respondent summarized communication issues by stating, "Sometimes I shout into a void and nobody answers." This quote echoes succinctly the perceptions that other chief officers reported during the interview process. Noteworthy during this study was the lack of strategies proposed to overcome these communication barriers. Often what was reported to be a communication barrier had considerable overlap with the themes *Organizational Knowledge* and the theme *Organizational Collaboration.*

   Although very few strategies were revealed for enhanced communication, two underlying attributes that assist in enhancing organizational communication were discussed. First, individuals in this study reported that the first step to good communication was to make it a priority, and if this was not done, the communication

efforts would fail. Also, several stated that respect for their colleagues played a role in making communication a priority within the organization.

Second, technology usage was discussed and suggested as an alternative to face-to-face meetings. Using video conferencing technology that is readily available and easy to use is one plausible alternative that should be especially attractive to chief officers of larger organizations that cannot physically visit every station in a timely manner. Using this technology would allow officers' meetings to take place daily and matters of importance could then be discussed on a routine basis.

Organizational knowledge (Theme three). The findings for the third theme *Organizational knowledge* were prevalent throughout the interview process. This study found that sixty-seven percent of the chief officers indicated that a deficiency in knowledge existed within the fire service. Most of the participants who indicated *barrier knowledge* themes to be problematic associated this issue with a lack of formal education. Specifically, they asserted that a lack of higher education focused on human resources contributed to this lack of knowledge. This is concerning given that higher education at its core is focused on developing individuals' communication skills, problem-solving skills, and open-mindedness, and all of these could be considered contributing factors to the barrier themes discovered during this research.

To address the deficiency in knowledge, most respondents called for an emphasis on higher education so that employees would acquire a broad knowledge base. Many indicated that the sole focus of the training was tactical, and this singular focus had led to problems within the organization. Others stressed the importance of providing educational guidance even before individuals were hired. This was done during cadet

academies in which they advised individuals interested in the fire service on the importance of obtaining their college degree and exposure to as many educational opportunities as possible. Several also stated that from day one, a new hire had an educational career guide and knew the degree requirements for each position in the department.

Five strategies are suggested to address the deficiencies associated with the theme *Organizational Knowledge.* First, to address the call for a broad knowledge base, hiring practices need to be adjusted to emphasize the value of higher education. By adjusting hiring practices at the initial stages of the employee-employer relationship, the value of education is emphasized and an expectation that employees are to be lifelong learners is set. This also provides an opportunity to get an influx of outside talent and knowledge that will immediately begin to adjust a stagnated culture.

Second, the current practice of having fire service educational standards developed internally and focused predominantly on fire service standards may be problematic. To address this issue and the call for higher education focused on a broad range of knowledge, it is suggested that educational assistance programs be implemented and rewarded. A few of the participants stated that their state paid the tuition for fire service employees attending universities. However, most also stated that these programs were underutilized. A reward system should be used to reinforce the value of higher education and to encourage others that may be considering educational opportunities.

Third, implementation of developmental growth plans that provide career guidance and planning is highly recommended. These plans should be developed collaboratively by the employee and the employer to ensure that the employee's goals

and objectives are in alignment with his or her long-term aspirations while keeping the overall organizational strategy in mind. Once adopted, these plans should be discussed by employees and their mentors frequently. It is also suggested that each of these plans should be reviewed at least quarterly to ensure employees are progressing towards their life and career goals.

Fourth, the call for knowledge acquisition and its associated long-term benefits of culture change will fall lifeless to the floor if the efforts of individuals to obtain this education are not rewarded. Therefore, it is suggested that education requirements be established for each position and promotion and be utilized. This sends the message that the organization values the struggles that individuals have endured while trying to obtain knowledge that benefits the organization.

Finally, chief officers need to take an active role in the teaching of the non-tactical aspects within their organization. During this study, chief officers were asked how frequently they actively led training. All too often the answer was "I do not."

At its core, SHRD is focused on the creation of a learning culture that shapes and influences organizational culture to benefit the employee and the employer. As a group, the chief officers who participated in this study were highly educated individuals who had the knowledge and interpersonal skills that were highlighted when asked to describe their ideal trainer. In addition, most indicated that they had lived the struggles associated with their personal knowledge attainment. For chief officers to remain stagnant and not actively share their acquired knowledge with those who follow is a mistake. All chief officers should actively lead, participate, and mentor their organizations in pursuit of knowledge and the creation of a learning culture.

Organizational collaboration (theme four). Theme four is a result of the suggestions made by chief officers centered on strategies to increase internal and external stakeholder support. Many of these strategies were closely related to suggestions on how to overcome the *Barrier Top Management Support, Barrier Finances,* and the *Barrier Communication.* Time and effort were frequently mentioned as a requirement when addressing issues associated with *Organizational Collaboration.*

At its core, this theme is about building relationships with internal and external stakeholders. A probing question asked during this study was related to participated in organization strategy development. Most of the respondents indicated that strategy development was an internal process with a limited number of employees given the opportunity to participate. This closed, top-down approach to strategy development was echoed multiple times during this study and referred to during discussion on the theme *Barrier Communication.* In addition, these same respondents often indicated that the theme *Barrier Finances* was an issue due to the lack of support by mayors, city councils, and boards reflecting the theme B*arrier Top Management Support*.

As a result, this research provides two suggestions for addressing issues that are related to *Organizational Collaboration.* First, organizations need to understand that they are not entities unto themselves and tremendous opportunities exist by developing strategies based on a mutually beneficial understanding. One of the participants in this study stated succinctly, "we understand that we have got to build relationships to get enough funding to do the things that we need to do." Building these relationships was frequently mentioned by those who had encountered the *Barrier Top Management Support* and overcome the *Barrier Finances.*

Second, others who had faced the *Barrier Collaboration* spoke about the need to

include the union, internal stakeholders, and employees during the process of building

Organizational Collaboration. Most reported their collaborative efforts to include

everyone in the decision and strategy building process were beneficial. Some had opened

their staff meeting to everyone in the organization and paid off-duty employees to attend.

They cited improved communication and buy-in for important programs that allowed

them to introduce cultural change initiatives based on everyone's input as rewards of

Organizational Collaboration.

  Organizational health (theme five). This theme, unfortunately, emerged as a

major theme of this research. Multiple participants reported suicides and mental health

crises within their organizations. Most of these issues were attributed to the extreme

stress associated with dealing with traumatic incidents. Others attributed stress issues to

the number of calls that their employees now respond to daily. Several cited the

reluctance of firefighters to share their emotions with individuals not involved in the fire

service. All of these factors could contribute to variety of other behaviors that prohibit the

creation of a learning environment within an organization.

  Two strategies evolved during this research to address stress-related issues. First,

fire services need to build internal peer support groups that enable individuals to talk with

other employees who understand the issues they are having. This should be supplemented

with an education that allows members of the organization to understand the signs of

stress and to take a proactive stance.

  Outside counseling was mentioned as necessary, and it was stated that every

employee has a duty to be watchful for the signs of stress and the right to use mental

health resources. One participant offered that these should be in place before they are needed, and employees should be able to participate without anyone knowing. The benefits of having an active chaplain who frequently interacts with employees were also mentioned several times during the interview process.

Second, one organization has found success by monitoring the number of runs individual employees respond to during a shift and then rotates employees to slower units during the shift to allow them recovery time. A boost in morale and a reduction of stress were credited to this strategy. One participant noted that "In the fire service, we care more about fire trucks than we do firefighters," and others commented that the number of responses every day had reached critical levels and they worried about employee health. Thus, symptoms of poor individual health should be viewed as a symptom that overall *Organizational Health* is failing, and appropriate interventions should be taken to heal the organization.

Implications for Practice

The practical implications of this study are provided in this section for the following stakeholders: chief officers; city administrators; and fire service HRD professionals. In addition, special considerations for large, medium, and small fire service organizations are discussed.

Throughout this study, it was found that three critical themes associated with aspects of the organization needed continual attention: *Organizational Communication, Organizational Collaboration,* and *Organizational Knowledge.* Each of these was determined to be interlinked to *Organizational Culture* and *Organizational Health.* To address these themes, chief officers and HRD professionals need to learn, understand,

and empower the responsible employees to facilitate organizational effectiveness by integrating a comprehensive performance management system. The performance management system should include detailed recruiting, hiring, and selection criteria based on each organization's forecasted needs. Special emphasis should be placed on hiring individuals with communication skills who have the knowledge and ability to work collaboratively with others.

Once the employee is hired, the inadequate system of employee evaluation and development revealed during this study must end. This study found that only two chief officers reported that evaluations were done quarterly with employee input. All employees need to have a development and performance plan to assist and guide them throughout their career. These plans should be developed by the employee and the organization to ensure that objectives and long-term goals of both are addressed.

Once developed, these plans should be monitored quarterly to ensure employees' careers are on a growth trajectory. In addition, there must be real consequences for employees who repeatedly do not meet the goals and objectives contained in the mutually agreed upon developmental growth plans. When probing questions were asked during this study on the consequences of failed employee evaluations, the answers were vague at best. A few of the chief officers stated that nothing was really done to employees other than an occasional write up that had little impact on employee behavior. Unfortunately, the lack of a performance management system within several of these organizations has created a system that will continually reinforce the current dysfunctional culture and place undue hardship on the members of the organization.

To address these issues and assist with implementation of the performance management system, it is imperative that fire service trainers who currently are focused on activity-based training evolve to become fire service HRD professionals and perform as internal change agents. This new role will require acquisition and application of knowledge, skills, and abilities beyond the levels currently required of them. As such, chief officers should demand that fire service HRD professionals acquire the knowledge to implement and oversee the performance management system within their departments and perform recruiting, hiring, training, development, and performance appraisal responsibilities. This will allow organizational strategy and objectives to be actively reinforced. The benefits of adopting a comprehensive performance management system is that it addresses multiple themes revealed throughout this study such as *Organizational Communication, Organizational Collaboration, Organizational, Knowledge, Organizational Culture,* and *Organizational Health.*

Chief Officers

The benefits of creating an organization based on SHRD best practices are numerous and assist change efforts focused on improving the *Organizational Culture* while promoting *Organizational Health.* This study revealed three critical components of organizational management that must be addressed if successful integration of SHRD practices is expected. Management of these three critical components (i.e., Organizational Communication, Organizational Collaboration, and Organizational Knowledge) must be continually cultivated, nurtured, rewarded, shaped, and constantly reflected upon to ensure successful establishment of an SHRD culture.

Cultivating SHRD. Cultivating the environment for successful integration of SHRD involves a conscious choice. As one participant of this study reflected, "We

decided nobody was going to leave here pissed off and mad anymore." A critical first step requires chief officers to acquire and build the *Organizational Knowledge* within their organization. This allows their organizations to utilize concepts associated with *Organizational Collaboration* to guide internal and external stakeholders through an honest analysis process to further understanding of the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). This process should complement and facilitate a deep discussion on the overall organizational strategy, which should also be developed with internal and external stakeholder representation.

Special care should be utilized when assembling stakeholders to ensure external priorities are met. Chief officers should strive to prevent the "silo effect" described by one chief officer as the creation of a strategy only based on the needs of the fire service. This critical step of cultivating the organization for change requires chief officers to increase *Organizational Knowledge* while continually communicating the need for the adoption of the organizational strategy by using *Organizational Communication* concepts. In summary, cultivating the integration process involves the conscious choice to adopt SHRD practices and acquire the *Organizational Knowledge* needed to facilitate internal and external *Organizational Collaboration.* This should be done while maintaining an environment of constant *Organizational Communication* focused on creating a learning environment based on the organization's overall strategy, mission, vision, goals, and values.

Nurturing SHRD. Once cultivating SHRD practices has begun, the nurturing phase of the process must be maintained to ensure all employees understand the value of adopting SHRD practices. One chief officer stated that this process required continual

support and communication on the value to the organization and more importantly, the individual employee affected by the needed changes. It was strongly emphasized by participants of this study that the nurturing phase took a considerable amount of time and energy. Several participants cited the necessity of continually communicating the need for change with those who had already adopted an SHRD mindset to ensure that the value was not forgotten. Other participants cited the need to continually grow and not allow oneself to become complacent with success.

The nurturing phase should be viewed as a continual process by chief officers, and awareness should be maintained that this process is focused on the growth of *Organizational Knowledge, Organizational Collaboration,* and *Organizational Communication* in pursuit of enhanced organizational performance. By continually nurturing the previously cultivated SHRD practices and growing the capabilities of the organization, SHRD will be allowed to grow and flourish within the organization.

Rewarding SHRD. Chief officers who strive to bring change to their organizations must provide a rewards system to encourage behaviors that are congruent with the overall organizational objectives and employee growth plans. Due to financial constraints, several chief officers stated that these rewards did not have to be monetary. Many chief officers cited personal recognition of an employee for a job well done as being a relevant award and noted that employees enjoyed being recognized for their work. One chief officer commented the reward system was the most important aspect of culture change, adding people just want to feel cared for and rewarding small accomplishments goes a long way towards changing attitudes.

This phase of the process involves considerable usage of *Organizational Communication.* As one chief officer suggested, it is not enough to reward good behavior. It must be celebrated. This was done through multiple avenues including social media, public service announcements, presentation of awards at city hall, and numerous other public events. All of these should strive to reward employees for their efforts and build *Organizational Collaboration* by including multiple external stakeholders in the celebration.

Shaping SHRD. All SHRD initiatives should have an evaluation plan in place to assist the developmental growth of employees. These long-term plans should be focused on providing the employee and the organization with a map to enhance employee and organizational knowledge. These developmental growth plans should be created by the employee with guidance from the employer to ensure strategic goals of the organization are considered. Several chief officers stated that it was important to base these plans on the knowledge that could be obtained from external sources that were not related to the fire service. This influx of external knowledge was often credited with assisting the culture change that was needed within their department and helping to build relationships with external stakeholders. As one chief officer reported, "These plans are developed during a recruit academy before we do our hiring. This allows us to assist each individual to understand how they can achieve their goals and objectives while we get an opportunity to assess the individuals fit with the organization." Assisting with the developmental growth plans was also credited with building *Organizational Collaboration* by providing members of the community with career-advising services seldom offered elsewhere. One department that offered these services knew that

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employees would not be with the department for a long period of time due to inadequate compensation as compared to surrounding departments. However, it was realized that the individuals would remain in the community, and the advantages of assisting others built lifelong relationships with the community.

In summary, developmental growth plans are a critical step in building *Organizational Knowledge, Organizational Collaboration,* and *Organizational Communication* within the department. As one chief officer stated, "It is about growing people, and I have had more success doing that by saying 'yes' to individuals and by allowing them to pursue growth opportunities that are focused on their wants and needs. In return, we have received organizational benefits."

Constant reflection of SHRD. Chief officers who undertake the process of integrating SHRD practices into their organizations should be aware that the effort requires constant reflection to maintain and grow the *Organizational Knowledge, Organizational Collaboration,* and *Organizational Communication.* Each of these areas is contingent upon each other, and all three must be grown together to form a relationship that becomes an organizational expectation. Constant reflection ensures that the organization is always looking to develop its people, enhance community engagement, and to become a more effective organization. This continual evolution guided by the organization's strategy that was developed by internal and external stakeholders during a reflective process further enhances *Organizational Collaboration.* The constant evaluation of knowledge levels within the organization and the associated learning activities that are identified further builds individual and *Organizational Knowledge* and assists to build *Organizational Collaboration* when employees seek external educational

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opportunities. *Organizational Communication* should constantly be reviewed to ensure that internal employees and external stakeholders understand the value of the organization's strategy and to develop, share, and justly reward those who deserve hard-earned recognition.

In summary, constant reflection on the SHRD processes should be viewed as a never-ending cycle and one of the most important concepts associated with maintaining SHRD once it has become established within the organization. Many chief officers also reported that the effort required to integrate SHRD focused on employee growth and organizational strategy was well worth the effort and allowed the *Organizational Culture* to be transformed, resulting in improved *Organizational Health.*

Fire Service Organizations

Fire service organizations attempting to integrate SHRD practices should be aware of multiple special considerations that were revealed during this study based on organization size. The following discussion presents these special considerations of SHRD integration for large, medium, and small organizations.

Large. The number of stations, the geographic area covered, and daily response levels all come into play when addressing the integration of SHRD in large organizations. Multiple officers with large departments reported that they could rarely centralize to train due to call volume or distance from a brick and mortar training center, and, when they did, overtime cost was high. Adoption of SHRD practices will not remove the burden associated with attending tactical training that requires simulation. However, SHRD does offer practical advantages and benefits when dealing with routine training that does not require substantial simulation.

At its core, SHRD promotes empowerment of individuals and station officers to take responsibility for their training, development, and performance. As such, every station officer should be required to become a certified instructor and empowered to administer the training, development, performance, and budgetary responsibilities of their station. This responsibility requires that an evaluation process is implemented to ensure that standards developed by the stakeholders are maintained. In addition, station officers should be given the opportunity to increase their *Organizational Knowledge* while constantly being supported through the *Organizational Communication* channels and required to maintain *Organizational Collaboration.*

Medium. The burden of staffing in medium size departments seemed to be unique and put them at a considerable disadvantage regarding resources such as *Organizational Knowledge.* It was frequently mentioned by medium-size organizations that a lack of *Organizational Knowledge* had caused them to limit change efforts that were centered on evaluation, training, and development. Large departments simply drew from a tremendous talent pool inherent to a large number of employees and could easily find members with the required skills and abilities to function as a change agent. Small departments were often fortunate to have access to subject matter experts who could assist in pursuit of organizational change, and many mentioned that outside resources were often provided at no cost. As such, medium-size organizations need to build *Organizational Collaboration* in pursuit of obtaining the *Organizational Knowledge* needed for successful integration of SHRD.

Small. A unique advantage for small departments trying to integrate SHRD practices is the ability and ease of *Organizational Communication* and *Organizational*

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Collaboration. As one respondent stated, "I can talk to the mayor, union president, and the town council without leaving the hallway." This advantage, combined with access to outside *Organizational Knowledge* that was often provided at no cost, allows small organizations an advantage to rapidly integrate SHRD practices. However, small organizations should also be continually mindful of the perils of promotion by attrition or long spans of stagnation brought on by the total absence of change. As one respondent related, "we have not promoted anyone in a decade and may not have another promotion for five years." Statements such as this make continual employee development focused on employees' goals and objectives critical.

City Administrators

Administrators have the responsibility to educate themselves on the needs, goals, and objectives of their local fire service. They should also actively participate in the strategy-building process and require fire personnel to participate in the overall budgetary process. Making uneducated funding allocations based upon "I think" arguments should no longer be used in the budgetary process when people's lives and multi-million-dollar budgets are at stake. It was reported multiple times during this study that budgets had been cut and adopted without consultation of the fire department. This lack of consultation on budgetary needs could have been its own theme if this study had focused on finances. Sadly, some chief officers reported their department's success in achieving accreditation status or their efforts to successfully lower their Insurance Service Organization (ISO) rating had been turned around and used against them. A few attributed their department's turnaround with the adoption of a manager-council form of the government stating, "We finally had individuals that understood and demanded

professionalism from all the government departments." Others reported *Organizational Collaboration* and *Organizational Communication* were both positively influenced when administrators had actively ridden with the firefighters, thus perhaps increasing their *Organizational Knowledge*.

In summary, as city administrators, council members, board members, and mayors, there is a responsibility to make informed, educated decisions on budget requests and the application of personnel policy presented by the fire service. It is suggested that governmental representatives begin to work collaboratively with the fire department. Administrators should occasionally ride with fire units for 24-hour shifts. This level of involvement with the fire department can enhance strategy development and provide an understanding of the multiple government regulations, standards, and laws that fire administrators are required to follow. Unfortunately, chief officers are often forced to choose between providing routine maintenance for public buildings and adherence to laws and regulations that affect personnel safety issues due to inadequate funding. Adoption of SHRD practices and a performance management system can promote *Organizational Collaboration* and *Organizational Communication* practices while enhancing overall organizational strategy.

Fire Service Human Resource Development Professionals

Fire service HRD professionals' new role should evolve to include service as an internal change agent and provide oversight of the performance management system within their departments. This new role will require acquisition and application of knowledge, skills, and abilities far greater than they are currently required. To address this knowledge gap, practitioners should strive to acquire the competencies as

recommended by Gilley and Gilley (2003). Acquisition of these skills will allow fire service HRD professionals to assume the critical role of an internal change agent, with a new focus of providing guidance to the organization on the recruiting, hiring, training, development, and performance appraisal activities within the organization.

Transferring these duties to fire service HRD professionals provides multiple benefits to the organization. By shifting these functions currently viewed as chief officer responsibilities to fire service HRD professionals, the organization will benefit from having a consistent and comprehensive organizational strategy for the development of employees throughout their career. It also allows chief officers to focus more of their energies on *Organizational Communication* and *Organizational Collaboration*, further increasing the effectiveness of the organization.

Adoption of the performance management system and the fire service HRD professional's new role should be done slowly in a manner that allows them to occur concurrently. However, once the performance management system is established and expectations for fire service HRD professionals have been developed, chief officers should continually communicate and collaborate with these professionals to ensure organizational performance objectives are met. This will assist in ensuring the overall strategy and employee development are accomplished, further enhancing *Organizational Communication, Organizational Collaboration, Organizational Knowledge, Organizational Culture* and *Organizational Health*.

Implications for Theory and Research

This research was underpinned by models proposed by Garavan, (1991), Gilley and Gilley (2003), and Ruona and Gilley (2009). Ruona and Gilley (2009) called for research of the theory-practice gap to advance scholars and practitioners' understanding.

Second, Gilley and Gilley (2003) proposed five key competencies that are critical to HRD practitioners: stakeholder relationship skills, systems thinking skills, organizational analysis skills, industry experience and technical skills, and project management skills. Furthermore, Gilley and Gilley (2003) stated that these basic skills must be obtained to perform as a business partner and be understood before any successful change effort may be launched. This claim was explored by analysis of a series of probing questions to determine the skills participants believed were critical for fire service HRD practitioners. The responses from chief officers confirmed that all five basic skills are critical for HRD practitioners in the fire service, and organizations should strive to increase their *Organizational Knowledge* to utilize their *Organizational Communication* and *Organizational Collaboration* skills to launch successful change efforts.

Third, Garavan (1991) identified nine essential characteristics of SHRD: integration with organizational missions and goals, top management support, environmental scanning, HRD plans and policies, line manager commitment and involvement, the existence of complementary HRM activities, expanded trainer role, recognition of culture, and emphasis on evaluation. Each of these characteristics was reported to aid the integration of SHRD within an organization. Garavan (1991) further emphasized the need for HRD professionals to understand these barriers in order to facilitate the adoption of SHRD practices. This study found that these barriers were closely associated with the integration of SHRD issues in fire service organizations and special consideration should be given to each issue during the integration process. In addition, the major aggregated themes discovered during this study (i.e., *Organizational Culture, Organizational Communication, Organizational Knowledge, Organizational*

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Collaboration, and *Organizational Health*) all contained themes or sub-themes that

reflect the importance of Garvin's suggested barriers to integration of SHRD. However,

this study suggests that *Organizational Culture* and *Organizational Health* are outcomes

that are shaped and contingent upon the current state of *Organizational Communication,*

Organizational Knowledge, and *Organizational Collaboration* within each organization.

Limitations

Several limitations could impact the generalizability of this study and its research

contributions. First, the researcher has maintained a close association with the fire

industry for approximately 30 years and frequently talks with other individuals associated

with the industry in pursuit of increasing organizational performance. This familiarity

with the fire service provides the researcher with a unique insight into a group that

maintains a culture resistant to change and unaccepting of outsiders. However, awareness

of the potential bias was self-monitored closely to ensure the researcher did not interject

personal bias during the data collection and analysis phases of this research study. In

addition, respondent validation was used to ensure interpretation of transcripts accurately

reflected the thoughts of those interviewed.

Second, the process of selecting random participants for this study involved a

national advertisement that focused on chief officers who are members of fire chiefs'

associations. This selection method provided a population that was open-minded,

creative, educated, and at the top of their field. However, this population may not be

representative of the chief officers in general. Third, the sample size of 24 for this

qualitative phenomenological study is within Creswell's (1998) recommended a range of

five to twenty-five participants for a phenomenological study. However, the researcher's

judgment determined the point of saturation and as a result, could limit the findings of this research and generalizability to other populations.

Suggestions for Future Research

Chief officers in the fire service located throughout the United States were chosen as participants for this study. Future research should compare geographically distinct populations to determine whether there are different perceptions based on geographical location. In addition, future research should strive to look at the differences that may exist between career departments and volunteer departments. In this study, very few departments had a volunteer component and the ones that did relied on paid personnel to perform most of their fire service duties. However, these departments reported that morale was good and that they often developed their people knowing that they would eventually leave for bigger departments once their training was complete. This continual replacement of personnel could place a higher emphasis on developmental activities associated with SHRD and provide an interesting population for future studies.

Future research should also strive to discover the impetus for the extreme silo effect that is present throughout most of the fire service. The discovery that culture is a major impediment to change has been widely reported and is not a new phenomenon. However, the fire service provides a unique population to study a culture that has predominantly closed itself off from outside influence and revels in the belief that change is not needed even though budgets, staffing, and resources are becoming scarce for departments that continue to operate in the past. The key to modernizing the fire service may be discovered if future research reveals how to remove this cultural barrier. Studies should also be conducted on how to improve communication for departments that have

limited resources, multiple locations and very little travel flexibility due to the need to stay within their primary jurisdiction in order to maintain response protocols.

Research should also be conducted in two additional areas. First, studies on stress and hours worked should be conducted in the fire service to determine the relationship between these factors and the ability to adjust to change. Second, research should be conducted to determine whether a knowledge gap of human resource practices exists in the fire service. Since almost every organization reported that they were primarily a tactically-focused organization, these studies could provide vital information to organizations that are seeking to understand the transformative process of SHRD adoption and become a learning organization that utilizes SHRD best practices.

Summary of Chapter Five

Chapter five began with the purpose statement of this study and a brief discussion on the five major aggregated themes that were discovered. Implications for practice were then provided for chief officers, fire service organizations, city administrators, and HRD professionals. Additionally, implications for theory and research were provided followed by a discussion on the limitations of this research. The chapter then concluded with suggestions for future research and a brief summarization of the chapter.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

<u>**EXPEDITED and EXEMPT RESEARCH APPLICATION**</u>

IRB: *Click here to enter text.*
Approved by: *Click here to enter text.*
Date: *Click here to enter text.*

Attach (electronically) to <u>gduke@uttyler.edu</u> with this application, the following:

- Written consent form using the UT Tyler Consent Template unless a waiver of written informed consent is requested
- Signature page of Thesis or Dissertation Committee members showing proposal approval for graduate students
- A brief research proposal that outlines background and significance, research design, research questions/hypotheses, data collection instruments and related information, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures. **Most of this can be copied and pasted to relevant parts of the application, but please keep Background & Significance brief for the application.**
- CITI certifications for PI, co-investigators, and research assistants participating in recruitment, data collection, data analysis, or, if they have any exposure to identifiable data (if training has not been completed at UT Tyler within a 3-year period of time)
- Tool/instrument/survey; if copyright or other issues prohibit electronic form, submit one hard copy

COMPLETE <u>ALL</u> ITEMS TO AVOID DELAY IN IRB APPROVAL

DATE: *January 18, 2018*

Principal Investigator	*Musgrave*	*Jon*	*D*
	(Last)	(First)	(MI)

PI Title and Credentials	☐Assistant Professor ☐Associate Professor ☐Professor ☒ Student ☐Other
Faculty Sponsor Name and Email if PI is Student	*Dr. Ann Gilley agilley@uttyler.edu[Dissertation Chair*
PI Phone	*812-318-1530*
PI Email	*Jmusgrave2@patriots.uttyler.edu or JonMusgrave@indstate.edu*
Co-Investigator(s)	Click here to enter text.
Co-Investigator(s) Email and Telephone	*Click here to enter text.* *Click here to enter text.*
Secondary Contact Person in the absence of PI	*Click here to enter text.*
Secondary Contact Person's Telephone and Email	Phone**:** *Click here to enter text.* Email: *Click here to enter text.*
Title of Proposed Research	AN EXPLORATION OF BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES FIRE SERVICE: AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CHIEF OFFICERS' PERCEPTIONS
Source of Funding	☐NIH ☐Local ☐ Industry ☐ Other Federal (Specify) ☒Other (Specify) *Self-funded*

1. **Designate the category that qualifies this proposal for what you believe will be either exempt or expedited review** (see UT Tyler Exempt (page 8) and Expedited Categories (page 9) at the end of this application) and justify this designation by responding to the statements below each category

   Category # *7*

   Information Required for Justification (See specific information under each

category)

This research study represents the main study that will be conducted

in fulfillment of my doctoral degree requirements. The data gathered

during this study will be obtained using semi-structured

interviews which will be audio recorded transcribed and analyzed with the

permission of the study's participants. Participation in this study represents

no more than minimal, if any risks.

2. For proposals involving <u>Personal Health Information (PHI) data</u>: If this is a retrospective chart review (Category 5) (health records research), or, data involves a review of PHI, refer to the IRB's HIPAA policies and procedures in the IRB Handbook and complete any appropriate forms. All can be located on the UT Tyler IRB site: <u>http://www.uttyler.edu/research/compliance/irb/</u>

2a. Does this protocol include the use of PHI? ☐ Yes   ☒ No

NOTE*: If the protocol includes the use of PHI, refer to the IRB Handbook on HIPAA policies and relevant forms that must be completed before IRB approval can be obtained.*

3.   **Clearly Stated** **Purpose of Study and Design:**   The purpose of this

study will be to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of chief

officers in the United States Fire Service to further understanding of the

barriers to integration of SHRD best practices. This study will utilize an

IPA qualitative study methodology, and the chief officers selected to

participate in this study will be selected from a diverse social and

geographical background. It is the intent of this researcher to select chief

fire officers currently employed in major metropolitan areas throughout the

United States. Furthermore, selection will be limited to chief officers

holding the rank of full-time battalion chief or higher.

4.   **Research Questions and/or Hypotheses, if applicable:**   This study
will be guided by two research questions. RQ 1) What are the barriers
encountered by chief officers when they try to integrate SHRD practices?
RQ 2) How can chief officers overcome the barriers to integration of SHRD
practices?

5.   **Brief Background and Significance of Study** (include enough
information and citations to indicate literature gaps and why it is important
to do this study)**:**

      This study is compelling, appropriate, and relevant to the field
of Human Resource Development because the topic of Strategic
Human Resource Development (SHRD) and the barriers associated
with the integration of SHRD practice have not been fully studied.
This problem is important according to the literature review because it
is imperative for fire service organizations to incorporate strategic
development models due to society's current cognitive, cultural, and
political contexts, rather than those of yesteryears' management
paradigms (Cox, 2012). Crossing this threshold will allow fire service
organizations focused on HRD to benefit from integration research of
barriers to SHRD practices. By furthering the understanding of the
barriers associated with this transformational step, it is predicted that
fire service organizations operating in the public sector will be able to
utilize the results of this qualitative study of barriers to integration of
SHRD practices to increase organizational effectiveness,
organizational efficiency, chief officer performance, and employee
morale.

6.   Target Population:

  a. Ages: *The age range of participants for this study will be approximately 25-65 years of age. The participants will include chief officers holding the rank of full-time battalion chief of training or higher.*

  b. Gender: *All genders may be included.*

  Explain below if either gender is to be purposely excluded.

  Click here to enter text.

  c. Are all racial and ethnic groups included in general recruitment? ☒ Yes   ☐ No

  Explain below if a racial or ethnic group is to be purposely excluded.

  Click here to enter text.

  d. The Number of Anticipated Participants with Justification: *A minimum of 8 chief officers will be solicited for this study.*

  e. Inclusion Criteria for Sample Eligibility: *The participants will include chief officers holding the rank of full-time battalion chief or higher and will be employed in the fire service.*

Note: *Any study involving **prisoners** requires a full board review and may not be approved under expedited review.*

7.   Explain the locations or settings for (a) sample recruitment and (b) data collection:

In what settings (e.g., specific classroom, organizational meetings, church, clinics, etc.) will you do sample recruitment?

The recruitment of all participants for this study will be from career fire departments located throughout the United States. These potential participants will be identified by the researcher using three specific approaches. First, the researcher will contact the fire chiefs of departments to obtain the names and email contact details for chief officers meeting the criteria for the study. Second, the researcher will contact the International Association of Fire Chiefs to obtain the names and email contact details for chief officers meeting the criteria for the study. Third, the researcher will use a snowball sampling strategy to obtain the names of potential chief officers who may meet the criteria for the study through those participants who have agreed to participate. These three approaches for identifying potential study participants will be used due to each of these group's potential knowledge of individuals who would meet the requirements for participating in this research. From those names gathered, the chief officers will then be contacted by the researcher via email with regard to the purpose of the study.

b. **In what settings will you collect your data?**

Based on availability and the willingness to participate in the study, a minimum of 8 individuals will be interviewed for this study. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim with the participant's permission. Field notes and observations will also be used, and coupled with the interview transcripts, will comprise the dataset for this

research project. All recorded interviews will only be used to capture observations and field notes, and no visuals or any identifying information from the recordings will be used. The researcher will schedule the interviews with the participants to occur at their convenience. Ideally, the interviews will be personal -face-to-face interviews. However, given the potential geographical distribution of the participants, the use of video conferencing technology for conducting the interviews may be necessary, such as Zoom.

8. **Prior to sample recruitment and data collection, who will you first obtain permission to do the recruitment and data collections.** For example, if sample recruitment and/or data collection will occur in settings other than public settings, you may need permission to do this. For example, in business organizations, you will need approval from a manager or owner of the business; in academic settings, you may need permission of course faculty to recruit their students; in school districts, you may need permission from a superintendent, principle and/or teachers.

The researcher will personally obtain permission from chief officers who elect to participate in the study. These eligible chief officers who have been previously identified by their fire chief or the international association of fire chiefs, or through snowball sampling of research participants given that each of these groups have knowledge of those chief officers that meet the study requirements and hold the rank of battalion chief or higher.

9. **Who will be recruiting the sample (humans, records, etc.)?** This could be the PI or another person who is asked by the PI to recruit.

The researcher will personally contact chief officers who meet the criteria of the research via email or by phone. All individuals who consent to be interviewed will be chief officers employed full-time in the United States fire service.

10. **How will recruitment be done?** For example, will recruitment be done by email (if so, indicate how email addresses are obtained), face to face, etc.?

The potential participants who have been identified by their fire chief or the international association of fire chiefs, or through snowball sampling of research participants that have agreed to participate, will be contacted by the researcher via email with regard to the purpose of the study.

    a. **Copy and paste text, verbal scripts, graphics, pictures, etc. below from any flyers, ads, letters, etc. that are used for recruitment of participants**. This will be what will be said in emails, etc. to potential participants as the general announcement for recruitment.

    NOTE: This is never an "N/A" option. You may also add these as separate attachments and indicate so in space below.

The following information will appear in an email that will be sent to prospective chief officers who meet the criteria for this research. Dear_____: My name is Jon Musgrave, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Human Resource Development in the College of Business and Technology at The University of Texas at Tyler. I am currently conducting research to fulfill the requirements for my doctoral degree. The focus of my research explores the beliefs, attitudes,

and perceptions of chief officers in the United States Fire Service to further understanding on the barriers to integration of Strategic Human Resource Development practices. I would like to conduct a personal interview with you to obtain an understanding of your experiences and how you perceived these experiences associated with the integration of Strategic Human Resource Development within your organization. The interview is expected to be approximately 60 minutes in length and will be conducted via a video chat program such as Zoom or via a personal, face-to-face interview. I will have a prepared list of questions relating to the topics previously mentioned and will seek your perspectives about them. I will take notes during the interview process and will seek your permission to record the interview as appropriate and necessary. Collection of your data in this manner will enable me to engage in the interview process as well as to analyze the data following the interview qualitatively. The recorded interview will be kept on a password protected and encrypted computer and any paper copies of materials will be kept securely in a locked file cabinet and will be accessible only to me and my dissertation chair. My dissertation committee is being chaired by and overseen by Dr. Ann Gilley, Professor in the Department of Human Resource Development at The University of Texas at Tyler. Your participation in this research endeavor is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty. Your choice to participate will not impact your role or status in your organization. You are also free to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact either myself, Jon Musgrave, at 812-318-1530 or by email at Jmusgrave2@patriots.uttyler.edu, Dr. Ann Gilley at 903-566-7324 or by email Ann Gilley@uttyler.edu, or Dr. Gloria Duke, Chair, Institutional

Review Board Committee, The University of Texas at Tyler by email

Gloria_Duke@uttyler.edu. Sincerely, Jon Musgrave

11. **Informed Consent**

. **Prospective research ordinarily requires written informed consent. The inclusion of children (under 18 years) requires permission of at least one parent AND the assent of the child (refer to UT Tyler's Policy on Informed Consent of Children).**

If written consent is to be used, terminology must be about the 8th-grade level, or as appropriate for the accurate understanding of the participant or guardian.

If there are questions about the literacy or cognitive level of potential participants, there must be evidence that the participant is able to verbalize basic information about the research, their role, time commitment, risks, and the voluntary nature of participating and/or ceasing participation with no adverse consequences.

Please use the templates posted under the IRB forms as a guide, and attach as a separate document with the application submission.

Do not copy and paste from this document into consent form. Use simple and easy to understand terminology written at no higher than 8th-grade level.

12. **If you require signed consents, skip #12 and #13 and move to Item #14.**

This section ONLY for those requesting a waiver or alteration of SIGNED and written informed consent:

All four criteria **must** be met in order to **NOT** have signed written informed consents as a requirement for your study.

In other words, you must answer "yes" to all four of the criteria below in order to NOT have written and signed informed consents.

If you are requesting a waiver of written and signed informed consent, indicate "yes" if the statement is true about your proposed research:

1. The research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. The waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects
     ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. The research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration,
     ☐ Yes ☐ No **AND**

4. Whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation ☐ Yes ☐ No.

13. **When prospective informed consent is waived, explain how you will obtain permission to use participant's data. If no permission is planned, please explain your rationale.**

Any online survey should always present general purpose of the research, risks, benefits, and PI contact information, and the participant should have the options presented to "I agree" or "I do not agree" to participate in the research. If they select "I do not agree" the survey should be set up so that the participant exits out and has no access to the survey.

Click here to enter text.

14. **Detailed Data Collection Procedures ATTENTION: Be very specific for this item.**

Specify **who, what, when, where, how,** duration type of information for your procedures.
Write this section as if you were giving instructions to another person not familiar with your study. Please bullet information if possible.

The individuals who agree to participate in this interview process may be interviewed in person or via video communication technology such as Zoom. Initial contact will be made by the researcher in addition to the scheduling of the interviews. The

interviews will be approximately 60 minutes in length and will only be conducted with the participant's permission. Interviews will be audio recorded with field notes and observations being documented. It is anticipated that one interview will be necessary per participant. However, it is possible that the researcher may need to obtain clarification of data contained in the interview transcript, which may require additional email or personal interaction. The participants will also be asked to review their transcripts and to examine preliminary findings as a form of respondent validation. Once gathered the data will be analyzed and thematically coded. The data will then be utilized in the researcher's dissertation, presented at conferences, or written about in scholarly refereed publications. Participants will not be identified by name, organization, or in any other manner. During the interviews, participants will also be asked not to identify anyone by name or any other manner that could be identifiable. During the interview, a semi-structured interview protocol will be utilized:

1. Can you begin by telling me a little about yourself and your role within the organization? In other words, please provide me with a progression of your career from your initial introduction to the fire service to the present day.   *2. How long have you been working at your current fire department?*   *3. Can you tell me about the department? For example, response area covered, employees, annual budget, leadership structure or other information you believe may be pertinent.*

4. *Please describe the current state of SHRD in your organization?*

5. Please describe the ideal state of SHRD in your organization?

6. What is preventing your organization from transforming from the current state to the ideal state?

7. How could these barriers to SHRD be overcome?

8. What are the organizational changes needed to overcome these barriers to SHRD? 9. If provided these resources how would you implement the changes within your organization?

10. How would adopting SHRD practices benefit your organization? 11. Is there anything that your department leadership could have done or could do to facilitate SHRD practices?

12. As we bring the interview to closure and you reflect on your experiences, is there anything that you would like to add about your experiences with SHRD in your organization?

15. **Data Analysis Procedures:**

According to Pope, Ziebland, and Mays (2000), "Analyzing qualitative data is not a simple or quick task. Done properly, it is systematic and rigorous, and therefore labor intensive and time-consuming" (p.116). Qualitative research also produces vast amounts of data that needs to be analyzed in an ongoing sequential process to allow the researcher to continually refine questions and hypotheses in pursuit of emerging themes (Pope et al., 2000). Specific data analysis procedures for this phenomenological study will follow strict guidelines. Once an interview or survey has been completed, it will be transcribed, coded, and analyzed using

MAXQDA qualitative analysis software to identify any pertinent themes. Successive interviews will then be conducted in a manner that builds on and compares each additional interview to the repository of themes in an attempt to identify additional contributory themes. Once new themes no longer emerge, the data analysis process will be deemed saturated, and interviews will conclude.

16. <u>Risks and benefits of this research to the subjects and/or society</u>

<u>Risks</u>: *It is not anticipated that participants will incur any risk or side effects associated with this research. The data will be treated confidentially, and a pseudonym will be used to mask all identities to ensure that participants remain anonymous. No institutional or organizational affiliations will be disclosed. Participants will be asked to never identify another person by name or another way that could be identified*

<u>Benefits (benefits of your research to society in general)</u>: The researcher anticipates that the information, results, and insights collected from the interviews will be of interest to the chief fire officers participating in the study, along with the leadership of other fire departments, as it is anticipated that understanding the barriers to Strategic Human Resource Development could assist other chief fire officers to overcome these barriers. In addition, the findings of this study will add to the existing literature base on how barriers to Strategic Human Resource Development are perceived and addressed within an organization, and specifically the United States Fire Service.

17.   **Identifiability of data or specimens**: Will the specimens or data be identifiable?

   (NOTE: Any time code numbers are used, or signed consent forms are used, there is ALWAYS potential identifiability of data).

   ☒ Yes   ☐ No   If yes, complete item 17a

   17a.   State the type of identification, direct or indirect, on any specimens or data when they are made available to your study team: The signed consent form with the participant's name and signature is the only potential identifier. This form will only be used for internal purposes in support of the IRB process. Once the researcher has received the signed consent forms, they will be locked away in a file cabinet at the home of the researcher. All participants will be identified by pseudonyms only.

   Direct Identifiers include subject name, address, social security, etc.

   Indirect Identifiers include any number that could be used by the investigator or the source providing the data/specimens to identify a subject, e.g., pathology tracking number, medical record number, sequential or random code number)

18.   **Confidentiality and Protection of Data:** Specify how confidentiality will be secured and maintained for research data

   For example, locked in a file cabinet in office; on the password-protected computer, location(s) of the computer; identifiers and signed consent forms are kept locked in a separate entity from data, etc.).

Individuals who consent to be interviewed will be assigned

pseudonyms, and their identities and organizational affiliations will

remain completely anonymous. All recordings, transcripts, subsequent

transcriptions, field notes, and any other respective data will be secured

on a password protected, and encrypted computer and any hard copies of

materials will be secured in a locked file cabinet to which only the

researcher has access to. No voice, photos, video recordings will be used

in presentations, publications or other public dissemination.

19. **Access to Data**: Specify faculty and staff (members of the study team) permitted to have access to the study data.

At present, only the researcher will have access to the

data collected. It is possible that the researcher's dissertation

chair, Dr. Ann Gilley, will have access to the data for analysis

purposes. Both committee members have completed the IRB

training and are familiar with the IRB process

20. **Have all individuals who have access to data been educated about human subject ethics and confidentiality measures?** (NOTE: This is the responsibility of PI, and certificates must be attached to IRB application)

☒ Yes   ☐ No

21. **If data is on a laptop, acknowledge that the laptop will never be in an insecure location where theft is possible (e.g., in a locked car)**

The data collected will be stored on a computer that is

password protected, encrypted and is located in the researcher's

home office. Also, any written data will be stored in a locked

filing cabinet also located in the researcher's home office.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Signature indicates agreement by the PI to abide by UT Tyler IRB policies and procedures in the UT Tyler Handbook and the Federal Wide Assurance, to the obligations as stated in the "Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator" and to use universal precautions with potential exposure to specimens.

Jon Dean Musgrave
    1/18/2018

Principal Investigator Signature   Date
Please print name or affix electronic signature.
Electronic submission of this
form by PI indicates a signature

Categories for Exempt Research

The following categories for Exempt Research are in compliance with Subpart **46.101(b)** of the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, located at http://www.med.umich.edu/irbmed/FederalDocuments/hhs/HHS45CFR46.html#46.101

1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

3. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (2) if (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii)

federal statute(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

4. Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

5. Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs, (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs, (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures, or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

6. Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Categories for Expedited Research

The following describes research activities and categories for expedited reviews:

(A) Research activities that: (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the following categories, as authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The activities listed should not be deemed to be of minimal risk simply because they are included on this list. Inclusion on this list merely means that the activity is eligible for review through the expedited review procedure when the specific

circumstances of the proposed research involve no more than minimal risk to human subjects.

(B) The categories in this list apply regardless of the age of subjects, except as noted.

(C) The expedited review procedure <u>may not be used</u> where identification of the subjects and/or their responses would reasonably place them at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects in terms of financial standing, employability, insurability, reputation, or be stigmatizing, unless reasonable and appropriate protections will be implemented so that risks related to invasion of privacy and breach of confidentiality are no greater than minimal.

(D) The expedited review procedure may not be used for classified research involving human subjects.

(E) The standard requirements for informed consent (or its waiver, alteration, or exception) apply regardless of the type of review--expedited or convened--utilized by the IRB.

(F) Categories one (1) through seven (7) pertain to both initial and continuing IRB review.

The following categories for Expedited Research are in compliance with 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110 of the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, located at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/expedited98.htm

RESEARCH CATEGORIES

CATEGORY #1 Clinical studies of drugs and medical devices only when condition (a) or (b) is met.

(a) Research on drugs for which an investigational new drug application (21 CFR Part 312) is not required. (Note: Research on marketed drugs that significantly increases the risks or decreases the acceptability of the risks associated with the use of the product is not eligible for expedited review.)

(b) Research on medical devices for which (i) an investigational device exemption application (21 CFR Part 812) is not required; or (ii) the medical device is cleared/approved for marketing and the medical device is being used in accordance with its cleared/approved labeling.

CATEGORY #2 **Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture as follows**:

(a) from healthy, nonpregnant adults who weigh at least 110 pounds. For these subjects, the amounts drawn may not exceed 550 ml in an 8-week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week; or

(b) from other adults and children [children are defined in the HHS regulations as "persons who have not attained the legal age for consent to treatments or procedures involved in the research, under the applicable law of the jurisdiction in which the research will be conducted." 45 CFR 46.402(a)]., considering the age, weight, and health of the subjects, the collection procedure, the amount of blood to be collected, and the frequency with which it will be collected. For these subjects, the amount drawn may not exceed the lesser of 50 ml or 3 ml per kg in an 8-week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week.

CATEGORY #3 **Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by noninvasive means.**

Examples: (a) hair and nail clippings in a nondisfiguring manner; (b) deciduous teeth at time of exfoliation or if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction; (c) permanent teeth if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction; (d) excreta and external secretions (including sweat); (e) uncannulated saliva collected either in an unstimulated fashion or stimulated by chewing gumbase or wax or by applying a dilute citric solution to the tongue; (f) placenta removed at delivery; (g) amniotic fluid obtained at the time of rupture of the membrane prior to or during labor; (h) supra- and subgingival dental plaque and calculus, provided the collection procedure is not more invasive than routine prophylactic scaling of the teeth and the process is accomplished in accordance with accepted prophylactic techniques; (i) mucosal and skin cells collected by buccal scraping or swab, skin swab, or mouth washings; (j) sputum collected after saline mist nebulization.

CATEGORY #4 **Collection of data through noninvasive procedures (not involving general anesthesia or sedation) routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves.**

Where medical devices are employed, they must be cleared/approved for marketing. (<u>Studies intended to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the medical device are not generally eligible</u> for expedited review, including studies of cleared medical devices for new indications.)

Examples: (a) physical sensors that are applied either to the surface of the body or at a distance and do not involve input of significant amounts of energy into the subject or an invasion of the subject's privacy; (b) weighing or testing sensory acuity; (c) magnetic resonance imaging; (d) electrocardiography, electroencephalography, thermography, detection of naturally occurring radioactivity, electroretinography, ultrasound, diagnostic infrared imaging, doppler blood flow, and echocardiography; (e) moderate exercise, muscular strength testing, body composition assessment, and flexibility testing where appropriate given the age, weight, and health of the individual.

CATEGORY #5 Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis).

(NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. <u>45 CFR 46.101(b)(4)</u>. This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

CATEGORY #6 Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

CATEGORY #7 Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

(NOTE: <u>Some research in this category may be exempt</u> from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. <u>45 CFR 46.101</u>(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

CATEGORY #8 Continuing review of research previously approved by the convened IRB as follows:

(a) where (i) the research is permanently closed to the enrollment of new subjects; (ii) all subjects have completed all research-related interventions; and (iii) the research remains active only for long-term follow-up of subjects; or

(b) where no subjects have been enrolled, and no additional risks have been identified; or

(c) where the remaining research activities are limited to data analysis.

CATEGORY #9 **Continuing review of research, not conducted under an investigational new drug application or investigational device exemption where categories two (2) through eight (8) do not apply but the IRB has determined and documented at a convened meeting that the research involves no greater than minimal risk and no additional risks have been identified**.

Appendix B

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER
3900 University Blvd. • Tyler, TX 75799 • 903.565.5774 • FAX: 903.565.5858

Office of Research and
Technology Transfer

Institutional Review Board

January 23, 2018

Dear Mr. Musgrave,

Your request to conduct the study: *An Exploration of Barriers to Integration of Strategic Human Resource Development in the United States Fire Service: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Chief Officers Perceptions*, IRB #SP2018-62 has been approved by The University of Texas at Tyler Institutional Review Board under expedited review. This approval includes the use of signed informed consent, and your assurance of participant knowledge of the following prior to study participation: this is a research study; participation is completely voluntary with no obligations to continue participating, and with no adverse consequences for non-participation; and assurance of confidentiality of their data.

In addition, please ensure that any research assistants are knowledgeable about research ethics and confidentiality, and any co-investigators have completed human protection training within the past three years and have forwarded their certificates to the IRB office (G. Duke).

Please review the UT Tyler IRB Principal Investigator Responsibilities, and acknowledge your understanding of these responsibilities and the following through return of this email to the IRB Chair within one week after receipt of this approval letter:

- This approval is for one year, as of the date of the approval letter
- **The Progress Report form must be completed for projects extending past one year.** Your protocol will automatically expire on the one-year anniversary of this letter if a Progress Report is not submitted, per HHS Regulations **prior** to

that date (45 CFR 46.108(b) and 109(e):
http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/contrev0107.html
- Prompt reporting to the UT Tyler IRB of any proposed changes to this research activity
- **Prompt reporting to the UT Tyler IRB and academic department administration will be done of any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or other**
- Suspension or termination of approval may be done if there is evidence of any serious or continuing noncompliance with Federal Regulations or any aberrations in the original proposal.
- Any change in proposal procedures must be promptly reported to the IRB prior to implementing any changes except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject.
- Expedited approval with signed consent

Best of luck in your research, and do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Gloria Duke, Ph.D., RN
Chair, UT Tyler IRB

Appendix C.

Musgrave IAFC E-mail: Invitation to Participate in Ph.D. Research

Chief,

Hi! My name is Jon Musgrave, and I am a retired firefighter and a Ph.D. student at the University of Texas at Tyler. I am currently nearing the end of my Ph.D. journey and need your assistance to help complete my dissertation. I am conducting a research study that explores chief officer's perceptions of how training and development are utilized within fire departments and the experiences that chief officers have had. I am looking for participants with the following qualifications:

Chief fire officers employed full-time in departments throughout the United States holding the rank of battalion chief or higher who are willing to participate in a 60-minute Zoom or face-to-face interview. Participants must hold the rank of battalion chief or higher and have a working knowledge of administration and the training and development functions within their department. Please click this link to complete a short contact information form if you are interested in participating in this research. https://uttyler.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Ve7JCaXNCfswW9

If you or members of your department are selected to participate in this research, all data will be confidential, and no presented or published data will be identifiable to the organization or the participant. I will gladly share the results of this research with you and your department upon completion of my dissertation.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I may be contacted by phone at (812) 318-1530, or by email at jmusgrave2@patriots.uttyler.edu

Thank you for your time!
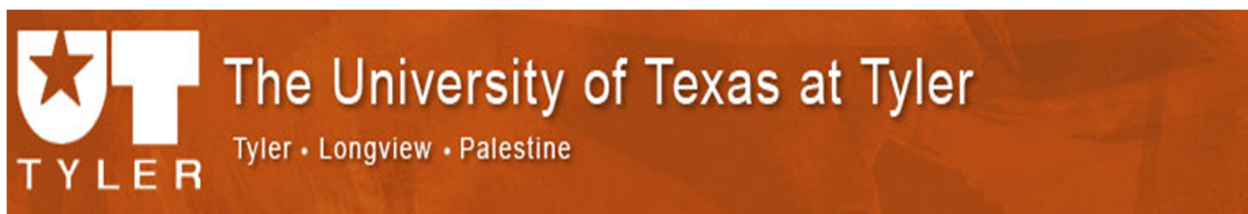
SHRD Participant Demographics and Contact Information

Thank you for your interest in my research. This form provides initial demographic and contact information. The first step is to make sure you understand the purpose of this survey and to seek your consent to participate. The purpose of this study will be to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of chief officers in the United States Fire Service to further understanding on the barriers to integration of strategic human resource development practices and the strategies that are utilized to overcome these barriers. This is a research project conducted by a doctoral student as a partial requirement for completion of a dissertation at the University of Texas at Tyler. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research study, you may withdraw at any time. This step of the research involves completing an online form containing questions about your organization and your contact information. It is anticipated that it will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete this form. After you read each question or statement, please provide the requested information, and there are no wrong answers. Please answer each question to the best of your ability. To protect your confidentiality, if you or members of your department are selected to participate in this research, all data will remain confidential and no presented or published data will be identifiable to the organization or the participant. The researcher anticipates no side effects or risks associated with your participation in this study

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below

Selecting the "Agree" button below indicates that:

You have read the above information.

You voluntarily agree to participate.

You are at least 18 years of age.

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "Disagree" button.

The study will require participants to meet face-to-face or by video conference for an interview, sign a consent form, and review transcription notes after the interview.

○ Agree

○ Disagree

Q2. Please answer the following general questions about yourself. Remember, none of this information is tied to your identity and will remain confidential.

Q3. Gender What is your gender?

○ Male

○ Female

Q4. Generation when you were born?

○ 1901-1925

○ 1926-1945

○ 1946-1964

○ 1965-1979

○ 1980-present

Q5. What is your highest level of education completed?

○ Less than high school

○ High school graduate

○ Some college

○ 2-year degree

○ 4-year degree

○ Master's degree

○ Doctorate

Q6. Years of service with your present fire department?

○ 1-5

○ 6-10

○ 11-15

○ 16-20

○ Over 20

- -

Q7. What is your current rank?

○ Chief

○ Assistant Chief

○ Deputy Chief

○ Battalion Chief

○ Other, a chief officer not designated above.

- -

Q8. How many employees are in your organization?

○ 0-50

○ 51-100

○ 101-200

○ 201-500

○ 501-1000

○ Over 1000

Q9. What is the approximate annual budget of your department?

○ 0-5 million

○ 6-10 million

○ 11-20 million

○ 21 - 50 million

○ 51-100 million

○ Over 100 million

Q10. Please identify the geographic region of the United States in which your department resides.

○ Midwest

○ Southeast

○ West

○ Northeast

○ Southwest

Q11. Race, please select your ethnicity.

○ African American

○ American Indian

○ Asian

○ Hispanic

○ White

○ Other

Q12. If you are willing to participate, please provide your contact information.

○ First Name _____

○ Last Name _____

○ What is your preferred e-mail address?

_____

○ What is your preferred phone number?

_____

Q13. Thank you for your assistance. I may be contacted by phone at (812)318-1530 or by email at jmusgrave2@patriots.uttyler.edu if you have additional questions. Thank you, Jon Musgrave,

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Appendix E.

Musgrave Research Study Participant Acceptance E-mail

Chief,

I am happy to inform you that you have been selected to participate in my study of barriers to integration of Strategic Human Resource Development in the United States Fire Service. I would like to conduct a Zoom or video conference interview with you in the next two weeks (I am also available on the weekends and evenings). Please indicate a couple of times that would be convenient for you to be interviewed by simply responding to this email at jmusgrave2@patriots.uttyler.edu or by phone (812) 318-1530. I will then set up a Zoom meeting and send you an invitation to join the meeting. In addition, please read and sign the attached consent form; it may be signed electronically and returned to this email address before our meeting. I look forward to our interview and learning from your experiences. Thank you. I truly appreciate your time and contribution to my Ph.D. journey.

Sincerely,

Jon Musgrave M.S.
Ph.D. Cohort, The University of Texas at Tyler 2015
Instructor, Department of Human Resource Development and Performance Technologies
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, Indiana
Office 812-237-9048
Cel.   812-318-1530
Jon.Musgrave@indstate.edu

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Institutional Review **Board # IRB #SP2018-62**
Approval Date: January 23, 2018

1. Project Title: AN EXPLORATION OF BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION OF STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES FIRE SERVICE: AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CHIEF OFFICERS' PERCEPTIONS

2. Principal Investigator: Jon Dean Musgrave

3. Participant Name:

4. Simple Description of Project Purpose: As part of the fulfilling my dissertation research as the final requirement for obtaining my doctoral degree in Human Resource Development at The University of
Texas at Tyler, I am interested in studying how chief fire officers perceive and address issues associated with barriers to Strategic Human Resource Development practices in their organizations.

5. Research Procedures: <u>If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:</u>

a.
You will be asked to sign this consent form which will enable me to conduct an interview
with you. After we initially establish contact by phone or email to schedule the interview at your
convenience, the interview can be conducted in person or via video communication technology
such as Zoom. The interview will be audio recorded with your permission and then will be transcribed verbatim along with any observations and field notes taken during the interview. The interview will be approximately 60 minutes in length. It is anticipated, there will be three contact points (including the interview) as you may be asked to provide additional clarifications of content related to your interview.

b.
You will also be asked to review your transcript for comprehensiveness and clarity or to engage in respondent validation after the data has been collected and

analyzed from all of the interviews conducted. Your name, organizational affiliation, and contact details will not appear in any articles, conference presentations, or other refereed scholarly forums. A pseudonym will be used, and all data provided will be aggregated if disseminated in any public forums. You will be asked not to identify anyone by name or another identifiable manner.

6. Potential Risks:

It is not anticipated that participants will incur any risk or side effects associated with this research. The data will be treated confidentially, and a pseudonym will be used to mask all identities to ensure participants remain anonymous. No institutional or organizational affiliations will be disclosed. Participants will be asked to never identify another person by name or another way that could be identified.

7. Potential Benefits:

The researcher anticipates that the information, results, and insights collected from the interviews will be of interest to the chief fire officers participating in the study, along with the leadership of other fire departments, as it is anticipated that by understanding the barriers to Strategic Human Resource Development could assist other chief fire officers to overcome these barriers. In addition, the findings of this study will add to the existing literature base on how barriers to Strategic Human Resource Development are perceived and addressed within an organization, and specifically the United States Fire Service.

<u>Understanding of Participants:</u>

8. I have been given a chance to ask any questions about this research study. The researcher has answered my questions. I understand any and all possible risks.

9. If I sign this consent form I know, it means that:

- I am taking part in this study because I want to. I chose to take part in this study after having been told about the study and how it will affect me.

- I know that I am free to not be in this study. If I choose not to take part in the study, then nothing will happen to me as a result of my choice.

- I know that I have been told that if I choose to be in the study, then I can stop at any time. I know that if I do stop being a part of the study, then nothing will happen to me.

10. I have been promised that my name or other identifying information will not be in any reports (presentations, publications) about this study unless I give my permission. The UT Tyler Institutional Review Board (the group that makes sure that research is done correctly and that procedures are in place to protect the safety of research participants) may look at the research documents. This is a part of their monitoring procedure and will be kept confidential.

11. If I have any questions concerning my participation in this project, I will contact the principal researcher:

12. If I have any questions concerning my rights as a research subject, I will contact Dr. Gloria Duke, Chair of the IRB, at (903) 566-7023, gduke@uttyler.edu.

CONSENT/PERMISSION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY

I have read and understood what has been explained to me. I give my permission to take part in this study as it is explained to me. I give the study researcher permission to register me for this study. I have received a signed copy of this consent form.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____
Witness to Signature

13. I have discussed this project with the participant, using language that is understandable and appropriate. I believe that I have fully informed this participant of the nature of this study and its possible benefits and risks. I believe the participant understood this explanation.

_____   _____
Researcher/Principal Investigator   Date

Appendix G.

Musgrave Research Study Participant Acceptance E-mail

Chief,

I am happy to inform you that you have been selected to participate in my study of barriers to integration of Strategic Human Resource Development in the United States Fire Service. I would like to conduct a Zoom or video conference interview with you in the next two weeks (I am also available on the weekends and evenings). Please indicate a couple of times that would be convenient for you to be interviewed by simply responding to this email at jmusgrave2@patriots.uttyler.edu or by phone (812) 318-1530. I will then set up a Zoom meeting and send you an invitation to join the meeting. In addition, please read and sign the attached consent form; it may be signed electronically and returned to this email address before our meeting. I look forward to our interview and learning from your experiences. Thank you. I truly appreciate your time and contributions to my Ph.D. journey.

Sincerely,

Jon Musgrave M.S.
Ph.D. Cohort, The University of Texas at Tyler 2015
Instructor, Department of Human Resource Development and Performance Technologies
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, Indiana
Office 812-237-9048
Cel.   812-318-1530
Jon.Musgrave@indstate.edu

Appendix H.

Musgrave Dissertation

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Intro: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study of barriers to integration of strategic human resource development. I will be asking a series of questions that are designed to explore your perceptions of these barriers and strategies that have been utilized to overcome these barriers. Remember there are no right or wrong answers.

Framing Question: In your own words, please define strategic human resource development, and when did you first become aware of strategic human resource development.

Musgrave Research Study SHRD Defined

Strategic Human Resource Development. "SHRD could thus be defined as the creation of a learning culture, within which a range of training, development and learning strategies both respond to corporate strategy and also helps to shape and influence it. It is about meeting the organization's existing needs, but also about helping the organization to change and develop, to thrive and grow" (McCracken & Wallace, 2000, p. 288).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study will be to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of chief officers in the United States Fire Service to further understanding on the barriers to integration of SHRD practices and the strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers.

1. Can you begin by telling me a little about yourself and your role within the organization? In other words, please provide me with a progression of your career from your initial introduction to the fire service to the present day.

    a) How would you describe the trainer's role within your organization?

    b) Who does the training in your organization?

    c) What are their responsibilities?

    d) What skill sets would your ideal trainer have?

    e) Who is involved in strategy development?

2. How long have you been working at your current fire department, and how long have you been associated with the fire service?

3. Can you tell me a little bit about your department? For example, the area covered, number of employees, annual budget, leadership structure, culture regarding learning, the morale of the department or other information you believe may be pertinent.

4. Please describe the current state of strategic human resource development. in your organization?

 P1) Does it have a tactical, developmental, or blended human resource development focus?

5. Please describe the ideal state of strategic human resource development.in your organization?

6. What is preventing your organization from transforming from the current state to the ideal state?

7. How could these barriers to strategic human resource development be overcome?

8. What are the organizational changes needed to overcome these barriers to strategic human resource development.?

9. If provided these resources how would you implement the changes within your organization?

10. What has the department's leadership done or what could they do to facilitate strategic human resource development practices?

      a) How do you view the role of training?

      b) How often do you perform employee evaluations?

P2) How is the department's morale?

12. As we bring the interview to closure and you reflect on your experiences, is there anything that you would like to add about your experiences with strategic human resource development. in your organization?

Thank you: I have truly enjoyed the time we have spent together, and I appreciate the contribution that you have made to my Ph.D. journey. Going forward, I anticipate that I will complete my dissertation in the coming months. Once complete, I will reach out to you again and provide you with the results of my study. If I can be of future assistance, please contact me at your convenience.

Appendix I.

Musgrave Participant Interview: Thank you E-mail

Chief,

Thank you for your participation in my research study of barriers to integration of Strategic Human Resource Development in the United States Fire Service. I truly appreciate the time you spent during our interview. If I can be of assistance in the future, please contact me at jmusgrave2@patriots.uttyler.edu or (812) 318-1530.

Thank you for your contributions to my Ph.D. journey!

Sincerely,

Jon Musgrave M.S.
Ph.D. Cohort, The University of Texas at Tyler 2015
Instructor, Department of Human Resource Development and Performance Technologies
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, Indiana
Office 812-237-9048
Cel.   812-318-1530
Jon.Musgrave@indstate.edu

Appendix J.

Musgrave Participant Respondent Validation E-mail

Chief,

Thank you for your participation in my study. I have attached the transcribed data from our interview and would like you to confirm that the transcribed data collected during our interview accurately reflects your perceptions for each question. After reviewing and reflecting on the transcripts, if there are questions that you would like to address differently or do not accurately reflect your thoughts, please feel free to add supplemental information to clarify your perceptions accurately. If the transcripts do in fact accurately portray your perceptions, simply respond to this email acknowledging that the transcripts are acceptable.

Thank you for your contributions to my Ph.D. journey!

Sincerely,

Jon Musgrave M.S.
Ph.D. Cohort, The University of Texas at Tyler 2015
Instructor, Department of Human Resource Development and Performance Technologies
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, Indiana
Office 812-237-9048
Cel.   812-318-1530
Jon.Musgrave@indstate.edu

Appendix K.

Invitation to Participate in Ph.D. Research E-mail.

Dear_____: My name is Jon Musgrave, and I am a doctoral

candidate in the Department of Human Resource Development in the College of Business

and Technology at The University of Texas at Tyler. I am currently conducting research

to fulfill the requirements for my doctoral degree. The focus of my research explores the

beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of chief officers in the United States Fire Service to

further understanding on the barriers to integration of Strategic Human Resource

Development practices. I would like to conduct a personal interview with you to obtain

an understanding of your experiences and how you perceived these experiences

associated with the integration of Strategic Human Resource Development within your

organization. The interview is expected to be approximately 60 minutes in length and

will be conducted via a video chat program such as Zoom or via a personal, face-to-face

interview. I will have a prepared list of questions relating to the topics previously

mentioned and will seek your perspectives about them. I will take notes during the

interview process and will seek your permission to record the interview as appropriate

and necessary. Collection of your data in this manner will enable me to engage in the

interview process as well as to analyze the data following the interview qualitatively.

The recorded interview will be kept on a password protected and encrypted computer and

any paper copies of materials will be kept securely in a locked file cabinet and will be

accessible only to me and my dissertation chair. My dissertation committee is being

chaired by and overseen by Dr. Ann Gilley, Professor in the Department of Human

Resource Development at The University of Texas at Tyler. Your participation in this

research endeavor is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time and

for any reason without penalty. Your choice to participate will not impact your role or

status in your organizational setting. You are also free to refuse to answer any questions

you do not wish to answer. If you have any questions about this research project, please

contact either myself, Jon Musgrave, at 812-318-1530 or by email at

Jmusgrave2@patriots.uttyler.edu, Dr. Ann Gilley at 903-566-7324 or by email Ann

Gilley@uttyler.edu, or Dr. Gloria Duke, Chair, Institutional Review Board Committee,

The University of Texas at Tyler by email Gloria_Duke@uttyler.edu.

Sincerely,

Jon Musgrave