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The Voices of Rural High School Youth: Qualitative Secondary Analysis and Youth Leadership Modeling

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THE VOICES OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH: QUALITATIVE SECONDARY ANALYSIS AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP MODELING

DISertation

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky

By
Victoria Sherif

Lexington, KY

Director: Dr. Beth Rous, Professor of Educational Leadership Studies

Lexington, KY

2016

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE VOICES OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH: QUALITATIVE SECONDARY ANALYSIS AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP MODELING

Preparation of youth who are ready to lead in learning, citizenship, and future careers requires development of various qualities, skills, and leadership. Leadership development during adolescence predetermines youth readiness to pursue leadership opportunities and engage in personal, professional, and community-oriented activities. Although research has offered an array of models and educational practices to foster youth leadership, there is a need for incorporating youth voice into leadership conceptualization and education.

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of characteristics of leadership and practices of its development from a rural high school youth perspective. Secondary analysis using longitudinal qualitative data was conducted using interview, observational, and documented materials. The dataset used included youth perspectives on leadership, their motivation in and attitude toward leadership development, and their leadership behavior.

The findings from this study indicate rural youth find leadership crucial to personal, family, and community change, with a focus on the development of leadership within themselves and others. Several practices of leadership development were identified by students as most contributing to their leadership. Those included volunteering and community service, collaboration with school administration and faculty, participation in leadership development course activities, and self-reflection. Through the findings of this study a working model of youth leadership was developed. Findings confirm existing scholarship concerning the need of youth leadership development and also reveal how rural high school students define leadership and encourage its development within self, an area currently not addressed in previous research on youth leadership modeling and education.
A secondary goal of this study was to describe the process of qualitative secondary analysis. A discussion on differences between quantitative and qualitative secondary analyses is presented along with criteria for evaluation of qualitative data that can be used for secondary analysis. Resulting methodological suggestions can assist researchers in understanding and assessing the research capacity of qualitative secondary analysis.

KEYWORDS: Leadership of Rural Youth, Youth Leadership Model, Adolescence, Leadership Education, Qualitative Secondary Analysis
THE VOICES OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH:
QUALITATIVE SECONDARY ANALYSIS AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP
MODELING

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DEDICATION PAGE

To all the youth who work tirelessly each day to perfect their leadership and create a positive change in the lives of others.
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As this dissertation is a representation of my goal and a dream, this page is, unfortunately, not enough to thank all the individuals who played a crucial role in my success.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, thinking among youth leadership researchers and educators has dramatically shifted. The previous focus on leadership giftedness of individual youth has begun to be replaced by new ideas on the capacity of every youth to develop leadership potential and fulfill their leadership purpose (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Klau, 2006). In his essay, Avolio (2016) emphasized one’s readiness to lead and learn from other leaders in a specific leadership-ready environment. Priest and Middleton (2016) argue that one’s leadership is self-defined and determines an individual’s thinking and behaving as a leader and realizing leadership development opportunities.

Despite this growing scholarly interest in the topic of youth leadership, there is much we do not know. As Hogan and Kaiser (2005) state: “[Youth] leadership is one of the most important topics in the human sciences and historically one of the more poorly understood” (p.169). Explored both quantitatively (Antonakis et al., 2003; Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Guerin et al., 2011; Oakland et al., 1996; Ogurlu & Emir, 2013; Schneider et al., 1999; Zacharatos et al., 2002) and qualitatively (Close & Lechman, 1997; Ferguson et al., 2011; Haber, 2011; Hammond-Diedrich & Walsh, 2006; Hastings et al., 2011; Komives et al., 2006; Mortensen et al., 2014; Mullen & Tuten, 2004; Roach et al., 1999; Webster & Worrell, 2008; Zenkov et al., 2011), there is a diffuse body of research on leadership of rural youth and its development whereby rural adolescent leaders become motivated, socially and culturally competent, self-directed, responsible, compassionate, and community-oriented. While there are numerous programs and models that inform youth leadership and its development, these lack a rigorous understanding of
youth insights on leadership and practices contributing to its development.

This dissertation reports theoretical and practical findings from a study examining views and experiences of rural high school students on leadership and its development as a result of secondary analysis of interview, observational, and document data. For the purposes of this study, youth leadership is defined as a complex and dynamic system that integrates youth knowledge of leadership, motivation, attitudes toward leadership development and practice, and leadership actions taken to improve the self, family, and community. Because leadership of rural youth is understood as a system, there is considerable potential for secondary education institutions to design and provide a positive and purposeful influence on leadership of youth through relevant programs, courses, services, events, and fostering leadership environments.

This research also has insights on methodological discoveries that occurred as a result of exploration and application of qualitative secondary analysis. Differences in the use of secondary analysis of quantitative and qualitative datasets are described, and suggestions are provided on how to evaluate the quality, sufficiency, and suitability of secondary data sources.

The intent of this chapter is to outline the research problem, specify the purpose and significance of the study, theoretical frameworks and definitions used throughout the dissertation, and discuss research questions and study design. The chapter closes with study limitations and organization of this dissertation.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

This study focused on an examination of perspectives of rural high school students on leadership and major practices of its development. This study sought to
increase understanding of how rural youth view and experience leadership, what educational practices they find beneficial for their leadership development, and why. This study employed qualitative secondary analysis, which is described and exemplified, thus, contributing to the general body of knowledge of qualitative data analysis and youth leadership research. To the researcher’s knowledge, no published studies have explored rural youth views on leadership and its development using secondary analysis of qualitative data. Therefore, this study is significant because it (a) represented student voices on the concept of youth leadership, (b) explored youth perspectives of how to foster the development of their leadership potential, (c) included a working model of youth leadership and major pathways of its development, (d) identified methodological underpinnings of qualitative secondary analysis and described ways to evaluate suitability, sufficiency, and quality of qualitative secondary data.

**Research Questions and Study Design Overview**

As this study focused on developing a picture of youth leadership, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How do rural high school youth view and experience leadership?
2. What educational practices youth emphasize as most contributing to the development of their leadership potential within the framework of a leadership development course?

To answer these research questions, a qualitative research design using a secondary data analysis was employed. The original data set used for secondary analysis was collected as part of a longitudinal qualitative case study conducted in a rural high school setting. Several data collection methods were used including semi-structured face-
to-face interviews, observations, and document review. There were 18 study participants, 16 of whom were students and 2 adults, one school principal and leadership development course instructor. Participation in the original study was voluntary; the sample was selected based on student enrollment in the leadership development course and course affiliation. The purpose of the original research was relevant to the aims of the present research study, which was to describe youth understanding of leadership, their motivation and attitudes towards its development and practice, and their leadership behavior. The findings from the secondary analysis are presented in Chapter 3. There is no intent to compare these conclusions to the original research using these data.

Assumptions and Definitions of Terms

There was one basic assumption undergirding this study, which was that qualitative secondary analysis is a valid design for studying this phenomenon. While some of the challenges of conducting qualitative secondary analysis will be explored in Chapter 2, the overall principles and metrics of secondary analysis are accepted while emphasizing its specific strengths and limitations in analyzing interview, observational, and document data.

For the purposes of this study, secondary analysis is defined as a methodology for conducting social and/or educational research known for (re)-using data collected for purposes distinct from secondary research purposes to allow for obtaining new social knowledge that would not have been otherwise generated without secondary analysis (Mitchell, 2015; Sales, 2006; Szabo & Strang, 1997; Trzesniewski et al., 2011).
The term “original study” indicates the study for which the data were initially collected. The data collected for purposes of the original study are referred to as the original data set or primary data.

The term “youth” is used to reference a physical, cognitive, emotional, and socio-cultural stage of adolescence that generally occurs during the period of puberty and adulthood. For the purposes of this study, the period of youth or adolescence is associated with the teenage years and range between 15 and 18 years old (Crandell et al., 2012).

Theoretical Frameworks

For the proposed study three theoretical frameworks, Systems Thinking, Student Involvement, and Student Voice, were used to guide the inquiry. The frameworks informed the selection of research design and methods, as well as broadened the perception of youth as equal community members and active agents of social and educational change. The frameworks also helped increase the understanding of relationships between youth personality, their background, and leadership. These theories were selected among other theoretical perspectives because they offered a unique approach toward viewing youth leadership and youth role in the leadership development process. Although the selected theoretical concepts are foundationally different in their propositions, they are interrelated in their capacity to facilitate the understanding of the bigger picture of youth leadership and relationships between youth, their leadership, and the educational and social environment.

The propositions of systems thinking are not new. The origins of the systems theory go back to ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato, however, modern ideas on systems thinking are dated to the end of 18th and beginning of 19th centuries. German
philosopher Hegel and Austrian biologist Karl Ludwig von Bertalanffy suggested viewing the whole as a sum of parts, which are dynamically interrelated and cannot effectively function in isolation from the whole (Hanson, 1995). Although the systems thinking theory was formulated years ago, it has not been widely applied to the field of education until recently (Galcik, 2000).

As noted earlier, the systems theory was proposed as a way to unify unrelated elements into a whole by connecting them into a coherent, interrelated, interresponsible system (von Bertalanffy, 1968). This understanding has been further developed and refined by environmental, health, and social scientists. For instance, Trochim and his colleagues (2006) define systems thinking as a “general conceptual orientation concerned with the interrelationships between parts and their relationships to a functioning whole, often understood within the context of an even greater whole” (p.539). Roux (2011) broadens this perspective by emphasizing the shift in understanding from “isolating the effect of a single factor to comprehending the functioning of the system as a whole” (p.1627). Specifically, the scholar argues there is a relationship between structures and elements at various levels of a system, which informs its capacity to adapt to external and internal changes.

Other scholars define systems thinking in a similar fashion. Dowling (1999) remarks that thinking in systems centers on identifying and understanding patterns of systems behavior in terms of its function in the larger system. Senge (1990) suggests that systems thinking helps “see the whole pattern of change [rather than] focus on snapshots of isolated parts of the system” (p.7). Similarly, Meadows (2008) views the theory as a way to understand the whole as a coherently organized, interrelated, and purposeful sum.
Another perspective from an educational angle is articulated by Frank Betts (1992). According to the scholar, systems thinking involves 1) systems interaction with constantly changing environments; 2) systems coping with constant change and uncertainty; 3) systems adjustment and correction to changing internal and external ambiguity and environment; 4) systems purpose that drives the development of new characteristics and functions; and 5) systems development in respect to its structure, functionality, knowledge, and adaptation. Similarly, Despres (2004) advocates that the importance of systems thinking lays in the proposition that systems are complex and indirect, rather than simple and straightforward; they are dynamic and progressive; and, lastly, they are adaptive and capable of learning.

The need to obtain a better understanding of youth leadership is critical to effective youth leadership education and school change. From a systems thinking perspective, this is especially important since the theory advocates for “moving from looking at parts to considering the whole, looking at shared involvement and leadership, viewing change as continual and evolving, and moving beyond the simplicity of cause and effect reasoning to giving attention to interrelationships” (Galcik, 2000, p.61). To shift our perception of youth leadership as a desegregated entity to a system with interrelated elements, a more thorough understanding of a system is necessary. For instance, Prichavudhli (2003) asserts, system elements “continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose” (p.38). A system, is guided by a goal and acts according to its environment (Furst-Bowe, 2009).

Systems thinking, as described above, is a theory which views a system as a sum of things interconnected in the way that allows it to generate its own patterns of behavior.
Since systems are embedded in other larger systems (Meadows, 2008), they are vulnerable to negative external influences, as well as malfunctioning of internal elements. Therefore, some systems are more effective, functional, and sustainable than others. The question is what system properties produce sufficient and productive behavior that leads a system to balanced functioning. Based on the above definitions of systems thinking and systems, several system properties can be identified. Those properties include holism, dynamism, complexity, resilience/adaptation, and self-organization.

Holism or wholeness of a system centers on the ability of a system to unify and integrate its elements into one whole without losing unique properties of separate elements. In a systems approach, holism, also known as nonsummativity, is described to emphasize the importance of the whole over the value of its individual components (Covington, 1998; Jones, 2003; Smith-Acuna, 2011). Rather than focusing on individual parts, attention is paid to the relationships that enhance system behavior and outcomes. These relationships operate through the flow of information among system constructs revealing potential pathways for balanced, sufficient, and sustainable behavior. System purpose and functions of each component are expressed through the interaction within the system and with larger systems. In other words, system behavior is indicative of system purpose and in order to change its behavior, we need to understand, identify, and alter its purpose and existing system interconnections (Meadows, 2008).

Behavior of every system, as already mentioned, is complex and dynamic. Whether a system responds to a changing environment, evolves into a more complicated system, or settles into a state of stability, it continuously changes (Garajedaghi, 2011; Trochim et al., 2006). System dynamism is often associated with system behavior, the
intensity and extent of which “depends on its interactions with other models and the state of the system” (Boardman & Sauser, 2008, p.57). As noted by Boardman and Sauser (2008), system dynamism or their dynamic behavior is responsible for system events and patterns along with the diversity of connections a system has with other systems. Furthermore, system dynamism involves continuous change under the external influence and system’s own experiences. Repeated patterns of behavior and experience merge into complex and dynamic functions of a system and change the scale of its existence (Waring, 1996).

The existence of a system is greatly affected by system complexity (Senge, 1990). Renier’s (2010) definition of a system exemplifies its complex nature: “a system … can be defined as a set of interacting elements that requires inputs from the environment, transforms them, and discharges the outputs to the external environment” (p.59). Complexity then illustrates the breadth and depth of internal and external interconnections of a system and its major functions. It involves many feedback processes and constructs, interdependencies among systems, and evolving behavioral patterns (Dowling, 1999). Therefore, complex systems are never stagnant; they constantly adapt and develop new characteristics.

Another property of a system is its adaptation. Changing environments along with internal and external threats to the holism of a system require it to constantly adapt. Adaptation, as noted by Flood and Romm (1996), is vital for system survival; a system “must develop and enhance its ranges of adaptation strategies to cope with the growing environmental complexity” (p.290). In addition, it needs to be resilient, or able to survive and persist within a variable environment” (Meadows, 2008, p.76). Therefore, adaptation
is the process of active learning and development of new features assuring system sustainability and survival among other systems. It requires a rich, intricate structure of various feedback channels that work correspondingly with the system purpose to react to and change simultaneously with the changing environment. Systems that learn, create, and evolve are self-organizing and have complex restorative, adaptive, and internally controlled structures.

Self-organization as a property of holistic, complex, dynamic, and adaptive systems involves such processes as active learning, complexifying, diversifying, and progressing. It is an ability of the whole to generate complex, resilient, and sustainable systems (Meadows, 2008). Self-organized systems structure themselves; they complexify its organization and behavior by obtaining new functions and creating new interaction patterns. Furthermore, they are unpredictable and heterogeneous in the way that enables them to develop new pathways of functioning and fulfill their purpose. Thelen and Smith (2006) claim that system’s self-organization “emerges from interactions of the components of a complex system without explicit instructions” (p.259). In this light, systemic change occurs naturally as a response to an internal need to evolve and/or a necessity imposed by the environment. Therefore, systems have the ability to self-organize themselves in diverse, complex, and resilient structures.

In summary, every system has basic properties. A system is a whole in which elements are interrelated and mutually influential. The theory of systems thinking helps recognize that system parts do not equal to the whole, yet their collaborative functioning is vital for system survival. System components are unified by a common purpose; they continuously change, adapt, diversify, and evolve to create new behaviors. Based on the
inputs from the environment, systems experience dynamic transformations to achieve desirable outcomes. When applied to youth leadership, the theory of systems thinking is useful for understanding the interrelationships between youth personality and leadership as well as integrating different elements of leadership education into an internally driven and purposeful process of youth leadership development.

Another theoretical lens employed in this study to examine and model youth leadership is student involvement. The origins of the theory trace to the 1980s, when Alexander Astin formulated his propositions on engaging college students in academic and social activities. The general idea behind the theory postulates that student learning and overall college experience greatly correlate with the extent of their engagement in academic and social aspects of higher education (Astin, 1999). As argued by Zhou (2010), students who are actively involved in academics, extracurricular activities, and university organizations as well as regularly interact with college faculty are observed to experience transformational learning and develop a wide set of skills and experiences. Involvement is, therefore, “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (Astin, 1999, p.518) in order to learn and professionally grow in college.

Focusing on enhancing student experiences in higher education rather than in the secondary educational system, the scholars argue that the college learning environment influences the growth in student knowledge of various skills and a discipline along with the need of improvement of vital student outcomes such as persistence and academic performance (Astin, 1993; Zhou, 2010). Although the primary focus of this dissertation is
leadership of youth, the student involvement theory offers elements of student engagement that can be translated to youth leadership education.

According to proponents of Astin’s theory (Foubert & Grainger, 2006; Long, 2012; Roberts & McNeese, 2010), a highly involved college student is an active participant in student-peer interactions, college organizations, volunteering and service learning, athletics, and extracurricular activities. Involved students are characterized not as much by their motivation to be involved as by their behavior and actions. Grounded in that idea, Astin (1999) emphasizes several student involvement pillars:

1. Involved students invest considerable amounts of energy and time in various activities and objects.
2. Student involvement is continuous, persistent, and dynamic.
3. Performance of an involved student can be measured quantitatively and qualitatively – amount of time spent on a certain activity vs. the extent of activity impact on student performance.
4. The quantity and quality of student involvement is affected by the amount of student learning and development.
5. The effectiveness of any educational practice or policy correlates with the capacity of that practice or policy to increase student involvement.

The aforementioned pillars can also be used to design more effective and purposeful interventions of youth leadership development. However, prior to implementing any educational practice, a complete evaluation of potential impacts of an educational intervention on student involvement is necessary. The evaluation focuses on the assessment of three major components of student involvement: student inputs, student
outputs, and the educational environment (Astin, 1993). The Input-Environment-Output model was designed by Astin to explain relationships and connections between student development (output), student input, and student learning environment.

Student input include various factors and characteristics attributed to student demographics and previous academic achievements (Astin, 1993). Student’s educational background, behavior, rationale for institutional and career selection, socio-economic status, life goals, and major academic interests are all associated with student input. Student’s learning environment refers to various educational, social, and economic environments a student is exposed to. It includes such variables as institutional characteristics, household properties, and characteristics associated with particular student involvement activities and interventions (Astin, 1993). Institutional resources, faculty, diversity of educational programs, academic courses, college facilities, and extracurricular activities are also attributed to environmental factors (Campbell, 2012).

Student outputs are associated with “the students’ characteristics after exposure to the environment” (Astin, 1993, p.7). Those characteristics include but are not limited to student performance indicators such as test scores and course grades; student satisfaction with learning; student retention in the same program and/or college; and degree completion (Zhou, 2010). Additionally, student outputs can be measured by the extent of development of his/her professional competencies and skills (Norwani et al., 2009).

Astin’s Input-Environment-Output model, as noted above, aims to assess student development in regard to specific student outcomes that resulted from the interaction with the educational environment and participation in learning interventions. The inputs, however, also need to be accounted for in evaluating the effect of the environment in
student outputs. Although the application of this model can be effective in determining influence of environmental and input factors on student outcomes, the model, unfortunately, has not been popular in secondary education. Therefore, the student involvement theoretical framework presents an opportunity to examine high school youth performance not only in general disciplines, but also in leadership education. Youth leadership interventions may then be adapted to reflect youth previous background, interests, experiences, and current educational and social settings.

To incorporate the ideas of young people in their leadership education and create abundant opportunities for youth to participate in the development of their leadership, a dialogue between youth and adults is necessary. This dialogue can encourage learning about educational advancements and challenges, as well as empower youth to express their opinions and influence the design and content of any educational practices and policies (Cook-Sather, 2006; Fletcher, 2003). Encouraging youth to share their opinions is the main goal of the **student voice** theoretical framework.

The importance of incorporating youth voices in education is found in two central ideas: 1) student voice represents a way for learning and 2) student voice can help design and implement school and education improvements (Brown, 2010). As a way of learning, the student voice theoretical framework emerged to support and foster student engagement in learning and community service. Matthews (2010) points out the importance of freedom, responsibility, and trust as ethical pillars of student voice. Students actively participate in their learning from the beginning; they take leadership in organizing their educational activities; they participate in mentoring their own and peers’ learning process; students select the curriculum, and support fellow students and teaching
personnel. Along with ethical values propagated by student engagement, the student voice theory also focuses on youth contribution to problem solving.

Giving voice to students shapes their learning and interests (Wyness, 2003). Wyness (2003) argues that student interests can positively change their learning spaces as long as their voices are heard by faculty and school administration. Not surprisingly, taking into account student opinions can refine and crystallize curriculum, and, therefore, lead them to more successful academic performance.

Organizational examples of honoring student voice in secondary and higher education include practices of allowing student input into decisions regarding college transition (Maunder et al., 2012), academic failure (Quiroz, 2001), learning support, teaching, and cultural pluralism (Testa & Egan, 2014), and course design and assessment (Grebennikov & Shah, 2013). Scholars reflect that the idea of student voice is to share youth representation of reality and meaning to shape one’s experiences and enhance knowledge and skill acquisition (Blake, 1997). Therefore, honoring student voices can enrich and broaden student experiences in learning (Seitz, 2005) as well as inform educational practices to best accommodate students’ learning needs.

The idea of student voice as a tool of school improvement has been actively researched over the last two decades (Brown, 2010). As noted by Mitra (2008), student voice as a concept is associated with opportunities for youth “to collaborate with adults to address the problem in their schools and allowing youth to take the lead on seeking change” (p.221-222). Engaging students in school affairs can add an important perspective to the process of school improvement, as well as inform different definitions
of youth roles in school change and how school change can be implemented to bolster student learning (Cook-Sather, 2006; Fielding, 2001; Richardson, 2001).

An example of implementing student voice in education reform is found in a study conducted by Seitz (2005). The scholar intended to show interrelationships between youth voice, learning, teaching, curriculum, and technology integration in the learning environment. The study revealed that collaboration between students and educators shapes the learning atmosphere in a positive way. Similarly, Mitra’s (2006) case study of a high school Latino students determined that youth voice is a powerful source for education improvement, community change, and parent engagement.

Pautsch (2010) draws several implications regarding the role of youth voice in school reformation and education change. The findings suggest that if principals and educators support youth voice in the right way, youth are capable of becoming an equal member of decision-making. To empower all students to be active participants of the educational improvement, principals and advisors need to communicate their vision of school reform with youth, create an opportunity for student membership in school government, and involve students in problem-solving.

In summary, youth voice as a tool for learning and school improvement encourages students to be cooperative and responsible participants of their lives, critically assess their learning, identify limitations in educational practices, and take action to highlight and remedy those limitations (Mitra et al., 2013). The application of student voice as a theoretical framework in youth leadership education enables educators to: 1) understand youth position on the issues of learning, community and education change, school reformation, and curricula improvement; 2) view leadership through youth lenses...
and, as a result, design and offer leadership development practices that meet student developmental and learning needs; and 3) reflect youth opinions in the purpose of leadership education and demonstrate the value of student voice and active position in the development of leadership of every student.

The relationship between systems thinking, student involvement, and student voice theoretical frameworks is grounded in the capacity of leadership education to facilitate the understanding of youth leadership as a system, elements of which are informed by youth and mirror unique characteristics of youth development. Incorporation of these approaches in youth leadership education serves as a vehicle to address complex issues in leadership education and develop enhanced understanding of interrelationships between youth background, previous knowledge and experience, learning abilities, social and educational environments, and leadership. The combination of the aforementioned approaches toward conceptualization and development of youth leadership offers a new paradigm for leadership education along with a foundation for effective youth leadership practice and youth personal growth.

**Study Limitations**

This study has several limitations associated with (a) potential researcher bias, (b) sample demographics, (c) use of primary data, and (d) generalizability of research findings. Specifically, the study is limited by potential researcher bias. Although the data were originally collected and secondary analyzed by the author of this study, several strategies were employed to avoid incorporating personal perspectives into any aspects of the study. Strategies included 1) during the original data collection, the questions for interviews, observations, and document collection were developed to ensure they did not
reflect the researcher’s personal account on the topic; 2) maintaining a journal to record personal thoughts and experiences throughout the original data collection process; and 3) data triangulation.

Another limitation is associated with the specificities of the original study sample. Particularly, the sample of study participants was relatively homogenous. The vast majority of rural youth participating in the original study were female students enrolled in the leadership development course. While this sample of youth reflects the class enrollment, future research should explore perspectives of more gender diverse youth enrolled in the course and attending the school. Similarly, since the course enrollment is voluntary, it is anticipated the original study participants may posses more knowledge concerning leadership than their peers due to their personal interest in leadership development and community change. That being said, it is believed this sample selection process may also reflect strengths of the study. Because the participating youth mindfully selected the leadership development course at the time of data collection, they represent rich cases of youth primed to think about and practice their leadership.

Similarly, since data were collected for different research purposes, a study conducted specifically to answer secondary research questions could present additional and/or different conclusion dimensions. To eliminate the effect of such on the research conclusions, data were triangulated. Moreover, the findings present only repetitive and consistent themes that emerged as a result of analysis of observational, interview, and document data. The data used for this study were collected longitudinally and were rich, contextually abundant, and clear. They reflected perspectives of rural youth who care about leadership and foresee the significance of its development in every activity in
which they took part. The primary data set included narratives and observations of youth who committed and dedicated their time to a yearlong leadership development course and community and school service. The data also portrayed perspectives of professional adults who designed and implemented the leadership development course and leadership activities across the educational site for an extensive period of time. Therefore, the data set utilized in this study was the result of participant thoughtful engagement with the concept of leadership and its practice as it applies to rural youth personal and community goals.

Last, the analyzed interview, observational, and document materials represent voices only of rural youth who were enrolled in the leadership development course and took part in this research. Since each participant’s account on leadership is subject to the involved activity and specific region, findings are limited to the personal experiences in leadership development and practice and perceptions of each student.

**Dissertation Organization**

This dissertation is written and organized in an article-style format. The next three chapters are intended to be independent manuscripts ready for publication. The final chapter is a synthesis of the dissertation. The following is a brief summary of the objectives of each of the chapters.

Chapter 2 is a critical review of the literature that focuses on research and methodological propositions of secondary data analysis. Studies and theoretical findings on secondary data analysis are reviewed to gain an understanding of differences between secondary analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, how this method is used, and how quality, suitability, and sufficiency of a data set are determined. The findings result in a
data evaluation rubric that can be helpful to a novice or experienced researcher who seeks to expand their qualitative methodology.

Chapter 3 reports findings derived from a secondary analysis of qualitative data provided by rural high school students, principal, and leadership development course instructor. The voices of these youth are collected to describe the concept of youth leadership and identify practices that contribute to its development. This chapter also exemplifies the use of the methodology of secondary analysis applied to interview, observational, and document data. The re-analysis of these data are used to illustrate how previously collected data can be used to answer new research questions and how the challenges of conducting secondary analysis can be overcome.

Chapter 4 presents a model of youth leadership that includes cognitive, motivational, affective, behavioral, and ethical components, which emerged as a result of the review of existing research on youth leadership, developmental theories, and findings from the secondary analysis study presented in Chapter 3. It also introduces a functional definition of youth leadership, where ethics is suggested as a core of youth leadership and its development.

Lastly, the focus of Chapter 5 is to synthesize the outcomes of this study. The chapter also includes a summary of major points of each chapter. A description of theoretical and practical implications for educational and youth leadership, potential policy implications, and main conclusions are presented.
CHAPTER 2

EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE SECONDARY DATA

Abstract. This paper compares quantitative and qualitative secondary analyses and describes a checklist for evaluating quality and sufficiency of qualitative secondary data and their further analysis in respect to different types of qualitative data. Whilst quantitative secondary analysis approach has been widely explored and employed in education and social sciences, this has not been the case with the qualitative secondary analysis. As existing literature primarily reports the outcomes of qualitative secondary research, little attention is dedicated to the details of evaluation of qualitative secondary data and their further analyses. Qualitative secondary analysis has important implications for qualitative educational and social researchers interested in generating new knowledge via conducting unobtrusive and time/cost efficient research with the wider utilization of existing qualitative data.

Introduction

In recent decades, secondary data analysis has become popular among educational and other social science researchers due to increased quantity and accessibility of quantitative and qualitative data (Burstein, 1978; Dargentas, 2006; Fielding, 2000; Hakim, 1982; Heaton, 2004; Murphy & Schlaerth, 2010; Vartanian, 2011). These publicly available data provide researchers with resources to examine and analyze new hypotheses, inform research questions apart from the original objective of data collection, and derive new and/or additional interpretations and conclusions that were absent in the original research.
findings. Differences in the type of data, quantitative vs. qualitative, inform the variance in purposes of secondary analysis, as well as methodological approaches taken to evaluate and revisit existing data.

**What Is Secondary Analysis?**

The growing interest in secondary data analysis in educational and social research (Heaton, 2004) generates various propositions on the definition and purpose of secondary analysis. As early as 1982, Hakim comprehensively defines secondary analysis as “any further analysis of an existing dataset which presents interpretations, conclusions, or knowledge additional to, or different from, presented in the first report on the inquiry as a whole and its main results” (p.2). The author has suggested the use of secondary analysis is appropriate if secondary research aims to identify additional indicators of an examined phenomenon; to reveal additional detail on the same research matter; to review a research matter from a perspective of a new theoretical framework not applied in the original study; or to answer research questions more thoroughly than in the original study as a result of application of more sophisticated analytical methodology.

Hakim’s understanding of secondary analysis greatly contributes to the perception of secondary analysis as the method to “generate new knowledge, new hypotheses, or supporting existing theories” (Hinds et al., 1997, p.419). As an effective methodology that allows for exploring dimensions not explored in the primary study (Du Plesis et al., 2009), secondary analysis aims to uncover new meanings of information familiar to a researcher along with revisiting original research findings to assure their reliability and novelty (Heaton, 2004; Kelder, 2005; Savage, 2005). Thus, the analysis of data collected by someone else (Johnston, 2014) is common in research “pursuing a research interest
that is distinct from that of the original work” (Bustamante-Gavino et al., 2012, p.36).

This can be demonstrated by secondary analysis studies conducted by Thompson (2000) and Rush, Watts and Stanbury (2011). In the first case, Thompson investigated the extent to which family and work conditions before 1918 created economic and social difficulties in workers’ earlier experiences. The study employed archived documented materials collected to investigate British trade unionism from 1880s. The data included personal diaries and a large number of interviews accompanied by hand-written notes. Similarly, Rush, Watts, and Stanbury sought to understand the accounts of older adults on adaptations they made in regard to mobility and factors that influenced those adaptations. The secondary study was based on the interview data and demographic questionnaires collected to examine older adults’ perceptions associated with aging along with the experiences of weakness in daily life. These research examples illustrate how re-analysis of archived data allowed for generation of new knowledge and fulfillment of research purposes different from the original research, thus making previously collected data more useful and impactful (Andrews et al., 2012; Notz, 2005).

The importance of secondary analysis for answering research questions divergent from the original ones and generating new conclusions and interpretations has been emphasized since 1976 (Gleit & Graham, 1988; Irwin & Winterton, 2011; Long-Suteball et al., 2010). The following definitions of secondary analysis provide examples of such methodological and scholarly contribution:

“Secondary analysis is the re-analysis of data for the purpose of answering the original research question with better statistical techniques, or answering new questions with old data” (Glass, 1976, p.3).
“Secondary analysis has the potential to contribute to knowledge because it has the potential to consider important questions without some of the limitations, or with a different set of limitations than those encountered in the original investigation” (Burstein, 1978, p.7).

“Secondary analysis can be defined as the (re)using of data produced on a previous occasion to obtain new social scientific … understandings” (Mitchell, 2015, p.3).

Thus secondary analysis has been conceptualized as a methodology for conducting research grounded in the use of data collected for purposes distinct from secondary research purposes, allowing for the development of knowledge that would have not otherwise been generated without secondary analysis (Sales, 2006). In other words, as a “credible method of generating knowledge” (Szabo & Strang, 1997, p.2), secondary analysis can reveal new underpinnings of knowledge by re-analyzing new hypotheses and/or re-contextualizing original data.

The potential of secondary analysis to advance educational and social science research (Trzesniewski et al., 2011) is also demonstrated by Kidd, Scharf and Veazie’s study (1996). Data collected on old farmers’ safety decisions, perspectives on health risks, and choice of safe behavior patterns revealed new perspectives on the relationship between occupational context and worker behavior. It also allowed the scholars to design injury prevention strategies, formulate economic factors influencing farmers’ safety decisions, and develop an educational module to prevent farming-related injuries.

The latter example demonstrates the capacity of secondary analysis to guide the development of epistemological and practical aspects of education and social sciences. As noted by Corti and Bishop (2005), “the re-use of qualitative data provides an
opportunity to study the raw materials of recent or earlier research to gain …
methodological insights” (p.7). Besides furthering methodological knowledge of
qualitative and human-centered scholarship, secondary analysis can also lead to the
expansion of its application and role in facilitating training in research design and
methods. Specifically, recent studies have demonstrated how utilization of secondary
analysis informed advantages and limitations of the method, ethical considerations in data
re-use, and various sources and types of secondary data (Bishop, 2007; Briassoulis, 2010;
Corti & Thompson, 2004; Goodwin & O’Connor, 2009; Long-Sutehall et al., 2011).
Furthermore, research grounded in secondary analysis may be of benefit in identifying
the limitation of the method. Aiming to “explore and explain sickness absence among
women who have been targets of workplace bullying” (p.440), O’Donnell, MacIntosh
and Wuest (2010) recognized the lack of additional original data and homogeneity of the
original research sample as limitations of secondary analysis. They concluded that
deliberate theoretical sampling for broader diversity and additional literature on
evaluation of quality and suitability of previously collected data can address common
secondary analysis limitations.

The substantive theoretical and empirical examples presented here suggest that
secondary analysis differs from traditional quantitative and qualitative research methods
and is an useful method in examining new research questions with pre-existing data
sources in addition to expanding epistemological and methodological foundations of
education and social sciences. Despite the apparent similarity in the purpose of
quantitative and qualitative secondary analyses, very little information is available
regarding the differences between the two and associated characteristics of data
evaluation and further analysis. Therefore, the following sections include the comparison of quantitative and qualitative secondary analyses, as well as practical suggestions on assessing sufficiency and quality of existing qualitative data and secondary analysis in respect to their different forms.

**Comparison of Secondary Analysis of Quantitative and Qualitative Data**

When carrying out a secondary analysis of primary data, Hakim (1982) recommends outlining the purpose of secondary research. The purpose should be transparent (Long-Sutehall et al., 2010) and can fall under the following broad goals: examination of a particular research question different from the primary one; additional analysis of pre-existing research findings; exploration of original research conclusions through different from the original research theoretical/methodological lenses; and/or reanalysis of existing datasets due to a more comprehensive and succinct research purpose. These broad purposes of secondary analysis were used as categorization criteria for existing literature to contrast secondary analyses of quantitative and qualitative data.

The scope of the literature review included peer-reviewed journals and books accessed through the University library and web-based databases such as ProQuest, WorldCat, and Google Scholar. Thirty-seven articles, published in the last four decades, described the use of quantitative and qualitative secondary data. The analysis included review of the original and secondary research purpose, research methods, and procedures. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of secondary data use in relation to major goals of secondary analysis and types of secondary data.
Table 1

Use of Secondary Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Secondary Analysis</th>
<th>Type of Data Used for Secondary Analysis (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New research question(s)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New analytic approach(-es)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional analysis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the distribution of published research on secondary analysis may fluctuate if the list of reviewed research is broadened by additional studies, this collection of work indicates that forty-five percent of secondary analysis studies (n=19) aimed to explore research questions not examined in the primary research. Ten out of seventeen studies (59%) were founded in the analysis of qualitative data.

Other occasions of data re-use demonstrated secondary research was driven by new analytic methodology and/or the need to revisit the reliability and accuracy of original research findings. Furthermore, application of new analytic approaches and additional analysis of previous research were most common in secondary research utilizing quantitative data. The literature also demonstrated nearly equal interest of educational and social researchers in quantitative and qualitative secondary analysis, contributing to identification of commonalities and differences between the two types of secondary research.

Growing interest in secondary analysis reflects the establishment of its straightforward conceptualization and definition (Devine, 2003; Heaton, 2004; Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985), yet with notable differences grounded in the nature of quantitative and
Quantitative methodology. Specifically, the differences mainly originate in data collection methodology, sources of data, research capacity, and data limitations (Table 2).

Table 2
Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Secondary Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Type of Data Used in Secondary Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Primary Data</td>
<td>Measurable, quantifiable, precise, statistical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Methodology</td>
<td>Large-scale surveys, longitudinal research, institutional reviews and evaluations, public records, census data, administrative records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source</td>
<td>Central government, small/large private institutions, higher education organizations, consumer and marketing agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Capacity</td>
<td>Sample generalization; predicting; identification of causal relationships; testing; objectivity of findings; comparison across populations; numerous hypotheses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>Presence of errors; possibility of data manipulation; lack of meaningful comparison; de-contextualization; limited number of variables.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative research utilizing secondary data can embody various empirical forms and be derived from different research activities carried out by government agencies, educational institutions, public administrative organizations, commercial groups, independent investigators and other entities that collect data for tracking and management purposes. Data are collected through large-scale surveys, longitudinal research projects, systematic institutional reviews and evaluations, and public records (Heaton, 2004; Smith, 2008). Classified into six categories, quantitative secondary
analysis in education and social sciences has shown to employ population census data unique to central government (Hakim, 1982); continuous survey data collected on a wide range of topics such as consumer and marketing research (Mazzocchi, 2008), general social and population research (Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985); longitudinal survey data generated from longitudinal studies on youth health and labor market experience (Greenstein, 2006); multi-source data linked across different databases such as the Youth Data Archive that gathers data on individual youth developmental outcomes across different educational settings (Penuel & Means, 2011); data derived from administrative records including but not limited to data on admission and retention in higher education, prison and crime records, etc. (Smith, 2008); and data from ad hoc surveys and studies focusing on data generated from randomly selected national sample surveys, as well as small local case study research (Andranovich & Riposa, 1993).

In addition to various forms and research activities conducted to generate large-scale quantitative data, quantitative secondary analysis is distinguished from qualitative by its research capacity. For instance, due to the nature of quantitative research, quantitative secondary analysis allows for generalizations from a study sample to larger populations, making predictions and identifying casual relationships (Kaufman et al., 2006). Pre-existing quantitative data can also be used to determine facts and processes objectively, inform researchers on additional characteristics of an examined phenomenon, and test measurable associations among those characteristics or variables (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative secondary analysis “can provide independent confirmation or disconfirmation of research findings” and reveal important effects overlooked in the primary study (Locascio, 1984, p.141). Different analytic approaches can advance
conceptualization of the nature existing between independent and dependent variables, and methodological foundations of quantitative secondary analysis as a type of research design (Vartanian, 2011).

Quantitative secondary data sets are often based on a large sample size, which can represent diverse populations. These large data sets help researchers make comparisons across populations and extend findings from previous studies above and beyond a specific research hypothesis (Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985). Therefore large quantitative data sets can address more than one hypothesis or research question. The range of variables comprising quantitative data may initiate a researcher’s interest in additional research questions not identified or articulated at the time of secondary study initiation. More importantly, a sufficient quantitative data set can have variables that can be used as predictor or outcome variables in the future (Vartanian, 2011).

Despite the alluring capacity of quantitative secondary analysis “to access data on a scale that [researchers] could not hope to replicate first hand” (Smith, 2008, p.21), scholars have emphasized methodological and philosophical pitfalls to this method. Smith (2008) raises such issues as presence of errors in a quantitative data set, capacity of the data collection process and content of collected data to be manipulated by those with power, and inability of quantitative secondary data to lead to meaningful comparisons.

Additional concerns associated with quantitative secondary analysis are attributed to disembodied and de-contextualized research (Murphy & Schlaerth, 2010); limited number of variables collected through abbreviated measurement tools due to research cost (Trzesniewski et al., 2011); and limited range of research questions that can be answered by quantitative data (Vartanian, 2011). In more detail, Murphy and Schlaerth
(2010) remind that “secondary data analysis [can] truncate the research process” (p.389) because education and social inquiries extend beyond this method. Quantitative secondary research excludes description of social interactions among research participants and investigator, and does not always illustrate complexities, nuances, and subtleties of a conducted study, occupying virtual rather than within social boundaries space.

In addition to the lack of knowledge about the interactions with study participants, the number of variables constituting a quantitative data set can be limited for an informative and comprehensive secondary analysis. From a pragmatic perspective, Trzesniewski and his team (2011) argue that “the measures in … existing resources are often abbreviated because the projects themselves were designed to serve multiple purposes and to support a multidisciplinary team” (p.5). In the case of the secondary research, due to methodological decisions made during the primary data collection, even fewer variables of interest are left for the secondary analysis.

A limited number of variables present in the original data set can also narrow the breadth of secondary investigation. Since available primary data restrict the variety of secondary questions, Hakim (1982), Stewart and Kamins (1993), and Vartanian (2011) have suggested employing quantitative secondary analysis to conduct exploratory investigation rather than to test a hypothesis. Accounting for multiple measure techniques and analytic approaches may also be considered during primary data collection to explore secondary research questions.

Secondary analysis of qualitative data, on the contrary, encompasses re-use of pre-existing data derived from exploration of educational and social environments,
thoughts, underlying reasons, motivations, and results of one’s activity. It embodies different methodologies employed to collect naturalistic and artefactual rather than measurable data (Heaton, 2004). Qualitative secondary analysis also reflects the descriptive nature of qualitative research, its purpose, and design.

Qualitative secondary analysis as a methodology “for conducting free-standing studies using pre-existing data originally collected for other purposes” (Heaton, 2004, p.9) expands on data collected via observations, interviews, and document reviews (Kaufman et al., 2006). Qualitative data sources can also include researcher’s notes, diaries, autobiographies, and open-ended questionnaires. Qualitative secondary data are often collected and archived as a product of independent qualitative studies conducted by a research team or independent investigators, as well as longitudinal research funded by private and government agencies that can be accessed through university archives, U.S. Government and state repositories, nonprofit organizations, and international and independent archives (Andranovich & Riposa, 2012; Dworkin, 2012; Jacobson et al., 1993; Kaufman et al., 2006; Mazzocchi, 2008).

Research capacity of qualitative secondary analysis varies depending on the extent of details present in the primary data. Details that did not serve the purpose of the original study (Janzen, 2012) allow the researcher to extensively examine the meaning individuals attribute to their experiences (Corti & Blackhouse, 2005; Corti & Bishop, 2005). Moreover, those details can reveal theoretical underpinnings helping to “better understand the social change” (O’Connor & Goodwin, 2010, p.284).

Naturalistic, artefactual, and exploratory qualitative secondary data can be used to construct and verify knowledge by (re-)examining perceptions and experiences of a target
audience. Within-case analysis may result in refining characteristics of available theories, emergence of new theoretical frameworks, and/or application of knowledge to different populations and academic fields (Ebbinghaus, 2005). Therefore, qualitative secondary analysis is applicable when “there is a little information known about a phenomenon, the applicability of what is known has not been examined, or when there is a reason to doubt the accepted knowledge about a given phenomenon” (Kidd et al., 1996, p.225). That being said, qualitative secondary research can generally broaden and deepen knowledge by stimulating a comprehensive understanding of the nature of an examined issue. It can reveal additional context of educational and social encounters and collaborations, as well as inform situated narratives around a particular topic (Broom et al., 2009).

Despite its apparent value to knowledge construction, methodologists of qualitative secondary analysis have identified several theoretical, representational, and ethical challenges. As Thorne (1998) explained, theoretical challenges would arise from the quality and capacity of primary qualitative data to answer secondary research questions. Specifically, qualitative secondary data are frequently questioned with respect to their reliability and validity, which can be limited due to the lack of thorough background information accompanying the data and detailed description of data collection methods. In addition to the incompleteness of a data set, Boris (2015) reminds of “the lack of control over conceptualization of the study, data collection decisions, … and/or biases in the original study that cannot be overcome in the secondary analysis” (p.46) as another pitfall of qualitative secondary analysis. However, secondary research conducted by Thorne (1998) and Corti and Bishop (2005) demonstrates the resolution of the aforementioned theoretical challenges by data triangulation, selection of research
questions and analytic approaches consistent with the original research design, and reporting transparency to allow for a critical review of secondary research findings.

Correspondingly to theoretical limitations, much attention has been paid to representational challenges of pre-existing qualitative data. Representational challenges are ascribed to sampling and researcher’s reflexivity (Andrews et al., 2012; Corti & Bishop, 2005; Thorne, 1998). The basic question in secondary research sampling is what decisions were made by an investigator of the original study to identify and recruit participants. Hinds, Vogel and Clarke-Steffen (1997) point out that researchers conducting secondary analysis can minimize erroneous conclusions by verifying the extent of informational contribution of each subject to the original project. To assess the nature and quality of participants’ input, an investigator could “move back and forth between the transcripts and theoretically sample for emerging ideas and concepts” (Andrews et al., 2012, Theoretical Sampling, para 1).

Researcher’s reflexivity, on the other hand, includes account of a primary investigator on the original research process and its major components such as design, methodology, and data collection. The extent of researcher’s reflexivity can either bolster or preclude clarity and transparency of secondary inquiry. Representation of knowledge and experiences of the primary investigator and study participants allow for not only higher quality coding and data analysis, but also depiction of subtle nuances crucial for answering secondary research questions (Bishop, 2007; Corti & Thompson, 2004).

In addition to theoretical and representational concerns, qualitative secondary analysis must be examined in terms of adherence to the principles of conducting ethical research. Although secondary research implies no face-to-face involvement with study
subjects and/or any intervention, there are challenges associated with confidentiality and subject agreement (Corti & Thompson, 2004; Hinds et al., 1997; Moore, 2007; Thorne, 1998).

 Archived qualitative studies embody an array of data including interview audio recordings and transcripts, artifacts and documents, field notes, observation protocols, images, and video records informing participants’ backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences. Although data sets are typically cleared from identifying information, secondary researcher may still receive data violating anonymity guidelines. While conducting secondary research involving vulnerable populations, Boris (2015) cleared secondary data from any identifying information to assure participants’ confidentiality, as well as verified the accuracy of original informed consents accompanying the data set. As she later wrote, the lack of informed consent and incompliance of secondary data with research anonymity guidelines may become a threatening risk to conducting secondary research. Similarly, McLeod and Thomson (2009) in their book *Revisiting Social Change* point out confidentiality and participants’ understanding of informed consent as cornerstones of a valuable, informative, and reusable qualitative data archive. Therefore, to address ethical challenges associated with secondary analysis of qualitative data, researchers should be cognizant of the risks imposed by ethical considerations of the method and make an effort to verify the alignment of the primary research with research integrity guidelines.

 In conclusion, although secondary analysis can be defined in numerous ways and serve different purposes, quantitative and qualitative secondary analyses can equally contribute to the knowledge enhancement and development. Both types of secondary
analyses can be used to extend understanding of familiar concepts and verify research propositions, as well as make it possible to investigate new research questions and refine ontological and epistemological underpinnings of secondary analysis as a method. Despite the apparent general similarities in the analysis of secondary quantitative and qualitative data, there are also notable differences. Key variations of quantitative and qualitative secondary analyses lay in the nature of pre-existing data along with unique characteristics attributed to the primary data collection methods, original research design, research capacity, and limitations of collected data. Taken into consideration, those methodological and practical differences and challenges can play an important role in evaluating quality and sufficiency of existing data.

**Evaluating Quality and Sufficiency of Qualitative Data for Secondary Analysis**

Secondary analysis is the use of existing data to generate new knowledge by answering a research question that has not been originally asked (Boris, 2015; Irwin & Winterton, 2011). Although quantitative secondary analysis is a widely known and cost-effective approach to maximizing usefulness of collected accessible data, secondary analysis of qualitative data is less common yet important descriptively rich “source of information for more than one study or one purpose” (Hinds et al., 1997, p.409). Due to the intrusive nature of qualitative data collection along with methodological and ethical challenges, the quality and sufficiency of data employed for qualitative secondary analysis must be carefully examined (Heaton, 2008).

Current scholarship informs numerous examples of the re-use of qualitative data. However, there are only a few commentators on qualitative secondary analysis that seem
to describe and exemplify the challenges associated with the assessment of data quality and sufficiency. This section includes guidelines that reflect summarized experiences found in the literature and theoretical suggestions on evaluation of secondary data.

A literature review was conducted using peer-reviewed publications (n=40) such as doctoral dissertations, and book chapters with eighty-five percent of the collection weighted towards peer-reviewed articles. The search included the following terms: secondary data analysis, qualitative data analysis, secondary qualitative data, secondary data, and secondary qualitative data analysis. As the review revealed, the process of assessment of sufficiency and quality of original qualitative data for secondary analysis includes evaluation of the relevance of the original data set to present research, primary research and data background, data set breadth and depth, trustworthiness, and sustainability of primary data.

The process of evaluation begins with conceptualization of a secondary study and selection of a research question (Boris, 2015; du Plessis et al., 2009; Hinds et al., 1997; Johnston, 2014; Kelder, 2005; Medjedovic, 2011; Murphy & Schlaerth, 2010; Roberts, 1996; Sandelowski, 2011; Szabo & Strang, 1997). Since collection of qualitative data is labor intensive and, hence, selective, one of the major methodological concerns of qualitative secondary analysis relates to the fit between available data and the new or modified research question (Hinds et al., 1997; Szabo & Strang, 1997). “There [should be] a logical link between the original data set and the question/s asked in the analysis, as the qualitative secondary analysis questions [arise] from the original data set” (de Plessis et al., 2009, p.76). More importantly, in order to utilize existing data appropriately, the available data set has to be adequate to address a proposed research question (Boris,
A survey-based study conducted by Medjedovic (2011) has shown that over 21% of respondents represented by “inexperienced” qualitative researchers (n=270) prefer collecting new data rather than utilizing previously collected data sets due to misalignment of their research questions with the purpose, context, methodological aspects, and specificities of research questions of existing data. Therefore, finding an appropriate or “qualified” data set that meets a research purpose and allows for answering a secondary research question is highly important.

Along with the fit of a secondary research question, the context of the original study and study sample must be taken into consideration (Irwin, 2013; Irwin & Winterton, 2011; Notz, 2005; Johnston, 2014; Whiteside et al., 2012). An important question is how well the context and sample “of the original research project match those of the present project” (Notz, 2005, p.2). From this perspective, the context of the original study and its sample must align with the settings and study population that are examined in the present study. Therefore, “in order to grasp the contexts underpinning diversity, and… insights into conditions and causes” a thorough understanding and matching of study settings and people situated within the study sample become significantly important (Irwin, 2013, p.299).

The quality of a primary data set can also be determined by examining the breadth and depth of collected data (Hinds et al., 1997). The breadth and depth of data are referred to completeness of the data set which includes complete documents, interviews, etc.; accuracy of interview and document transcripts; and detailed sampling plan (Corti & Backhouse, 2005; Harris, 2001; Hinds et al., 1997). Specifically, Janzen (2012) argues that an appropriately collected and archived data set would be accompanied by extensive
description of methodologies employed to collect data, field notes, and information necessary for a secondary investigator to fully understand the nuances of the original study. In other words, details accompanying the data set should “provide enough information … so that users do not need to seek information about the data from other channels” (Niu & Hedstrom, 2008, p.2). In addition, the original data must allow for understanding examined processes, relationships, and subjective meanings (Bornat, 2005). Only holistic and rich data can reveal the complexity of the original study and an examined issue (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Such data, if re-examined, provide vivid and complete descriptions of a researched phenomenon while having a strong impact on the findings of the present study.

Contributing to the breadth and depth of primary data, comprehensive background information about the original study also increases data set quality and sufficiency (Andrews et al., 2012; Elliott, 2015; Fielding, 2000). The context is seen to support understanding and interpretation “because no data can be seen outside of a viewing context” (Sandelowski, 2011, p.347). “The detailed contextual knowledge about the circumstances of the data collection possessed by the primary researcher” can foster both description and explanation (Mitchell, 2015, p.3). Particularly, knowing research context allows for complex understanding of nuances of the original study, as well as its theoretical and/or empirical contribution to the overall knowledge base. As emphasized by Coltart, Henwood and Shirani, “that proximate knowledge of the original research context is vital for making sense of the nature and score of qualitative research data” (Coltart et al., 2013, p.9).
How detailed should be the description of the original study context to make a judgment regarding data set sufficiency and quality? According to a team of scholars guided by du Plessis (2009), the original study context should include a description of research questions, study population, sample selection choices, and employed research methodology. Arguing that “the assumed context and the text are related to each other” (p.8), van den Berg (2005) also suggests evaluating contextual information about data collection methods and collected “raw” data (i.e., interviews, interview audiotapes, and transcripts); background characteristics of researcher/s and study participants; and information about the data collection site, time of data collection, and data collection settings. Additionally, the scholar and his colleague, Martyn Hammersley (2010), have emphasized the importance of accessing information about how study participants were selected and recruited and any other relevant information that may be helpful for a secondary data analyst to fully recreate the meaning and background of the original study.

Evaluation of quality and sufficiency of a qualitative data set for secondary analysis also includes consideration of data set sustainability and the possibility of further follow-up with the sample. Data sustainability implies collection of qualitative data over a sustainable period of time (Miles & Huberman, 1994). “Such data makes [events] powerful for studying any process … and are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.10). Moreover, longitudinal qualitative studies are found important in developing rapport between researcher(s) and study participants and, thus, capable of recovering missing aspects of the original research context (Fielding & Fielding, 2012).
The possibility of follow-up with primary study participants is especially important when the data quality is problematic, meaning data are outdated or missing (Corti & Backhouse, 2005; Whiteside et al., 2012). Although follow-up with subjects appears challenging due to numerous reasons, “in principle, it is wise to leave oneself the freedom to recontact on one’s own behalf, or to ask informants whether they would be willing to be contacted for a different project” (Thompson, 2000, p.8). An opportunity to reconnect with subjects can be created when a researcher intentionally includes it in the consent form, sets up a flexible participation schedule of data collection, collects additional contact information, and/or tracks study participants during the study (Woolard et al., 2004). These procedures help not only facilitate the outcomes of a study, but also clarify characteristics of the data collection process and participant recruitment.

Summarized and outlined earlier criteria for evaluation of data quality and sufficiency for qualitative secondary analysis were used to refine an assessment rubric, originally designed by Hinds and his team (1997). Although the original rubric allows for determining data set qualities and characteristics, comprehensive evaluation of data quality and sufficiency requires systematic and elaborate analysis of primary qualitative data to adequately determine their nature and suitability for secondary research. Therefore, the refined assessment checklist (Appendix A) includes the following criteria for determining: 1) relevance of original qualitative data to present research; 2) extent of background information, breadth and depth of primary data; 3) trustworthiness of original data set; and 4) data set sustainability.
**Secondary Analysis of Observational, Interview, and Document Data**

Qualitative secondary data can be analyzed in many different ways by examining its characteristics. Emerged from qualitative research, analysis of pre-existing data requires attention to data thematic and structural components (Boris, 2015). Thematic analysis of qualitative secondary data relates to examination of materials in respect to their content or what is being shared, whereas structural analysis focuses on organization of participants’ insights or how they are being shared (Notz, 2005; Taylor, 2003). To examine thematic and structural characteristics of qualitative secondary data, several analysis procedures need to be considered.

The process of secondary analysis of interview, document, and observational data begins with initial data review and their further organization (LeCompte, 2000). Evaluation of secondary data quality and sufficiency may be guided by the assessment rubric (Appendix A). To further familiarize with the original research environment and data collection process, an investigator may review audio recordings of interviews, check transcripts for errors and omissions, and reread document materials, observational, and research notes (Szabo & Strang, 1997). Once data are determined to be sufficient, complete, accurate, and of satisfying quality, greater immersion into secondary data is necessary (Rabiee, 2004). Intensive immersion into details of secondary data helps viewing pre-existing data as a whole and guides the emergence of themes.

During thematic analysis, secondary analyst actively develops and assigns data codes or units of analysis. These units of analysis are later merged into categories and themes relevant to secondary research questions. To develop a thematic framework, as suggested by Notz (2005), Rabiee (2004), and Szabo and Strang (1997), secondary
analysis researcher can compile methodologic and theoretic memos. Methodologic memos allow secondary analyst to record subtle nuances attributed to the analysis, as well as characteristics about secondary research process itself and made analysis decisions. Theoretic memos, on the other hand, capture analyst’s thoughts about the process of data analysis, initial categories and themes, and emerging connections between analyzed data and research questions. During thematic analysis, separate quotes from interviews and documents along with observational notes are formed into descriptive statements for further questioning and analysis (Bustamante-Cavino et al., 2011; Rabiee, 2004).

Opposite of thematic analysis of qualitative secondary data is structural data analysis. It involves management and assembling of analyzed data (LeComplte, 2000; Rabiee, 2004). In Kim’s secondary research on elder mistreatment in South Korea and its policy and practice implications (2013), the scholar organized previously coded categories and themes by key words, numbers, and colors and then compared text passages in each theme “to achieve a credible, trustworthy, and reasonable result” (p.44). This example is broadened by Rabiee’s (2004) clarification that data management and assembling also includes intensive quote organization within the text – indexing and charting. In other words, selected narrative is compared and contrasted by cutting and pasting similar quotes together. Additionally, data assembling involves active comparison between categories and themes until each category is viewed as separate, identifiable structures (Burke, 1992). These procedures not only help refine evolving categorizations and patterns, but also create logically linked narrative structures underpinning valid and
reliable relationship between secondary research questions and findings (Bowen, 2009; LeCompte, 2000).

Although the order of the described analyses of secondary interview, document, and observational data may vary in the actual secondary research, all of the aforementioned procedures are common. For instance, aiming to “demonstrate the use of dialogic/performance methodology in secondary analysis” (p.8), Boris (2015) in her dissertation research reexamines perceptions of HIV positive Kenyan women and exemplifies the use of thematic and structural analysis procedures with the emphasis on data organization and connectivity.

Propelled by thematic and structural approaches toward secondary analysis of interview, documented, and observational data, analysis of qualitative knowledge is also regularly guided by content analysis. Content analysis of existing qualitative data is a more narrow and specific data analysis methodology and commonly described as flexible, interpretive, and inductive/deductive (Cavanagh, 1997).

The notion of content analysis lays in examination of primary study text data to meaningfully describe and represent collected content (Harris, 2001; Miller & Brewer, 2003). According to Miller and Brewer (2003), content analysis can take various forms including enumeration of words and terms used to develop an understanding of pre-existing data and establish meaningful relationship between secondary research questions and the content. Chen and his team (2008) simplify content analysis by describing it as a method “used to generate themes or categories responsive to our research questions” (p.6). Generated themes and categories are further compared and contrasted.
Content analysis can be inductive or deductive. Similar in its purpose, generation of knowledge, the two approaches foundationally differ in the development of categories (Cho & Lee, 2014; Elo & Kyngas, 2008). If an inductive approach guides the emergence of units of analysis and categories directly from the data, in the deductive approach units of analysis and categories are derived from prior research and/or knowledge base.

Besides its major difference in category generation, content analysis also differs in its approaches toward data examination, coding, and interpretation. There are three approaches: conventional, directed, and summative (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Each of those approaches are driven by inductive, deductive or both ways of category generation.

The conventional approach toward content analysis of pre-existing interview, document, and observational data centers on exploration and description rather than confirmation or disprove (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2000). This type of analysis has been found appropriate for generating new knowledge and broadening a conceptual basis of an existing theory. It begins with active and intensive reading of data. Then, based on the data, secondary analyst highlights and memos separate text fragments that capture potential answers to research questions using participants’ words. Once the data are coded, additional data review is conducted to identify codes that can be combined or split into subcategories. Later, final codes are organized into a hierarchical structure and used in the description of findings. As a result of the inductive data analysis approach, conventional content analysis helps gain insights directly from secondary data “without imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1279-1280). The knowledge, thus, is generated directly from existing insights and archived observations.
When there is a need to broaden or verify knowledge, qualitative secondary methodologists turn to directed content analysis (Bowen, 2009). Data examined for the directed content analysis approach may present enough evidence to support or contradict existing knowledge (Bowen, 2009; du Plessis et al., 2009; Mayring 2000). It can also offer “predictions about the variables of interest or about the relationships among variables” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1281). Attributed to the deductive data analysis stream, directed content analysis provides necessary structure to the coding process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It begins with identifying key variables from an existing theoretical framework or a study. These key variables serve a role of initial coding categories and be defined according to a theoretical framework employed in the secondary study. During this process, initial codes and categories are used to identify narrative segments that support emerged codes and categories. If none of the analyzed narrative can be assigned to a predetermined category, data need to be revisited, whereas emerged codes and categories become independent informing additional characteristics of an examined issue.

If the purpose of qualitative secondary research is to understand the contextual use of participants’ words and phrases, summative content analysis could be used. As another unobtrusive approach, it can be employed to examine the extent of the content usage and its underlying meanings (Harris, 2001; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Miller and Brewer (2003) write about summative content analysis: “[it] establishes ‘meaning’ only in the sense of what is explicit in the words used in the text and what is implied by their use from the range of alternatives that could have been employed” (p.43). By studying the frequency of specific words in a pre-existing qualitative data set, summative content
analysis can reveal a more accurate definition of phenomena and/or their alternative characteristics. It starts with computer-assisted searches of the appearance of terms and words. Word frequency is counted for every coded unit of analysis and later compared with the total number of terms coded (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Context of coded terms is also taken into account “to identify patterns in the data and to contextualize the codes” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1285).

As described above, conventional, directed, and summative qualitative content analysis begins with similar steps yet differ dramatically in the development of initial codes. These differences in the process of coding are dependent on the secondary research questions along with an analytic approach chosen to examine secondary data. To gain a broader and more thorough understanding of phenomena based on secondary interview, document, and observational data, conventional content analysis can be used, whereas a directed content analysis approach centers on extending, refining, or verifying theoretical propositions and concepts. Lastly, gathered and enumerated qualitative secondary data can reveal contextual meanings of content or specific terms if analyzed from a summative content analysis perspective (Kawulich, 2005).

Another method of qualitative secondary data analysis is found in nursing research and practice. Interpretive description is a relatively recent qualitative data analysis methodology (Hunt, 2009). Although interpretive description is used to illustrate how “themes that emerged from the data to be evaluated in light of nursing practice” (Janzen, 2012, p.26), the significance of this method directly relates to analysis of qualitative secondary data and applies to studies involving repurposing of pre-existing interview, document, and observational data. As such, the significance of this technique
is described in terms of analyzing secondary data to reveal knowledge meaningful and
useful to practitioners in education and social sciences.

Interpretive description was formulated by Thorne and her colleagues (Thorne et
al., 1997) as a qualitative data analysis method that helps to “develop ways of
understanding human phenomena within the context in which they are experienced”
(Thorne, 2000, p.68). The nature of this technique lays in grounded theory and
phenomenology and emphasizes the generation of research questions from practice
(Kahlke & Hon, 2014). In the light of qualitative secondary research, interpretive
description focuses on developing research questions from pre-existing data and practice
to provide theoretically sound understanding of human, social, or educational phenomena
that can be used in further practice (Thorne, 2008).

Analysis of qualitative secondary data from a perspective of an interpretive
description method begins with data sorting and thorough data review. Immersion in pre-
existing data is especially important because it enables secondary analyst to “know
individual cases intimately, abstract relevant common themes from within these
individual cases, and produce a species of knowledge that will itself be applied back to
individual cases” (Thorne et al., 1997, p.175). That being said, the process of code
development, coding, testing, interpretation, and conceptualization are internally or
inductively driven (Thorne et al., 2004). Once initial codes are developed, they are
revisited and complied into themes. Secondary data can then be compared to identify
common groupings. Although common groupings is a common step in interpretive
description, Thorne, Kirkham and O’Flynn-Magee (2004) advise to create broad
categories and themes, “permitting groups of data bearing similar characteristics to be
examined and re-examined for a range of alternatives” (p.5). Interpretive description, therefore, enables to develop a coherent logic and structure in pre-existing data, as well as generate practice-relevant findings. Furthermore, the method of interpretive description helps create a conceptual description from secondary data by capturing the patterns and themes conveyed through participants’ multiple insights and experiences.

**Conclusion**

In their recent writing, Irwin and Winterton (2011) suggest that an increasing capacity of research to generate abundant, rich in depth, and accessible data creates a profound opportunity to conduct efficient and cost-effective secondary inquiry. Asking additional research questions that have not been originally asked can reveal new knowledge, question current hypotheses, or support existing theories. Therefore, the overall goal of this method is to contribute to the specific body of knowledge by providing an alternative perspective on topics without any intrusion into vulnerable populations (Johnston, 2014; Roberts, 1996). A number of differences between quantitative and qualitative secondary analyses were identified in the literature, majority of which were attributed to specificities of original research, methods of data collection, data archives, purpose and capacity of secondary research, and associated with it limitations. Aside from their differences, qualitative secondary analysis imposes various criteria of determining the quality and sufficiency of existing data. By being aware of these criteria, qualitative researchers can not only make secondary analysis a reliable and valid exploration method, but also properly archive collected qualitative data for future research.
Successful secondary analysis of qualitative data requires a systematic approach toward data examination, coding, and interpretation. Grounded in inductive and deductive analysis, analysis of interview, documented, and observational data is driven by the purpose of secondary research, which determines the selection of data analysis methodology. Whether it is conventional, directed, summative content analysis or interpretive description, qualitative secondary analysis presents equal opportunities for collaborative research. While these methods differ in data coding and interpretation, they have important implications for novice and experienced educational and social researchers seeking to develop, extend, and explore the environment in a flexible and unobtrusive way.
CHAPTER 3
HEARING THE VOICES OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH ON
LEADERSHIP AND PRACTICES OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

Abstract. This paper reports findings of qualitative secondary analysis study on characteristics of young leaders and leadership development within a high school setting as recounted by youth. With a focus on bringing student voice to the identification of characteristics of young leaders, this study fills a gap in research related to rural youth leadership development. The nature of youth leadership was described within three areas: the self, family, and community. Youth ascribed different understanding of leadership, motivational factors, inspiration of leadership development and practice, and leadership actions to each leadership type. They also highlighted such practices as volunteering and community service, collaboration with school administration, leadership development course projects, and continuous self-reflection as most contributing to their leadership development. The study has important implications for theorists and practitioners involved in design and implementation of youth leadership development programs.

Introduction
The development of talents and skills is one of the goals of general secondary education (Oakland et al., 1996). Educators are expected to promote cognitive, motivational, affective, and ethical qualities in youth, thus, enabling them to take leadership roles in learning, social, and professional areas. Facilitation of leadership development at a young age predetermines youth readiness to assume their leadership in business, educational,
religious, governmental, etc. activities. Therefore, it is crucial to understand not only what youth leadership is, but also how its development is fostered in various settings. This is especially true in rural areas, where there are often limited educational and economic resources (Gallo & Beckman, 2016), and strong family and community ties (Herzog & Pittman, 1995). Although research has investigated both youth leadership and the development of young leaders, little is known about the perspective of young high school students about themselves as leaders and how youth leadership development is supported in a rural school environment. The purpose of this study was to explore characteristics of young leaders and successful practices of leadership development in a high school setting.

Various models are used in the development of young leaders. These models combine leader personality and skills (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998); scholarly understanding, reflective practice, transformative experience and active demonstration of leadership in the field and in the community (Stein et al., 2005); leadership knowledge, attitude, desire, will, decision making, critical thinking, as well as intra-/interpersonal and communication skills (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002); and leader identity, self concept, group influences, developmental changes, and leadership view (Owen, 2012). Although the list of leader development models is not limited to the aforementioned, these represent the breadth, diversity, and complexity of youth leadership and development. Therefore, both require a deep level of understanding of leadership and its development that is founded in “a person’s constructive development, or their understanding and construction of the world” (Sessa et al., 2015, p.16). Despite the abundance of perspectives on characteristics of youth leadership and practices related to its development, in order to fully meet youth
developmental and social needs, and address the challenges faced by rural youth, youth voice needs to be taken into account (Mortensen et al., 2014). Therefore, in this study, the emphasis is placed on examining the voices of young students, aged 15 to 18, on leadership and the value they place on the practices used in its development within a rural high school setting.

**Leadership of Rural Youth**

The term ‘youth leadership’ has gained increasing prevalence in education as a construct to describe “the involvement of youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs for planning and decision making” (Kress, 2006, 51). This definition of youth leadership assumes continuous engagement of youth in hands-on leadership activities with further transformation of their experiences into leadership knowledge and skills (Zacharatos et al., 2000). “Being complex and tugging on emotional interactions” (Whitehead, 2009, p.847), youth leadership extends beyond basic experiences; it includes motivation, intellectual stimulation, consideration (Zacharatos et al., 2000), as well as attitudes, self-awareness and self-efficacy, behaviors, past leadership experience, and various interpersonal, learning, and professional skills (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Jones, 1938; Klau, 2006; Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). When placed into practice, youth define leadership as “an inclusive opportunity available to anyone who is motivated to make change happen… working for the common good, putting others’ needs before one’s own” (Mortensen et al., 2014, pp.457-458). It therefore, requires young people to put into practice their decision-making skills and meet their developmental and social needs regardless of the provided educational support.
Although youth leadership is not new to education and social sciences, leadership of rural youth as a branch of youth leadership scholarship continues to emerge. Comprehensive examination of rural youth leadership has begun in 1990s in the field of agricultural education and community services. The focus of this research has been on an examination of the impact of extension service programs on the development of youth’s leadership skills. Consider, for example, a study conducted by Seevers and Dormody (1994). With an aim of exploring the relationship between leadership life skills of 400 rural youth and their participation in 4-H leadership activities, achievement expectancy, self-esteem, years in 4-H, age, ethnicity, gender, and place of residence, the scholars determined that participation in 4-H practices positively correlated with youth’s leadership skills regardless of their age, self-esteem, years in the program, or place of residence.

Seevers and Dormody extended their research to identify specific leadership activities that were valued by youth as most contributing to their leadership skill development (1995). They found that such activities as holding office, teaching younger program members, fairs, demonstrations, public speaking, and community service ranked number one as a contribution toward youth leadership development. While a significant number of youth were involved in the leadership activities, most youth did not realize the value of these activities. Therefore, it is crucial to design an environment for leadership development and practice, as well as provide opportunities for self-reflection and leadership evaluation.

Building on Seevers and Dormody’s study, Wingenbach (1995) investigated leadership life skills of rural youth and their participation in FFA leadership activities.
Leadership activities included practices oriented toward building skills in communication, decision-making, human relations, learning and resource management. Findings revealed a significant relationship between youth leadership and participation in leadership development activities. As a result, Wingenbach suggests creating more opportunities for youth to participate in leadership activities, with a greater emphasis on female youth involvement.

Hastings and her team (2011) describe the process of how rural youth leaders develop through community engagement. Their study sought to understand the conditions under which youth engage in their community and strategies used by youth and adults for collaboration. They found strategies such as purpose identification, encouragement of youth to share their views, and collaborative work to enable ideas fostered youth leadership. Specifically, emphasis was placed on ownership, responsibility, and perception and attitude at the individual level along with the community ability to capitalize on youth leadership potential. Continuing their research, the scholars also predicted self-perceived youth leadership skills by youth emotional intelligence (McElravy & Hastings, 2014). These findings expanded research conducted by Seevers and Dormody in the 1990s and indicate the dependence of youth self-perception as leaders from their ability to successfully marshal their emotions and emotions of others.

Recent research on leadership of rural youth has served as a catalyst for change in rural schools and communities, including implications for fostering individual and small group instruction, development of group culture, advising, instructional methodology, and greater community engagement (Ley et al., 1996). A primary way to build leadership among rural youth is to provide direct individual instruction (Mitra, 2005). Driven by
adult advising, leadership of rural youth thrives in smaller group activities and with the support of direct, individual instruction. As identified by Mitra (2005), to unify youth leaders and collectively construct meaningful actions, a variety of resources and tools are necessary. Those include, but are not limited to communication skills, common norms, and common language. As a result, it enables youth to be active change agents in rural school and community settings, while increasing student leadership and their empowerment.

Engagement in service learning demonstrates that rural adolescents are capable of self-driven learning and addressing the needs of their community (Terry, 2003). According to Terry, leadership activities incorporated into service learning positively impact self-selected curriculum, allowing youth to experience leadership and learning in a meaningful way. Learning more about leadership and community needs can lead to a stronger commitment by students to self- and community development, as well as a positive attitude toward leadership and community projects, thus empowering rural youth to make decisions and take independent actions (Terry, 2003).

Researchers have also emphasized the connection between the aspirations of young rural leaders, their participation in school-community partnership, and an increased sense of responsibility. Those rural students who share career, educational, and leadership goals with parents and teachers are reported to aspire to lead a successful and fulfilling adulthood (Ley et al., 1996). Seen as community leaders, rural youth, with educational support, are capable of making influential choices about their future careers and life direction, thus, showing progression in their leadership maturity (Bajema et al., 2002). Partnering with students to grow schools and communities creates new meaning
and understanding for students in rural settings, producing a common purpose for schooling, youth well-being and responsibility, and a thriving community (Bauch, 2001; Wood et al., 2009).

There is ample research explaining the concept of youth leadership, as well as sufficient evidence of the positive impact of leadership programs on youth personal and leadership development. Nevertheless, current research still inadequately portrays leadership from a rural youth perspective, nor is comprehensively familiar with leadership development practices valued by rural youth. As a participant in a study conducted by Mortensen and her team (2014) stated, “There are many ways in becoming a leader and they can be big or small steps. In some of our daily lives we don’t even notice it, but we are being a leader in someone else’s life” (p.453). A comprehensive understanding of rural youth leadership and pathways of its development allows general and leadership educators to create youth-led leadership development programs. As a result, it becomes possible to address the root causes of existing community problems, elevate the youth role in self- and school development, and increase youth collective efficacy and responsibility. In this paper leadership as recounted by rural youth is described and major leadership development practices that most contribute to youth leadership education are exemplified.

**Study Design**

This study employed secondary analysis of qualitative data to explore youth perspectives of characteristics of leadership and youth development activities. Secondary analysis of qualitative data is relatively new, however in recent years is becoming more popular among the U.S. and UK qualitative education and social researchers (Heaton,
Secondary analysis includes further analysis of existing data collected by someone else to pursue a research inquiry that is different from the original investigation (Bustamante-Gavino et al., 2012; Hakim, 1982; Johnston, 2014). Quantitative secondary analysis is generally designed to make generalizations and predictions, identify causal relationships, and test measurable associations among examined variables (Creswell, 2009; Kaufman et al., 2006; Locascio, 1984; Vartanian, 2011), while secondary analysis of qualitative data is used to construct and/or verify knowledge by (re-)exploring experiences and perceptions of targeted populations (Ebbinghaus, 2005). Qualitative secondary analysis is beneficial when “there is little information known about a phenomenon, the applicability of what is known has not been examined, or when there is reason to doubt the accepted knowledge about a given phenomenon” (Kidd et al., 1996, p.225). As the aim of qualitative secondary analysis is to address new research questions by analyzing existing data, the methodology seeks to critically assess previously collected data as a result of additional analysis of an original dataset (Hinds et al., 1997), application of a different theoretical framework from the original study (Heaton, 2004); or describe characteristics and/or behaviors of individuals, communities, or organizations (Long-Sutehall et al., 2010).

The key to qualitative secondary analysis is to utilize existing data to gain methodological insights (Corti & Bishop, 2005), generate new conclusions and interpretations (Gleit & Graham, 1988; Irwin & Winterton, 2011), and fulfill research purposes different from the original research (Andrews et al., 2012). However, before conducting qualitative secondary analysis, it is necessary to evaluate the appropriateness and quality of a qualitative data set (Heaton, 1998; Hinds et al., 1997; Notz 2005; Thorne,
1998). To determine the congruency of data to the secondary study and ensure data quality and viability, the following data evaluation questions should be answered: a) do the purpose, context, population, and sample size fit the interest of a secondary analysis study?; b) is an existing data set complete?; c) are existing data broad and deep enough to answer research questions of a secondary analysis study?; d) were qualitative data collected over a sustainable period of time?; and e) does the original project allow for additional data collection? Each of these questions will be addressed in the following section.

**Do the purpose, context, population, and sample size fit the interest of the secondary analysis study?** The first step in the process of data evaluation is to conceptualize the study and develop the research questions that can be answered with previously collected qualitative data (Boris, 2015; Johnston, 2014; Roberts, 1996). As questions for qualitative secondary analysis arise from an existing data set, the data and the questions should be logically connected and adequate for addressing secondary research needs (Boris, 2015; du Plessis et al., 2009).

As the data evaluation process unfolds, it is important to determine the purpose of the research project from which the original data were to assure the capacity of the data in meeting the needs of the secondary study with respect to the targeted population, sample size, wording of interview prompts, and general context of the study (Johnston, 2014). According to Notz (2005), to generate credible knowledge, the context and sample of the original project should match those in the present project. Hence, learning and matching the contexts, diversity, and research conditions present in the primary study with the
secondary research questions, study settings, and sample leads to in-depth, sufficient, and thorough research findings.

**Is an existing data set complete?** The next step in the process is to evaluate the completeness of the original data. It is vital for the researcher to have access to the documents of the original study, as well as obtain materials that are complete and accurate (Corti & Backhouse, 2005; Harris, 2001; Hinds et al., 1997). Appropriately collected and stored qualitative data should include a detailed description of data collection methodologies, field notes, sample recruitment plan, and accurately transcribed interviews. The data set can also include additional documents that informed the researcher’s decisions on data collection and study execution (Janzen, 2012). Niu and Hedstrom (2008) argue the data set should contain enough information to understand research processes, context, and nuances of the original research, thus, eliminating the need to seek for additional background information from other resources.

**Are existing data broad and deep enough to answer research questions of a secondary analysis study?** Existing qualitative data cannot be evaluated without knowledge of the background of an original study (Andrews et al., 2012; Elliott, 2015; Fielding, 2000). In evaluating existing data, issues with the study context must be considered (Sandelowski, 2011). Without a detailed description of research context, constructing the understanding, determining theoretical and practical contributions of the primary research, and, more importantly, scoring existing research data become challenging. The researcher should obtain all documentation of the study background including original research purpose and questions, processes of data collection and accompanying protocols, background characteristics of the original study researcher(s)
and subjects, and, lastly, characteristics of data collection site, time, and settings (du Plessis et al., 2009; Hammersley, 2010; van den Berg, 2005).

**Were qualitative data collected over a sustainable period of time?** In any research, the time over which data are collected must be considered (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data collected over a long period of time can prove more substantial for analysis, as well as broaden the understanding of meaning placed on the examined events, processes, and phenomena. Within a longer time frame, there is an opportunity for the primary researcher to build sustainable and trusting relationships with study participants, hence, leading to more credible and informative data.

**Does the original project allow for additional data collection?** To bolster the credibility and trustworthiness of secondary analysis findings, it is beneficial to have the possibility to reconnect with subjects from the original research, especially when data are outdated or missing (Corti & Backhouse, 2005; Whiteside et al., 2012). Reconnecting with study participants can help assure understanding of obtained information and/or clarify characteristics of study procedures and processes, which can lead to better outcomes of secondary analysis research as well as provide for data expansion.

**Theoretical Framework**

This research was guided by theoretical propositions of a student voice theoretical concept. As noted by Mitra (2008), student voice as a concept is associated with opportunities for youth “to collaborate with adults to address the problem in their schools and allowing youth to take the lead on seeking change” (p.221-222). It is believed that young people have authentic perspectives on learning, school and community change, teaching, and education. By being engaged in a dialogue with adults, youth can add an
important perspective to the process of school improvement, as well as inform different definitions of youth roles in school change and how school change can be implemented to bolster student learning (Cook-Sather, 2006; Fielding, 2001; Richardson, 2001). Moreover, it can empower them to become more active in decision-making, personal and career development, problem-solving, and educational and school policy design and implementation (Pautsch, 2010).

**Methods**

This study employed secondary data analysis to explore characteristics of youth leadership and its development. Two secondary research questions were examined: 1) how do rural high school youth view and experience leadership? and 2) what educational practices youth emphasize as most contributing to the development of their leadership potential within the framework of a leadership development course? The secondary researcher was the same individual who collected the original data. During the original data collection and secondary data analysis, it was assumed that study participants were knowledgeable of youth leadership and that collected insights were reflective of participants’ true beliefs and authentic opinions. The students were also informed on the risks and benefits of participating in the research; their participation in the original study was voluntary. To assure participants’ anonymity, all the names used to report the findings were changed.

As for the process of qualitative secondary analysis, in order to generate new knowledge, the original study, the process of data collection, and the analytical processes applied to the data need to be outlined (Heaton, 1998), and the secondary research questions should be sufficiently close to those of the original research (Thorne, 1998). In
addition, existing datasets should be complete, accurate, and transparent, and contain enough detail to explain any decision made regarding data attainment, participant recruitment, research timeframe, and additional data collection. This information will be presented as a framework to explain the procedure for secondary analysis reported in this paper.

**Data Set Evaluation. *Research purpose, context, population, and sample size.***

The original study sought to characterize youth perspectives of leadership, their attitudes, motivation, and experiences in leadership development (Sherif, 2016). Specifically, the original research objectives were to (a) clarify the meaning of leadership from a youth perspective, (b) understand youth motivation in learning and practicing leadership, (c) explore youth attitudes towards leadership development, and (d) learn how youth experience leadership. Within the framework of the original research the following research questions were examined: 1) How do youth perceive leadership?; 2) What motivates youth to develop and practice leadership? and 3) What are emotional and behavioral indicators of youth leadership?

The study was conducted in a rural high school setting within the context of a youth leadership development course. The course was designed to engage youth in local and global community improvement initiatives, responsible decision making, school-oriented project development and implementation, and incorporation of modern technology into educational processes. Sixteen high school students enrolled in the course took part in the study. The sample was comprised of 12 female and 4 male participants. The age of the participants ranged from 15 to 18 years old. Additionally, the study enrolled a school principal and course instructor.
The purpose of the original research was relevant to the aim of the present study, which is to examine the pathways of youth leadership development created by a youth leadership course and describe perceptions of youth on the characteristics of young leaders. As the context of the original study and study sample also reflects the research interest predominant in the present study, it allows for analysis of the original qualitative data to answer different research questions. Specifically, the secondary research questions arose directly from the data and were formulated broadly in an effort to reduce biases and allow subjects’ responses to lead researcher’s understanding of youth leadership and practices most contributing to the development of leadership within youth.

Similarly, the characteristics of the original research settings and study population are integral to the present research. The data provide rich descriptions of study settings that are indicative of occurring development and practice of youth leadership. Youth enrolled in the original study actively participated in local and global community improvement initiatives, decision making, school-oriented project development and implementation, and incorporation of modern technology into secondary education learning processes.

*Completeness and accuracy of the data set.* In addressing the question of data completeness and accuracy the researcher had the benefit of accessing necessary background information. Detailed documentation was kept on data collection methodologies, fieldwork, and the recruitment process, which provided evidence of careful and consistent data collection. The records included semi-structured interview protocols, field and observation notes, as well as subject-relevant documents shared by the course instructor and study participants. The interview recordings were checked for
transcription accuracy and determined as adequate and meeting the purposes of the current secondary analysis research. Interview and observation protocols were complete, so were the notes. Each note (protocol) was date and time stamped. Finally, in evaluating how complete the original data were, the researcher examined interviewing procedures to ensure they were guided by the protocol, constructed in respect to outlined protocol questions, and how clarity of participants’ responses were addressed during each interview.

**Breadth and depth of the existing data set.** It is vital to have access to rich, descriptive, and informative data. For this study, research documentation and existing data were consulted and included the following: semi-structured interview recordings and transcripts, observational and in-field notes, and documents that were shared by study participants and publicly available.

In the original study, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with every student participant. The interview questions sought to investigate how youth perceive leadership and themselves as leaders, what motivated them to take the course and practice leadership, along with what inspired them to be leaders and practice their leadership, and provide specific examples of their leadership practice. Each student was interviewed at least twice for approximately 10-15 minutes. Forty interviews were conducted totaling seven hours of audio data.

Along with student interviews, a school principal and instructor of the leadership development course were interviewed. Adult study participants were asked to share their perceptions of youth leadership and describe educational pathways created within the school to develop youth leadership. The respondents also provided information on
various activities offered to youth to further their leadership potential, their importance to youth education and personal growth, and the alignment of youth leadership development activities/programs with school values and the general curriculum. As a result, adult interviewees provided numerous examples of educational supports designed to develop youth leadership within the school and their value for youth engagement in school and community life.

Observational data were also collected and included detailed information about observational settings, time, interpersonal interactions, participants’ responses and behaviors. Twenty observations were conducted during the study. Observations included indoor and outdoor observations of students and course activities. The focus of the observations was on educational settings where the development and practice of youth leadership occurred, characteristics of youth leadership in practice, the nature and content of activities offered in the classroom to further youth leadership, and opportunities provided by the course curriculum and instructor for students to practice their leadership.

In addition to observational materials, the data set included documents collected to augment the data and assure credibility of potential research findings. Collected materials were based on two types data – documents provided by study participants and the course instructor, and publicly available documents. A total of sixty-two documented materials or over one hundred thirty-five documented pages were collected. Documents of study participants and course instructor included students’ essays, open-ended leadership surveys, reflections on course activities, readings, leadership, and school values, and students’ electronic presentations. Publicly available school and course documents included student organization core teams, community mission, and school
vision and values, course curriculum, and Lead2Feed lessons which were used as a curricular foundation of the course.

**Duration of data collection.** According to Johnston (2014), the time frame of data collection is paramount to any research. The researcher utilized the data that were no more than three years old. The original study was completed over two academic years from April 2013 through June 2015. The researcher visited the site on average twice a month to collect the data.

**Possibility of additional data collection.** The last step in the evaluation of the original qualitative data set is to assure the appropriateness of and/or need to re-contact subjects from the original study. The review of interviews and research documentation indicated the subjects willingly shared their contact information and agreed to be recontacted if there was a need. Although some original participants may have graduated at the time of the secondary study, the remainder still attended the school. It was also found that in the case of this secondary research, there was sufficient extent of high quality data collected on this very specialized topic, hence, making the secondary analysis possible without any additional data collection and compliant to researcher’s university requirements to research integrity, accountability, and ethics.

**Data Coding and Analysis.** The process of secondary analysis of interview, document, and observational data began with initial data review and organization (LeCompte, 2000). To manage the data, a web-based qualitative and mixed method research data analysis tool “Dedoose” v.6.1.18 was used for both analysis and data storage.
The initial data coding was guided by two approaches: thematic and structural. During thematic analysis, codes were developed and entered into Dedoose allowing for data organization based on emerging thematic patterns and categories. The units of analysis or codes were guided by the secondary research questions and, as the analysis process evolved, were merged into categories (Notz, 2005; Rabiee, 2004; Szabo & Strang, 1997). Individual quotes from interview transcripts, documents, and observational notes were developed into descriptive statements for further analysis (Bustamante-Cavino et al., 2011; Rabiee, 2004).

Once preliminary codes were assigned, data were grouped into themes. By using Dedoose, where coded phrases and paragraphs are automatically connected to themes, the researcher was able to efficiently compare and contrast coded narrative until each category was viewed as an independent, identifiable structure (Burke, 1992). This procedure not only helped refine evolving thematic patterns, but also create a narrative structure with logical, valid, and reliable relationships between secondary research questions and findings (Bowen, 2009; LeCompte, 2000).

After preliminary analysis, a more detailed inductive, conventional content analysis was performed (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2000). Specifically, more detailed coding and category formation were guided by the data (Cho & Lee, 2014; Elo & Kyngas, 2008) to explore and describe, rather than prove or confirm, an examined phenomenon (Bowen, 2009; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2000). Specifically, narratives were actively reread and separate text fragments were assigned thematic codes to answer secondary research questions using participants’ words.
Results

Rural youth and school educators had unique perspectives on leadership and how its development should be fostered within youth. They emphasized leadership complexity, suggesting the presence of leadership potential in everyone with the emphasis on ethical virtues regardless of one’s understanding of leadership or its purpose. Overall, several prominent themes emerged in the youth and adults’ narratives. Participants in this study identified three types of leadership: leadership for the self, leadership for family, and leadership for community. Each type of leadership had unique characteristics reflecting youth understanding of leadership, their motivation, aspirations, and leadership actions. When describing leadership development practices, participants frequently emphasized volunteering and serving community, as well as, engaging in course activities, collaborating with school administration and staff, and continuously self-reflecting. Table 1 provides a summary of the emerged themes. Perspectives shared by youth were supported by adults’ opinions and, therefore, were not highlighted in the following narrative. The types of leadership identified, along with supporting evidence from interviews and documents will be presented, followed by practices found to most contribute to leadership development from a youth perspective. Identified practices were also described as such by adults.
Table 1

Summary of Youth Leadership Themes and Pathways of Youth Leadership Development and Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone has the potential to be a leader</td>
<td>Study participants believe that anyone can be a leader. Being a leader is a personal choice and requires responsibility, determination, passion, willingness, inspiration, motivation, and dedication to leadership development and practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership for the self</td>
<td>Leadership for the self plays an important role in making rural youth independent in helping and positively impacting others, advancing their career, accomplishing personal goals, and bettering their personality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership for family</td>
<td>The goal of leadership for family is to serve and care for others, learn from their family members, take the initiative, and make the self and family happier. Youth emphasized practicing leadership for family through hard work, dedication, goal setting, and putting interests of their family before their own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership for community</td>
<td>Leadership for community aims to create positive social change that results in empowerment of others, personal and community goal accomplishment, and continuous learning. Youth highlight community contribution and giving back as primary goals of their community leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pathways of Youth Leadership Development and Practice</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering and community service</td>
<td>Study participants emphasize creating a positive social change, helping others, learning leadership, and practicing responsible decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with school administration and staff</td>
<td>Leadership emerges as a result of learning from each other, mutual trust and responsibility, professional partnership, constructive communication, and active engagement in the leadership building process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course activities</td>
<td>Course activities deepen rural youth’s understanding of leadership, allow for refining and applying leadership knowledge and skills, and contribute to the development of youth confidence, responsibility, and professionalism as leaders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-reflection is crucial to rural youth as a way of problem resolution, personal improvement and growth, self-awareness increase, leadership mobilization, personality evaluation, and assessment of the development of leadership potential.

**Everyone Has the Potential to Be a Leader**

The idea that anyone can be a leader was greatly emphasized by high school students and supported by the school principal and course instructor. Highlighting different leadership characteristics and skills necessary to be a leader, they often discussed one’s willingness to be a leader and fully assuming the responsibility for being one. They repeatedly emphasized the choice and passion of being a leader. One of the study participants, Alice, stated, “I think everyone can be a leader if they wanted to. They have the abilities inside them whether they show it or not”. Chris agreed, “Everybody has the ability to be a leader. It’s just if we choose to use it or not”. Jennifer continued, “I think if you have the passion for it then you can. Like if you really want it and you dedicate yourself to being a leader, then you can grow”. Another respondent, Matthew, was more assertive, “You always have that choice and you always have that right. You are who you make yourself”. Indicating that leadership is authentic to everyone, study participants also agreed that without hard work and continuous self-realization as a leader, becoming a true leader can be challenging. As one youth, Maranda, eloquently explained:

> [W]e all have leadership values. And I think you need to be enthusiastic about it. You need to spend as much time doing it, and helping others when you are done with yours [leadership assignment]. Leadership is helping others when they don't understand something, or not being afraid to ask questions if you don't understand something.
Some respondents also underscored the importance of working hard to realize their leadership potential. As Bonnie noted, “they [leaders] need to be giving their hundred per cent each day, or at least try” to become a leader. Even if everyone has leadership potential, what matters is “what they did with [it]” and “whether they have the courage and the fighting strength to get up there and actually be a leader”.

It is apparent that subjects saw leadership potential in everyone and recognized that this potential can remain unrealized if not properly developed and practiced on a regular basis. Respondents shared a belief that all individuals have a choice to be a leader along with the capacity to change and lead in their own way. Empowered by their own and peer examples, participants believed no matter how often and in what way one assumes leadership responsibilities, every leader is important.

**Leadership for the Self**

The interviews, discussions, and narratives of youth participants along with the adults were virtue focused, consistently relating leadership to traits that allow youth to play different roles in their personal and other people’s lives. They emphasized that viewing leadership as a way “to build each other up” helps them “guide [themselves] and people in the right direction (Kayla)”, “encourage [themselves] and people to do their best and always try (Joe)”, and “take full responsibility for my actions and admitting when I am wrong or have made a mistake (Helen)”. In addition to guidance, encouragement, and responsibility, youth shared a new characterization of personal leadership rooted in empowerment. They presented personal youth leadership as beneficial in “helping others and making them as strong as they can be (Chris)”. The role of personal leadership is to help the leader become independent, so they can positively
impact others, advance one’s career, and better themselves. As Josh noted, his leadership was about:

[J]ust staying ahead in college and stuff. And you have to be that leader. Just stand out… And you have to push yourself and be motivated to go to that pathway. And that's what leadership is all about – being motivated and determined to make something of yourself and others.

Alison summarized the point by saying that personal leadership was demonstrated by “becoming a better student, a better learner, a better teacher, a better communicator. A better, just individual. As a whole person, I'll be better if I’m a leader”.

When discussing the role of personal leadership in improving the self and working with others, youth stressed the need for seeing a positive change either in their own or other people’s personality. This idea was often tied directly to the need to expand professional knowledge and skills, accrue independence, and the continuous accumulation of leadership experiences. For instance, commenting on why leadership was perceived as important for personal growth, Sarah suggested, “You have to have leadership in order to fulfill the goals so you could be successful in them”, whereas another student, Emily, emphasized the need for leadership in the future, specifically in college:

It [leadership] just makes you understand that you're going to take that stand and you're going to have to be able to keep yourself in school. And you're going to have to be able to do things by yourself. Because college isn't mandatory. So, it just helps you get a better grasp on how you're going to take your life from there.
Moreover, study participants agreed that leadership and personal improvement are linked with growth of leadership in others. As Helen described:

Just making improvements, whether they're small or big. It can be something as simple as helping someone else out to make them better, or making yourself better. That's the most important thing you can do is grow, like yourself. Because if yourself doesn't grow, how can you expect others to grow? And I think that's the main point of a leader, the main objective is to help others grow.

This willingness to be a better leader and, more importantly, a better person, reflects the youth’s actual inspiration to “be the best [they] can be for themselves (Bethany)”. Specifically, the youth in this study were inspired to develop and practice leadership for self-improvement reasons. If they felt happy about leadership, it was often because they “want to be the best person I can be for myself… where ‘I’ is the only consistent thing in my life (Bonnie)”. Matthew also expressed his inspiration by leadership and noted on a positive change his leadership is capable of creating within himself, “I inspire myself. I don’t want to be like some of the people in my life. I want to be better than that. So, I want to have a good, secure future”, while another student, Maranda, placed the emphasis on her inner feelings, “[practicing leadership] makes me feel like a better person within myself. It just makes me feel better”.

If leadership practice empowers youth to continue their leadership development and practice, what actions do they take that make them empowered, inspired, and motivated leaders? When describing their leadership, youth identified tutoring and
helping others as core behaviors of a leader. Congruent with adult study participants, high school students emphasized patience in working with others and letting them learn from their mistakes. Chris described this view of leader behavior by saying,

I can let people learn for themselves and make their own mistakes without allowing them to feel like a failure. For example, when I peer tutor, instead of preventing the kids from making a mistake, I can let them make the mistake and then go back and show them why it was wrong. After that I can tell them how great they did on another aspect of their work.

This aspect of leader behavior was not limited to assisting others in their learning; rather a leader can help others with anything, even something minor, yet significant to another person. In other words, leader behavior is propelled by considering other people’s needs as urgent as one’s own. As Bethany stated, “When people, like my friends, don’t know how to do something, I am there to help them and I got them along. I showed them how it is done. I always put everybody else forth”.

Furthermore, this empathetic behavior can be what helps the study participants grow as leaders both for themselves and for other students or groups in which they interact. Respectively, the subjects related their leadership actions to providing direction to the group while remaining engaged in everything that interests them. Jennifer summarized this, stating, “I think I demonstrate it [leadership] in this class: when we got off task, I kind of reel us back in to get back on task, so we can complete our project to better the community”. Another youth, Natasha, stressed: “I make sure I’m actively engaging in whatever’s going on. I'll make sure I know all the different parts of what’s
going on”. For the participants in this study, leadership practice required not only directing group efforts and staying engaged, but also being creative and taking responsibility for the outcomes of leader behavior. As Alice explained, “Practicing leadership is all about creating ideas as in ways to make our project better or more successful and helping design it all”. Similarly, Joe shared a key lesson for them in being a successful leader: “Try to stay positive in everything that you do. And if I do fail and take responsibility for it, but also respond to it and do better”. Taken together, understanding of how one should practice his/her leadership varied, although it was clear that for the study participants, in order to feel positive, inspired, and motivated by the results of their leadership behavior, they needed to constantly challenge themselves with new tasks and activities, responsibly commit their time, skills and knowledge to those in need. In addition, it required youth to continuously self-reflect and practice self-improvement so that they learned from their mistakes and addressed both personal and group goals. Similarly, the adult subjects highlighted an important role of self-reflection and self-improvement in youth leadership education.

**Leadership for Family**

The belief that leadership begins in the family was very important to the young participants in this study. They described the traits and skills necessary to be a leader for their families, and they often discussed the diversity of roles leaders can play in the family. They repeatedly associated leadership with the ability to work hard. They viewed a family leader as someone whose determination and responsibility are fully dedicated to serving others. Karla illustrated this point saying:
He [family leader] works so hard, and everything he's worked
for...everything he's got has been through hard work. I think that's really
important, as a leader, is to have that determination that goes back to that.

You have to work hard to get there. It's not just going to come to you.

Describing her father as a family leader, Kayla added, “He gets just a few hours of sleep
and he is always helping other people out, takes things for them, and he is just a really
hard worker”. As the leader of the family, “he has to be responsible” and “put others
before the self” in order to create a positive change and lead the family in the right,
prosperous direction.

Along with being a hard worker, the high school students ascribed taking
initiative to the qualities of a family leader as well. They highlighted that family
leadership was exemplified and furthered through being in charge of a situation. The role
of the family leader was to recognize those situations and work toward making a
difference. For example, Matthew accentuated the impact of being proactive by noting:

If you don't take that initiative to go and help, who is? I've been in that
position before. So, it's kind of a thing where you’ve got to go, and you’ve
got to make the impact. And you can, no matter how small or how big.

Because you never know what may change somebody's life. And there
you are, you helped. And it can blossom into something beautiful.

Most importantly, taking initiative, according to youth, is a way to demonstrate family
leadership; it is accepting the challenge of responsibility and care for others. As Josh
stated when describing his father, “He is not afraid to take charge of situations. And he
likes to do new things. He can accept the challenge. So, I'd say, definitely, my dad is a leader”.

Although working hard and acting as a leader were the two most prominent themes, the young study participants noted that immaturity along with the lack of creativity and a supporting team can prevent a family leader from realizing his/her leadership potential. Family leadership, as voiced by both groups of participants, assumed a degree of maturity, especially when a leader was expected to act and put the needs and interests of others before his/her own. Giving an example of her immigrant sister, Emily illustrated the significance of the maturity of a family leader:

She was seven when we moved from Europe here. She didn't know the English language. So, she had to learn it herself, in school, in the first grade. And she had to teach us. And my parents didn't know English either. So, as we got older, she still had to translate things for them and deal with all of that. So, I think she had to grow up more than anybody else.

When describing family leadership, the participants focused not only on articulating leader’s characteristics, but also what motivates and inspires one to be a family leader. Overwhelmingly, they indicated a family leader should be a role model, teaching and demonstrating skills and knowledge to others by acting as a leader. All participants stated their leadership has been encouraged and inspired by at least one close family member. According to them, their family leadership was greatly influenced and motivated by observing leadership actions of their parent. To be an effective family leader, actions of
adolescent family leaders were inspired by such traits of their parents as a strong and resilient personality, determination, and a positive outlook. Sarah described this, stating:

My mom is my role model because she is a very strong person. She took leadership on at a very young age to raise her kids. I feel like that's where I got my leadership. And I want to help other people, because I know that my mom helped other people, helped us succeed in life.

Personal determination and goal orientation were also emphasized as qualities that are crucial to a family leader. Participating in the original study students in the agreement with the school staff discerned those qualities as highly important to successful family leadership. Joe explained, “They [role models] are all very motivated and determined. And they all have goals. So, I look up to them, and that has made me the way I am. Because I have all my goals, and I try to be successful every day”.

In addition, they found their family role models to be influential to their positive outlook on life and willingness to make things happier for themselves and others. This was expressed by Alison when describing the role her mother’s leadership played in her attitude: “She always influences me to do the best with myself and accomplish whatever I want to. She tells me I can do anything I put my mind to”. The participants did not perceive the lack of certain skills and qualities in themselves and their role model as a barrier to acting as family leaders; instead, they applied leadership to help people inside and outside their family better and happier. As Karla summarized, “I have always been raised to be nice to everyone, try to do my best around everyone, keep them happy.

The aforementioned ideas on youth willingness and capacity to be leaders for their families were intertwined in their examples of how leaders caring for their families
act. The subjects believed a family leader was always ready to take the initiative and needed no suggestion to help family members. Their family leadership was often practiced during family events and activities, as well as through interactions with younger siblings and older family members. Chris illustrated his family leadership in the following way:

My grandmother needed firewood taken in or she wanted her garage cleaned up. So, I went over to her house and moved some heavy stuff that she couldn’t lift anymore; folded up her firebox and cleaned her stove.

My uncle who was in a car wreck… He can’t move around anymore. So, I helped him with carrying his wood and helped him mow his grass and stuff like that. So, usually it’s family members and friends. I try to help them because I know I am physically able to do stuff. I try to do it as much as I can without them having to ask. That way they don’t feel like they’re bothering me or anything.

Additionally, the youth along with adults seem to find joy and satisfaction in acting as leaders for their families. The notion of altruistic and empathetic help served an important function in family leadership of rural youth; a family leader put his/her leadership skills into practice along with influencing the knowledge and experiences of other family members without any expectation of being recognized or praised. They indicated a family leader always leaves something positive and useful behind. This point was emphasized by Maranda, “They [family] will be like, ‘Oh, how do I do this?’ And then I show them and they would be like, ‘Thanks. Now I can do it myself. We work a lot together on
tractors and stuff”. The participants stressed that family leaders learn from others and act as models to others, working hard, diligently and responsibly to create change resulting in happiness and well being of others.

**Leadership For Community**

In addition to personal and family leadership, the subjects identified community as a core component of leadership. Youth leadership for community was described as positive change that results in empowerment of others, accomplishment, and continuous learning. As Sarah stated:

> Leadership is not all about a personal achievement, but rather a change that affects others. For example, a leader can use other people to help him/her start a project for the community. Just as our community group is doing Christmas Grants and Penny Wars, a leader develops an idea to help the community and uses a group of others to make this idea happen. This leads to success in the community.

Moreover, leadership for community provides youth with opportunities to learn and empower others. Elaborating on the learning aspect of community leadership, Joe noted:

> I learn from every situation. Every project we do in this class, I learn from it. I learn maybe just how to help other people, how to help myself, how to communicate better. It all just teaches me. And I love learning.

However, according to the young and older study participants, community leadership extends beyond learning; the purpose of leadership for community was “to make others as strong as they can be. Because there's so many people without self-confidence that are so amazing, and they deserve to know what they're worth” (Jennifer). It was clear that for
the subjects, leadership defines the positive progress and change in the community and without developing leadership, the actual achievement of change and creation of learning leadership experiences become difficult.

Since community leadership is about helping others to create a change, it requires strong motivation. In the case of the young study participants, they were empowered to further and practice their leadership for community because it was benefitting others. They found community members not only as service recipients, but also role models. Youth leaders, who participated in the original study, strove to improve lives of others; their leadership was motivated by the desire to contribute to another person’s life. For example, Alice underscored the significance of being a leader for others by stating:

I don’t like seeing other people struggle because throughout my whole life, that’s all I see is people struggling, myself struggling. And so, like if there’s any way I could contribute to helping somebody, I'll do it. No questions asked.

Matthew similarly noted:

I would do everything I can for them [community members]. Some people don't have what they need to be fulfilled. I see it as my duty if they reach out to me. Then, I need to help them for that reason. And it's just really important that everyone gets that sense of fulfillment.

Interestingly, all youth study participants experienced emotional satisfaction and fulfillment by practicing their leadership for community. The school principal and course instructor also observed this satisfaction in the students. The participants emphasized the sense of personal achievement from unselfishly helping their community. As Chris
described, his inspiration emerged as a result of community service, “I feel good but I don’t expect anything in return because I feel like it is my job”.

When discussing actions the youth took to help their community, they provided specific examples. They described various projects conducted to support the community and further their leadership. These ranged from community service such as fundraising and volunteering at a local hospital and animal shelter to organizing ‘green’ events, which included trash pick-ups and trail cleanups in the school and county areas. The students noted their leadership for community begins with idea generation. “Creating ideas as in ways to make our project better or more successful and helping design it all” (Bethany) was one of the most representative student responses. Once ideas were generated and refined, youth would focus on their implementation collaboratively with other school students and community members. Natasha reasoned:

I think sometimes it’s really hard to get to somewhere on your own, especially if you're not in the right mindset. So, if you're helping other people that are there and supporting you and giving you a good environment, then, it’s easier to reach that goal. And so, I want to make things easier for other people.

Leadership for community, therefore, was viewed as a way to improve the environment and provide personal support and care to those who are in need without expecting anything in return. As Alison expressed, “I'll just be there for them. I'll help them reach a goal. I'll help them overcome any kind of obstacles and support them in all aspects”. It was clear that the youth associated community leadership not only with specific
leadership actions, but also referred to it as their duty and the way to give back to their community, thus, leading in their own way.

Pathways of Leadership Development and Practice

In addition to the characteristics of leadership, there were numerous accounts on practices contributing to the development of leadership within rural youth in a high school setting. The study participants frequently discussed leadership development and practice as part of their daily life and a life-long goal. They identified several practices that have helped them further their leadership potential. The young leaders noted that their leadership was primarily shaped by volunteering and community service, collaboration with school administration and staff, leadership development course activities, and self-reflection. These practices were also viewed as contributing to youth leadership by their school principal and course teacher. The following is the description of the aforementioned practices.

Volunteering and Community Service. Youth experiences in volunteering and community service as part of their leadership development process were centered on several major projects such as fundraising for Uganda farmers, community antique car show, collecting and assembling care packages for the U.S. troops, local trash pickups, and trail and street cleanups. All of the aforementioned projects were proposed, designed, and conducted primarily by the students.

Working with, in, and for the community to make a positive impact, “help everyone in someway” (Bethany), and “improve leadership skills” (Alice) were seen as important to the youth as a whole. Although student participants did not emphasize specific leadership skills they would like to bolster, they often discussed how being part
of community-oriented initiatives allowed them to create positive social and economic change, better the school, and sharpen their social skills. Overall, volunteering and community service practices allowed youth to “learn more about leadership” (Chris), “create visions and goal to help strive for greatness and leadership” (Josh), and “grow as a person” (Kayla). Natasha also illustrated this point saying:

I want to be a big part of this school and what happens in the future. By being involved in my community, I can do this. The projects that we will complete will best help me in my future story.

Participants repeatedly emphasized a learning aspect to their leadership practice in the community. Specifically, volunteering and community service helped them broaden their perspectives on local and global community issues, foresee the impact of their leadership at the individual and community levels, and envision a cause for which they could dedicate their leadership. As Maranda eloquently explained:

The more disciplined attitude that we have toward the project that we are creating and running, the more people will respect us and notice the cause were fighting for. When we fail at one thing we must learn to adapt and overcome the situation we’re given. The more we go out into our community the more people notice us and join us even if we failed.

Similarly, another student, Emily, emphasized the learning value of community service and volunteering in his leadership development stating, “Leadership allows us to learn about people our age in our community and in other communities around the world. And looking at what they’d done, we can learn from that as well. And continue to grow”.

Dedicating their leadership to make a positive difference in the world appeared to
empower participants to be better leaders, as well as provide them with an opportunity to experience outcomes of their leadership. Moreover, it enabled students to see results of their decision-making and take responsibility for their actions as they involved other citizens. Helen exemplified this saying:

We’re trying to get letters back from the troops that we sent flavor packets for water and food. I think having getting to see that, getting to see what you do and how it impacts people is probably the best way to do it. You’re doing it yourself and seeing people and how it helps them impact someone is probably the best thing.

Leadership development through active community service and volunteering was just one example of the outcomes youth saw leaders could achieve. They were able to observe and learn from the impact their leadership was making in their community and other people’s lives, establish trusting relationships with community members, practice responsible decision-making, and take part in the local and global positive change.

Collaboration with School Administration and Staff. In addition to volunteering and community service, the participants identified collaboration with school principal and teachers as a valuable practice of their leadership development. They emphasized willingness of school administration and personnel to share their leadership responsibilities, delegate the power, and take into account youth voices in the school decision-making process. There were numerous examples of students leading high school faculty meetings, sharing their perspectives with teachers on how to improve learning and student engagement in the school, as well as representing their peers in the processes of internal event planning and organization. Surprisingly, the school principal and course
instructor also saw benefits for their students’ leadership from their active engagement and collaboration. According to the participants, establishing positive and collaborative relationships between school staff and young leaders allowed the latter to practice and build on their leadership knowledge and skills, and also observe adult leadership in a working environment. One student, Alison, described this experience saying, “That’s one of the main parts of learning leadership – watching the teachers and watching what they do and how they respond to the situations is how you learn leadership in one way”. However, leadership development and learning leadership from adults were not the only outcomes of youth-faculty collaboration. The subjects particularly described a positive shift in the overall student-faculty professional relationships. Specifically, daily interactions with the school administration and faculty were now grounded in trust, mutual responsibility for personal and school success, confidence in each other’s ability to fulfill assigned roles, active engagement in school affairs, and constructive communication. Taken together, the contribution of student-faculty partnership emphasizes a mutual goal and decision to grow personal and school leadership, as well as the conviction to support and be responsible for each other. Youth seemed to tie this conviction to faculty’s willingness to perceive students as equal partners in learning and administrative processes.

**Course Activities.** Another contributor to youth leadership development practice was students’ active engagement in activities offered as part of the leadership development course. Some of the activities included youth participation in the creation of school news, teaching technology to county’s middle school students, and fundraising for Uganda farmers. Course activities as a practice of youth leadership development
demonstrate the scope of leadership skills and experiences. Specifically, participants noted the impact activities had on their understanding of leadership and its importance for personal and professional development in the future. For instance, Josh reported, “Before, I didn’t really think about leadership or leadership qualities and how they even make their way in the situations. Now, I think about it, “If I want to be a leader, I need to do this”.

In addition to a deeper understanding of the role of leadership in their and other people’s lives, course activities fostered students’ ability to apply leadership knowledge and skills under different circumstances. Sharing his perspective on the role of this practice, Matthew pointed, “I have become a better leader by being a part of this team. I have learned how to direct people without being rude and controlling. I have learned how to take everyone's ideas and make it into one”. Moreover, active engagement in the course bolstered study participants’ confidence in and responsibility for being leaders. This awareness of the impact of leadership development activities can be described by the quote from Natasha:

I think it is really helpful and I think it’s made me a little more responsible about wanting to actually teach people something new and making sure that they are ready to go before they even get somewhere and making them fully prepared.

The students emphasized that developing and practicing leadership through course projects while being in the high school would have a positive impact on their professional skills and career in the future. The notion of application of leadership in a specific profession served as an important motivator in youth leadership development and practice; a leader could and should transmit his/her skills and knowledge in any work
field and then add new leadership qualities to better the community. Karla summarized this idea saying, “I do think it's important that we do learn those skills especially before going to college. Because we're going to need them in whatever profession we do, no matter what”. This process will continue with every new leader but each leader will enrich their area of expertise and encourage leadership behavior in others through active leadership practice and continuous self-improvement.

**Self-Reflection.** Participants identified self-reflection as a practice that contributed to the development of their leadership. They highlighted different roles self-reflection can play in their leadership development. Self-reflection allows one to resolve an issue and identify a pathway to achieve the best possible outcome. Jennifer described this impact of self-reflection saying:

> A leader can overcome an obstacle by stepping away from it and thinking. This gives a person time to critically process what is actually happening. It allows the leader to self-reflect and see what needs to be changed in order to achieve the best outcome.

This value of self-reflection is not limited to leader’s productivity; rather self-reflection is a process that has the capacity to influence personal betterment and self-awareness of leadership abilities.

Furthermore, this capacity of self-reflection to further one’s leadership potential can be what mobilizes someone to practice their leadership; as previously discussed, the subjects believed that with inspiration, motivation, dedication, and responsibility everyone can be a leader. Self-reflection is, therefore, a way to evaluate personal and leadership strengths and weaknesses, as well as to determine the extent of leadership
potential development. According to youth, one’s ability to lead is defined based on how effectively s/he can analyze potential effects of his/her actions. Josh described this importance of self-reflection stating:

In order to be a proper leader, a person has to know their strengths and weaknesses. If one can’t self-reflect, then they don’t have the ability to lead others. If a person doesn’t even look to improve themselves, then how can they properly lead others?

Therefore, for the youth, self-reflection was not only the way of self-improvement, but also an imperative metric of one’s capacity to lead and make a positive difference in his/her own life and lives of others. Altogether, youth understanding of the role of self-reflection highlighted its significance in expanding leadership potential, determining a direction for personal and professional growth, overcoming challenges, and effectively leading others.

**Discussion**

The findings from this study underscore the significance of understanding rural youths perspectives of leadership and practices contributing to its development and practice. This understanding can be used to guide the design and implementation of youth leadership development programs. While research on rural youth leadership typically defines youth leadership as youth engagement in responsible leadership behavior and/or a set of skills, the findings from this study emphasize the complexity and interconnectedness of leadership with youth personality. In this study, participants differentiated leadership based on impact areas (self, family, and community). Leadership for the self, family, and community differed in their ultimate goals; from the perspective
of rural youth, different leadership characteristics, aspirations, motivational factors of leadership development and practice and leadership actions are ascribed to youth leadership based on its impact areas.

The current youth leadership inquiry does not adequately reflect voices of rural youth on leadership. For example, while research highlights the potential of every youth to be leaders (Mortensen et al., 2014), rural youth de-emphasized the importance of specific interpersonal, professional, and learning skills and instead view leadership as an integration of various skills, leadership knowledge, inspiration, and motivation with the emphasis on ethics. Also, the youth recognized three areas of a positive leadership impact that included personal, family, and community areas over individualistic leadership nature, which is a predominant theme of current youth leadership research.

Another important difference between current youth leadership research and perspectives of rural youth on leadership that emerged in this study is the emphasis on personal and community betterment as a result of ethical leadership actions. For study participants, leadership was a mechanism for improving the self, identifying personality strengths and weaknesses, and determining the extent of leadership potential. The development and practice of leadership was integrated into community change that was perceived by the student as a personal responsibility to give back and contribute to community growth. This finding supports research on youth leadership within communities, thus, illustrating youth willingness and need to make a positive impact and promote long-term change within their community. Although this finding does align with the current scholarship, in this study, youth emphasized the altruistic and empathetic
nature of their personal and community leadership, which is presently missing in existing youth leadership concepts and models.

Many contemporary youth leadership concepts are self-centered, focusing little on the role of family in the development and practice of youth leadership. In this study, participants felt it imperative to learn from family, serve and take care of their family, as well as enrich family capacity with their leadership skills and experiences. Achievement of the common family good and happiness was perceived possible through hard work, dedication to family values, and putting family interests before their own. In addition, rural youth identified family members as their leadership role models and a constant source of leadership inspiration.

Similarly to the conceptualization of leadership, the participants also shared unique perspectives on practices contributing to their leadership development and practice. Although research has been conducted to determine effective for youth leadership development practices, rural youth along with the school principal and leadership development course instructor in this study had different ideas on how their leadership can be fostered. Volunteering, community- and school-oriented course projects, collaboration with school faculty, and self-reflection were dominate practices identified that are currently either missing or incompletely described in the existing scholarship on rural youth leadership. These practices allowed rural youth to bolster their leadership and observe its impact in the school and community settings, as well as create trusting and responsible relationships with adults, learn from their leadership actions, and evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses as emerging leaders. Youth ideas of developing leadership through different practices, whether they are purposefully offered
by educators or not, emphasize youth self-awareness as leaders and their responsibility for developing leadership within the self and are consistent with overarching in the literature idea that everyone can be a leader.

Overall, despite some alignment of rural youth perspectives on leadership and the pathways of its development and practice present in youth leadership research, no single study captured the complexity and interconnectedness of rural youth leadership with their personality, family, and community. Moreover, with the abundance of leadership development programs in urban and rural educational settings, the present study identified the combination of volunteering, community service, collaboration with school faculty, and self-reflecting practices as most valuable to rural youth personal and leadership development. This is not surprising, as rural youth are often considered a marginalized group, whose conceptions of leadership and its development are rarely taken into account when designing leadership development courses and programs.

Limitations

This study has two important limitations related to the study sample and the method of qualitative secondary analysis. First, the sample of rural youth was relatively homogenous. The vast majority of rural participating in the original study were female students enrolled in the leadership development course. While this sample of youth reflects the class enrollment, future research should explore the extent to which these findings include the perspectives of more gender diverse youth enrolled in the course and attending the school. Similarly, since the course enrollment is voluntary, it is anticipated that the original study participants may posses more knowledge concerning leadership than their peers due to their personal interest in leadership development and community
change. That being said, it is believed that this sample selection process may also reflect the strength of the study. Because the participating youth mindfully selected the leadership development course at the time of data collection, they represent rich cases of youth primed to think about and practice their leadership.

Second, the data used in this study are relatively limited. Specifically, since the data were collected for different research purposes, a study conducted specifically to answer current research questions could present additional and/or different finding dimensions. To partly eliminate the effect of such limitation on present research conclusions, the data were triangulated. Therefore, the findings present only repetitive and consistent themes emerged as a result of analysis of observational, interview, and document data. The narratives youth shared were collected longitudinally and are rich, contextually abundant, and clear. They reflect perspectives of rural youth who care about leadership and foresee the significance of its development in every activity they took part in. There are narratives and observations of youth who committed and dedicated their time to a yearlong leadership development course and community and school service. Therefore, data utilized in this study were the result of youth thoughtful engagement with the concept of leadership and its practice as it applies to rural youth personal and community goals.

**Theoretical and Practical Implications**

The findings presented in this study suggest that present assumptions and beliefs on youth leadership may need to be reexamined. Youth leadership administrators, educators, and practitioners can use the findings from this study to evaluate their understanding of youth leadership and effective practices of its development and the
extent to which this understanding matches the perspectives of youth, especially from rural areas, as they design leadership development interventions. The voices shared by youth in this study do not invalidate previously derived empirical research; rather they emphasize the need to connect youth ideas on leadership with youth leadership training programs. As found by researchers (Mortensen et al., 2014) and identified in this study, youth leadership can and should be fostered in anyone who is motivated to invest in personal, family, and community growth, prioritizing the needs of others over personal ones. Moreover, it appears crucial to take into account family and community roots of leadership as recounted by rural youth to adequately meet their needs in personal, social, and professional growth.

Centering youth leadership education around adult assumptions on leadership and practices of its development, youth leadership educators might unintentionally limit learning of youth leadership and demotivate rural youth involvement in the leadership development process due to the differences in leadership understanding. Such disconnection in understanding may lead to skewing youth leadership knowledge, and, as a result, develop individualistic rather than family- and community-oriented leadership behavior. With this in mind, it is important to consider current youth values and beliefs on leadership, and whether those leadership values and beliefs result from prevailing leadership education. As rural youth progress in their leadership education, it appears necessary to examine if their values and beliefs will more closely align with adult ethical and leadership virtues and understanding.

The findings of this study were both somewhat consistent with and extend previous limited research on the notion of leadership and contributing to leadership
development practices from a rural youth perspective. Specifically, the present research expands previous research findings on the importance of leader’s personality in school and community change, as well as add to the list of practices used to further their leadership and become active members of professional collaborations with adults (Hastings et al., 2011; Seevers & Dormody, 1995; Terry, 2003). However, leadership to better the self, family, and community, caring and empowering others, engaging others in making a positive change as leaders, and reflecting on leadership potential within the self as fundamental processes and results of leadership practice shared by rural high school students have not been highlighted in previous studies. Moreover, authentic to each leadership area youth’s knowledge about leadership, their motivation, aspirations, and actions in leadership practice present a valuable contribution to the youth leadership scholarship. Additionally, these findings expand the thinking about what leadership means to rural youth and what practices they find valuable and effective in bolstering their leadership.

As shown in the present study, it is crucial to include rural youth in the dialogue on the notion of leadership in order to make leadership education more responsive to the developmental needs of youth in marginalized areas. Hearing voices of rural youth can excite their interests in leadership development, being role models for their peers, serving their schools and communities as equal partners, encourage self-reflection, and motivate them to exercise their leadership potential for their family and community common good early on in life to prepare them to lead now and in the future.

As this study provides a set of conceptual constructs unifying youth personal, family, and community leadership, the findings of this study resonate with the call of
Kress (2006) to re-conceptualize rural youth leaders in a different way we conceptualize adult leaders and, as a result, develop a theoretical framework grounded in youth input. While this study presents a limited knowledge on rural youth ideas around leadership and practices of its development, results of utilized secondary analysis of longitudinal qualitative data can serve as a foundation for future studies to engage more diverse rural youth population to examine how their ideas on leadership are shaped and what educational interventions they find most contributing to their leadership practice.
CHAPTER 4

MODELING YOUTH LEADERSHIP: APPLICATION OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THEORIES AND ETHICS

Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to describe youth leadership as a central construct to personal growth during adolescence. In this paper a functional definition of youth leadership is presented, along with a youth leadership model connected to theories of personality development. As part of the model, ethics is suggested as a core of youth leadership and its development. Youth leadership is presented as a crucial identity structure for personally and socially significant results that ultimately have the capacity to impact the overall welfare of the community.

Introduction

There has been an attempt to define youth leadership and design models to illustrate its structure and practical use in leadership education for many years (Whitehead, 2009). Existing research on youth leadership focuses on various youth leadership aspects relating to youth motivation in leadership practice, youth perceptions of leadership, and their leadership experiences (Hendricks, 2011; TerMaat-McGrath, 2010; Wright, 2008). However, little is known about the breadth and depth of interconnections between adolescent personality and their leadership skills and experiences. Scholarship seemingly is overpopulated with studies that explore only segregated aspects of youth leadership In fact, the notion of youth leadership is often grounded in definitions of adult leadership and lacks core developmental characteristics (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Wright, 2008).
There are also multiple examples of evaluation of youth leadership education that describe youth experiences in leadership training rather than its overall impact on youth decision-making and personality (De Simone, 2012; Kenton, 2012; TerMaat-McGrath, 2010). In addition, defined from perspectives of organizational theory, society, and power, theories of youth leadership often simplify its complexity. Therefore to holistically define youth leadership, a critical analysis of existing research is needed. Increasingly, there is a need for leadership educators to develop leadership integrative with youth personality. Leadership education, hence, should be connected to youth learning experiences that influence their cognitive, affective, and motivational structures. The integration of leadership education into overall youth development often requires restructuring existing leadership learning opportunities with an emphasis on theoretical approaches to youth personality development. Incorporation of such theories into youth leadership education can unify educational efforts and meet social needs in growing ethical, motivated, responsible, community-oriented and successful youth leaders. This paper briefly reviews the youth leadership scholarship and examines youth development theories that are further used to model youth leadership.

**Situating Youth Leadership Theory and Research**

Throughout the years youth leadership scholars have attempted to define and operationalize the notion of leadership in respect to youth development needs. The approaches taken to examine youth leadership vary depending on a researcher’s philosophical paradigm. A philosophical paradigm determines researcher choice of study design and methods, scope of research questions, sample characteristics and its size, etc. (Gutek, 2004; Merriam, 2009). As a result of any inquiry, research findings allow the
researcher to further speculate, prescribe, or analyze the relationship between an
examined issue and the existing world. To systematize youth leadership scholarship,
current youth leadership research is evaluated from speculative, prescriptive, and analytic
philosophical paradigms.

Broadly, philosophical paradigms to knowledge generation imply the way of
understanding the world. Philosophical paradigms define “the relation that man has to the
world in which he lives, as far as both man and the world are affected by culture” (Dewey
as edited by Boydston, 1990, p.467). Intertwined with man’s perception of the world,
they determine the collection of knowledge and its further assessment. Synchronized with
active learning, philosophical paradigms allow for analysis, synthesis, and summary of
man’s experiences submerged into a specific culture. Moreover, analytic, speculative, and
prescriptive philosophical paradigms guide one’s reflection and interpretation of “reality
as a whole by explaining it in the most general and systematic way” (Kneller, 1971, p.4).
As a result, previously accumulated knowledge and experiences are furthered through
active evaluation, analysis, and synthesis and evolve as a coherent complex system called
knowledge.

In more detail, the ultimate purpose of the speculative philosophical paradigm is
to organize accumulated knowledge and experiences into a coherent system.
Desegregated information is ordered in respect to its contribution to the overall
understanding of the world. Individual knowledge is combined and arranged into a whole
(Kneller, 1971). Conversely, the prescriptive philosophical paradigm seeks to establish
standards of knowledge assessment. It aims to 1) describe the knowledge through its
various characteristics and relationships integrated with experiences and 2) determine the
importance of the knowledge for a specific field by clarifying its capacity to broaden our understanding and systematize previously observed phenomena. Finally, the analytic philosophical paradigm examines the meaning of commonly used terminologies that constitute the notion of the knowledge. Depending on the context and a discipline, the definition of terminologies varies. The approach, therefore, aims to derive the word definition, as well as reduce inconsistency of knowledge use across various disciplines.

In sum, each philosophical paradigm used to generate and systematize knowledge greatly contributes to discipline coherence and wholeness. Speculative, prescriptive, and analytic paradigms further understanding of a phenomenon as a system, explain it in respect to its major components and aspects, and deliver commonly accepted and thoroughly described terminologies and experiences without undermining the importance of each. Kneller (1971) argues that speculation without analysis limits our understanding of an examined phenomenon whereas analysis without prescription eliminates its wholeness. Therefore speculative, prescriptive, and analytic paradigms should equally guide scholarship in order to maintain the sustainable development of a discipline. The paradigms are then used to frame existing knowledge of youth leadership, thus, providing structure for a seemingly disintegrated youth leadership theory.

The categorization of research on youth leadership in respect to speculative, prescriptive, and analytic paradigms was guided by several criteria. Studies were ascribed to speculative youth leadership inquiry if they contain a) propositions on youth leadership as a system and/or b) elements and characteristics attributed to youth personality, educational environment, and/or community. Prescriptive youth leadership studies were identified in respect to a) measurable outcomes of youth leadership development and/or
b) instruments and/or methods of youth leadership assessment. Lastly, analytic youth leadership research was considered as such when it describes etymology of youth leadership.

**Speculative youth leadership inquiry.** As stated earlier, the purpose of the speculative philosophical paradigm is to recognize the order and wholeness of a phenomenon by viewing it as a system. Viewed as a system, youth leadership is interconnected with personality structures such as knowledge, attitudes, will and desire, decision making, reasoning, and critical thinking, intra-/interpersonal skills, and oral and written communication (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). A youth leadership conceptual model proposed by Ricketts and Rudd (2012) outlines the importance of experiences, cognition, and behavior evolving as a result of mastery of youth leadership activities. Similarly, Owen (2012) explores youth leadership through leadership identity lenses. It is suggested that under various internal and external influences youth leadership roots in the self. Specifically, self-awareness, self-confidence, interpersonal efficacy, skills, and motivations play a crucial role in formation of leadership identity.

Another group of studies emphasize youth behavior and decision making skills as key elements of youth leadership (Kress, 2006; Zacharatos et al., 2000). To be effective, youth leadership must be developed in environments “where youth skill development is encouraged through hands-on participation and by recognizing that youth experiences are transformed by the youth who participate in them” (Kress, 2006, pp.54-55). Youth leadership is, therefore, viewed as a sum of experiences emerging as a result of adolescent personal transformation and decision-making. In addition to youth behavior as a youth leadership component, Zacharatos, Barling and Kelloway (2000) suggest that
youth leadership consists of inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and consideration. Conversely, Whitehead (2009) defines youth leadership beyond personality to include empathy, trust, and commitment to social values as main youth leadership components. According to Whitehead, youth leadership is “complex and tugs on emotional interactions” (p.847) furthering leader’s self-awareness, self-confidence, ability to grow leadership in others, and integration with community interests and needs.

Various empirical studies on youth leadership also imply connections among youth leadership, youth social skills, extraversion, intelligence (Guerin et al., 2011) and academic intrinsic motivation. For instance, Guerin and her team (2011) explored the relationship between adult leadership potential and the exhibition of leadership traits in childhood through adolescent social skills, extraversion, and intelligence. They concluded that extraversion had the strongest correlation with adult leadership potential, while intelligence had little relationship to youth leadership. Additionally, they found that individual differences in temperament and subsequent personality traits may play a role in developmental processes, and might eventually result in leadership status. Academic intrinsic motivation and youth leadership developed from childhood through adolescence were also strongly related (Gottfried et al., 2011). Specifically, the higher young children and adolescents were motivated in academics, the higher they were motivated to lead in adulthood.

Other speculative self-reported studies describe youth leadership as a combination of collective action, modeling, mentoring, and character integrated in a specific developmental and/or social change (Mortensen et al., 2014). Youth reported leadership within the context of “an inclusive opportunity available to anyone who is
motivated to make change happen… working for the common good, putting others’ needs before one’s own” (pp.457-458). Broadened by the diversity of youth leadership roles such as family, educational, or peer leaders, youth leadership as a system extends beyond beliefs, experiences, and personality traits.

While theoretical propositions on the nature of youth leadership lay within social and personality systems, research findings described above differ on the specific elements constituting the core of youth leadership. Depending on the research context and theoretical lenses, youth leadership components vary. As a result, youth leadership remains a complex and ambiguous construct, and leadership definitions continue to be inconsistent. Therefore, there is a need for more collaborative efforts to “develop a distinct youth-driven framework of leadership” (Mortensen et al., 2014, p.459).

**Prescriptive youth leadership inquiry.** The ultimate goal of the prescriptive philosophical paradigm is to identify specific characteristics, relationships, and connections to suggest measurable outcomes/indicators of a phenomenon. In the light of youth leadership, when applied, the prescriptive philosophical paradigm informs the categorization of youth leadership studies according to breadth and depth of described youth leadership elements and ways of their assessment. Various leadership styles, factors influencing leadership development and practice, leadership skills and competencies are prescribed as a core of leadership assessment. As a result, prescriptive leadership studies are abundant with assessment techniques and scales allowing researchers and practitioners to determine the extent of developed leadership and one’s predisposition to be a leader.
In regard to various bases to assess the extent of leadership potential, different competencies and skills are considered as possible leadership determinants. A group of researchers led by Mumford (2000) explain that leadership and its development are integral to the development of competencies, motivation, and personality. Specifically, such competencies as problem solving, solution construction, social judgment, creative thinking, and leader’s expertise are considered most important in the assessment of youth leadership.

Additionally, leadership competencies can be measured via evaluation of cognitive and intellectual abilities, attitudes, motivation, self-awareness and self-efficacy, behaviors, past leadership experience, and various interpersonal, learning, and professional skills (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Jones, 1938; Klau, 2006; Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Other scholars also identify personal growth and conceptual awareness (Mawson, 2001), and activism (Chambers & Phelps, 1993) as possible metrics of developed youth leadership. Although not all scholars agree that motivation and previous experiences in leadership are required for leadership assessment (Chambers & Phelps, 1993), they play an important role in determining impact of leadership practice on leader personality and community (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Mawson, 2001).

Numerous attempts have been made to quantitatively determine the extent of developed youth leadership. For instance, Kosutic (2010) proposed a model of youth leadership and designed an instrument of its assessment. According to the author, youth leadership is a sum of processes including following, knowing, and influencing. She suggests youth leadership can be evaluated by examining characteristics authentic to leader’s personality, his/her relationship with others, activities s/he is involved in, and the
extent of persuasion employed to execute leadership goals. As follows, the designed youth leadership assessment tool aims to explore 1) leader’s confidence in knowing specific activities and personalities of people involved as well as personal values and beliefs, and 2) confidence in influencing others by organizing activities, building interpersonal relationships, and through persuasion, motivation, and inspiration. Therefore youth leadership can be developed by furthering one’s knowledge of him/herself as an individual, training in relationship building, and refining one’s organizational skills.

Similarly, Hindes (2011) argues that youth leadership is “a dynamic social and developmental process whereby an individual influences others to achieve common goals in a particular setting or context” (p.7). Hindes emphasized the development of leader’s influential skills to transform behaviors and thinking of others. Based on this understanding of youth leadership, she prescribes to evaluate youth leadership based on leader’s performance outcomes, self-efficacy, problem-solving skills, and the depth of self-concept.

As shown in the aforementioned research, youth leadership is purported to represent a sum of various skills, competencies, and processes. Motivation as part of leader’s personality and personal influence plays an important role not only in leadership development, but also in predicting the effectiveness of leader behavior and its contribution to the welfare of an educational organization and/or community. Nevertheless, little is known about young leader’s awareness of his/her leadership potential and leadership in general, its importance for personal development, leader’s attitudes towards leadership practice and his/her actions.
Lastly, the assessment of youth leadership in respect to its components is rarely systematic. Specifically, youth leadership is assessed 1) out of the context of its occurrence; 2) distinctly from the relationship between youth leadership and youth’s cognitive, affective, and behavioral structures; and 3) with the little emphasis on leader’s gender, educational status, and socio-economic nuances. Hence, prescription of authentic youth leadership characteristics and their assessment lacks a systematic understanding of youth leadership as a construct, which results in inconsistent, often unreliable, and is applicable to limited population outcomes.

**Analytic youth leadership inquiry.** As described earlier, the purpose of the analytic philosophical paradigm is to gain a broad and in-depth understanding of a phenomenon by examining its authentic aspects and characteristics (Kneller, 1971). Analysis, as an approach to derive a more comprehensive meaning, allows for identification of structural elements and interactions between them. If application of the prescriptive paradigm excludes examination of the context where a phenomenon occurs, the analytic philosophical paradigm allows a researcher to discover and explain the nature of the phenomenon within a specific environment.

Analytic leadership studies provide an analysis of various concepts of leadership in regard to particular contexts. The meaning of leadership is determined based on several criteria. First, the analysis of accumulated leadership knowledge not only demonstrates the evolution of leadership as a construct but also identifies major shifts in social and organizational sciences that have influenced the leadership inquiry over time. Second, analyzed leadership knowledge is grouped in theoretical frameworks, application of which allows researchers and practitioners in the field of leadership to accomplish
different outcomes of youth leadership development. Third, the analytic philosophical paradigm applied to leadership inquiry promotes better understanding of youth leadership as a complex phenomenon existing within social and educational environments.

Youth leadership studies conducted in various settings such as educational, social, organizational, etc., suggest youth leadership can be interpreted in several different ways. If leadership is examined within the context of social development, it strongly correlates with adult personal and identity structures (Day et al., 2014). Leader development is driven by human development, and, thus, the development of leadership is a process of personal growth. Scholars of organizational leadership (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005) describe leadership from an array of perspectives including professional competencies, virtues, collective nature, personality factors, leader incompetence, and organizational effectiveness. In this light, leadership reflects organizational and personal factors influencing its outcomes and the extent of its development.

Analytic youth leadership studies also explore youth leadership within the context of youth responsibility (Hammond-Diedrich & Walsh, 2006) and leadership giftedness (Roach et al., 1999). Researchers emphasize youth perception of leadership and responsibility to youth leadership potential (Hammond-Diedrich & Walsh, 2006). Roach and her team (1999) suggest leadership needs to be reviewed in regard to leadership giftedness along with group and youth roles and risks youth take to accomplish those goals. Unfortunately, such understanding of youth leadership is rooted in perceptions imposed by youth leadership programs and organizations rather than youth themselves.

Another approach to analyze the meaning of youth leadership is gender-based (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Mullen & Tuten, 2004). Koenig and colleagues (2011) suggest
youth leadership correlates with leadership roles taken by female and male leaders, whereas adult leadership varies based on organizational settings and gender-authentic characteristics such as warmness, coolness, assertiveness, and masculinity (Haber, 2011; Kawakami et al., 2000). Therefore, gender aspects of youth leadership should be regarded in defining the construct, as well as selecting methods of youth leadership development and assessment.

All of all, the analysis of leadership knowledge and practice aims to clarify the meaning of leadership with regard to the settings in which it occurs. The meaning of leadership elements and factors of its development depend on researchers’ perceptions of leadership, previous leadership studies, and leadership context. Organizational structures, society, personality, and gender influence the definition of youth leadership along with implications of its development.

In summary, speculative youth leadership research seeks to establish theories of leadership with regard to the world, society, and education to order and interpret conflicting data from behavioral, sociological, psychological, educational sciences and management. Such attempts are distinguished by conceptual propositions supported or disregarded by quantitative and qualitative analyses. Conversely, prescriptive youth leadership discourse specifies outcomes of youth leadership development and suggests ways to assess them. Particularly, leadership investigators identify the number of leadership outcomes such as sets of skills, knowledge, behaviors or pathways of accruing power, its application to complex social organizations, on one hand, and offer an array of approaches to evaluate the extent of leadership outcomes, on the other. Finally, analytic youth leadership studies explore youth leadership systematically within specific socio-
economic and educational environments. These studies primarily suggest that environment plays a crucial role in furthering specific youth leadership characteristics. Depending on the environment, the meaning of youth leadership as a construct can vary.

Although speculative, prescriptive, and analytic philosophical paradigms greatly contribute to organization and categorization of the existing youth leadership knowledge base, there is still a lack of a commonly accepted definition and structure of youth leadership. Incorporation of the aforementioned paradigms into youth leadership inquiry can bring more clarity, order, and consistency in the use of youth leadership definitions. Additionally, viewing youth leadership as a complex system evolved as a result of prescription, description, and analysis can inform the development of youth leadership in various settings and assure more reliable and valid assessment of leadership within youth. What follows is a summary of development theories that inform components of leadership and its education during adolescence. Although the theories are not described comprehensively, they offer enough background for youth leadership educators to identify major directions of leadership development within youth.

Theories of Youth Development

Development of youth and their leadership is a complex and dynamic process. Facilitation of this process requires recognition of developmental characteristics authentic to youth (Owen, 2012). Acknowledgement of youth developmental differences and attributes helps educators decide “what to include or exclude from leadership development, communicate values and beliefs about the nature and purpose of leadership, and articulate and assess the efficacy of a leadership’s program’s design and delivery” (Owen, 2012, p.17).
Age differences associated with the period of adolescence are particularly important in leadership development because they inform the ways youth accumulate and further their knowledge; accrue and refine their skills; develop and employ their abilities in daily learning and socialization; and cope with and experience new educational and social situations and relationships. The process of development requires youth to adapt, design, complexify, and diversify their ways of learning about and interacting with the world (Crandell et al., 2012). This complex process involves continuous change in cognitive, motivational, affective, behavioral, and moral (ethical) structures and is an essential part of youth growth as self-motivated, intelligent, self-aware, responsible, and adaptive individuals. Table 1 below provides a summary of theories used to inform adolescent development occurring in cognitive, motivational, affective, behavioral, and ethical structures.

Table 1  
Theories of Youth Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory of Development</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Information is assimilated, stored, and organized into coherent thoughts and ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>Extrinsic and intrinsic motives</td>
<td>Cognition and development are activated by internal and external stimuli, such as curiosity, interest, appraisal, recognition, and emotional fulfillment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Behavioral</td>
<td>Emotions and actions</td>
<td>Emotions are biological and social reactions stimulating the development of identity-linked concepts, behavioral and judgmental standards, and self-regulatory influences. Actions are developmental outcomes of educational activities, social interactions, learning, and personal change. They help youth translate values, principles, and knowledge learned through social interactions and self-reflection into unique experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical</td>
<td>Moral reasoning</td>
<td>Judgment or choice rooted in cognitive reasoning that allows for defining moral (ethical) values and principles, applying them to life situations, and conceptualizing such values, principles, and learned life examples as abstract and universal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth personality and its structures evolve gradually. According to Piaget (as cited in Crain, 1980), development is a stage-based changing process that represents increasingly comprehensive ways of thinking grounded in constant cognitive exploration, manipulation, and making sense of environment, and, as a result, construction of new and more elaborate structures for dealing with it (p.76). Cognitive developmental change can be broken into two major parts: a) constant interaction with the environment and its comprehension, and b) creation of new and meaningful to a person structures. These structures allow one to better understand the environment by applying and testing newly developed cognitive mechanisms.

As a process, a **cognitive developmental change** has three major tendencies: assimilation, accommodation, and organization. A continuum of information represented by assimilation, accommodation, and organization lies in the process of inquiry. Specifically, it is representative of how one inquires, processes, and organizes the information available in the environment into coherent systems of thoughts and ideas. Therefore, cognitive development is a continuous process of construction, in which one through his/her own activities “builds increasingly differentiated and comprehensive cognitive structures” (Crain, 1980, p.77).

Generally, the period of adolescence outlines a few cognitive changes crucial for our understanding of how youth learn about the world and leadership in particular. Adolescents comparing to younger children begin to think about far-reaching problems related to equity, education, social justice, and leadership. They are capable of relating such issues to their own knowledge and foresee outcomes of their actions initiated to resolve those issues. They easily grasp abstract principles and construct their own
meaning relevant to their environment and previous experiences. More understanding and meaning is brought by engaging adolescents in active learning. It allows them to process, assimilate, and organize information simultaneously with its application to specific learning activities. Adolescents, thus, are enabled to build cognitive structures independently from external assistance, although learning is nourished, stimulated, and challenged by the environment (Crandell et al., 2012).

The changing learning environment inevitably creates situations of internal conflict. The nature of the internal conflict is described by limitations in existing cognitive processes on one hand, and the necessity of development of new ways of knowledge acquisition on the other (Steinberg, 2008). Due to the lack of more sophisticated cognitive structures, new knowledge and experiences may confuse adolescents and at the same time motivate their cognition to accrue new patterns of information assimilation and retention (Evans et al., 1998). As a result, under the influence on the internal conflict, cognitive processes constantly increasingly change, adapt, and become more complex and diverse (Owen, 2012).

Another core process of youth development is sociocultural. Sociocultural development enumerates the important tasks and challenges adolescents face as they develop new relationships with social and educational systems. During adolescence, sociocultural development is stimulated by several factors such as internal motives and needs of personal growth, environment, and experiences collected as a result of previous social interactions (Cloninger, 1996; Larson & Pleck, 1999).

Flavell (1985) suggests that human learning and development is driven by extrinsic and intrinsic stimuli. Although he recognizes an important role of behavioral
and social factors in development, learning that is based on personal interest and curiosity are seen as more effective and impactful. The cognition, which is activated by unexpected, unfamiliar, or intriguing stimuli, centers on examination of the world for the purpose of learning rather than receiving recognition, appraisal, or some sort of external reinforcement. Intrinsic motivation “activates or intensifies human cognitive processing” (Flavell, 1985, pp.15-16) and, thus, is important for overall adolescent development. Specifically, the desire and willingness “to master problematic situations, to be effective with respect to one’s environment, to be competent” (Flavell, 1985, p. 19) assure continuous exploration and determine the extent of behavioral change. Intrinsic motivational factors greatly contribute to the expansion of adolescent skill mastery, their competence and effectiveness in a specific activity or discipline.

The concept of intrinsic motivation includes adolescent interest, internal rewarding, and cognitive and emotional fulfillment (Flavell, 1985). It is also viewed as adolescent engagement in consciously selected cognitive and social activities for the purposes of emotional and intellectual satisfaction. Motivated intrinsically, youth can intentionally select and explore complex issues expanding their knowledge and experiences without external instruction (Crandell et al., 2012).

Simultaneously with changes in motivational structures, adolescent development extends to growth in a social domain. At this age stage, development is influenced by sociocultural processes such as group learning, peer collaboration, friendship, community service, sports, etc. (Kozulin as cited in Kozulin et al., 2003). Submerged in social environments, adolescents begin to compare their cognitive abilities with their peers’. As a result of such comparison, they are able to realize the extent of their cognitive and
social functioning. The difference between youth abilities and the complexity of cognitive and social tasks and challenges is referred to as Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky (Brown & Ferrara, 1985).

The Zone of Proximal Development refers to maturing psychological functions necessary for transition from one age group to another. It also describes one’s current state of psychological function in regard to further development and potential intervention/ participation/ collaboration efforts associated with it (Chaiklin as cited in Kozulin et al., 2003). Furthermore, ZPD represents a structural construct of developed and predetermined psychodynamic functions. Transforming under the influence of different sociocultural environments, psychodynamic functions positively affect adolescent motivational, emotional, and cognitive structures (Blunden, 2008). As a result, adolescent thinking moves from simple categorical thinking to more abstract and conceptual.

The shift in adolescent conceptual thinking is driven by creation of a new systematic, structural, and categorical picture of the reality connected to the self. Their worldview becomes more multisided and culturally sensitive. Adolescents become more aware of themselves as unique individuals, their inner feelings, and motivations. Continuous self-reflection and perception of themselves as active explorers of the purpose of their life furthers internalization of accrued social experiences and gained insights (Mahn as cited in Kozulin et al., 2003).

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1999) provides another perspective on adolescent social and behavioral development. According to the theory, environment presents endless opportunities of socialization and allows for learning, adaptation and
growth under external social forces (Bandura, 1999). Diversity and complexity of social situations positively correlate with the speed and quality of learning. This occurs because youth, as active social agents, continuously encounter, observe, imitate, and refine outcomes of social actions of their own and their family and community members (Crain, 1980). Those actions are embedded in youth social networks, which if encountered on a daily basis, stimulate youth active involvement with their family and community. Mostly through those networks youth learn socially important values, principles, and accepted norms of behavior that will be exercised in different learning environments in the future.

Bussey and Bandura (1999) argue that different types of environments create different developmental outcomes. For instance, imposed environments present various physical and/or sociocultural situations and circumstances that constantly impose on adolescents without their choice. Being imposed into those situations, youth have to decide how to design their behavior. On the contrary, selected environments present situations where there is a choice of actions. Such choice is made in regard to educational activities, social networks, lines of actions and new experiences. Even more choice, selectivity, and personal changeability are presented in constructed environments. Construction of the environment is completely intentional and requires interplay of one’s cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral inputs. As a more directed and intentional process, the construction of the environment results in positive developmental changes of cognitive, motivational, emotional, and behavioral constructs. Complex structures of constructed environments promote youth self-development and self-realization (Bussey & Bandura, 1999), whereas imposed and selected environments help evoke and refine previously accrued knowledge and skills.
Although social environment is imperative to adolescent development, environmental factors are not the only factors that trigger youth learning and social development. There are also affective and behavioral factors such as youth emotions and actions. They “operate as interacting determinants” and, as a result, influence one’s development bi-directionally (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). They stimulate the development of identity-linked concepts, behavioral and judgmental standards, and self-regulatory influences (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Adolescents learn to recognize, appropriately express, and manage their emotions. The difference between positive and negative emotions becomes more evident and apparent, thus, enabling youth to acknowledge the impact of emotions on the self and others.

With the increase of adolescent emotional awareness, their risk-taking also increases due to changes in social, emotional, and physical development (Steinberg, 2007, 2008). Specifically, since adolescent capacities responsible for self-control and self-reflection continue to mature into adulthood (Crandell et al., 2012; Crain, 1980; Steinberg, 2007), risk-taking will decline between adolescence and adulthood as their cognitive and emotional structures evolve. Competent decision-making, according to Steinberg (2008), is greatly undermined due to underdeveloped mechanisms of self-regulation, resistance to external influence, and impulse control. However, with external instruction and continuous self-reflection, adolescents can minimize the risk of impulsive and risky behavior.

Actions, on the other hand, are developmental outcomes of educational activities, social interactions, learning, and personal change. They help youth translate values, principles, and knowledge learned through social interactions and self-reflection into
unique experiences. Integrated with realization of interconnectedness with others, actions transform personal and social responsibilities into more complex commitments and purposes (Chickering, 1969).

Along with cognitive, motivational, emotional, behavioral, and social development, adolescent **moral (ethical) structures** actively transform as well. The transformation of ethical structures is connected to the development of cognitive processes and linked to conceptualization of adolescent individuality and behavior. Moreover, it represents a continuous evolvement and restructuring of thought and motivation (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1997). In the light of youth leadership, Day and his colleagues (2009) point to the interrelationship between moral (ethical) and leadership structures. They write, “Just about every decision made and action taken by a leader has ethical implications. Leadership development needs to include the development of ethical and moral reasoning to address these implications” (p.83).

Although the development of ethical leadership within youth plays a major role in fostering responsible, altruistic, civic, kind, and socially responsive generation, ethical development has been crucial to the adolescent personal development in general. Kohlberg once noted, “Today more than ever, democratic schools systematically engaged in civic education are required” (Kohlberg, 1975, p. 675). For many years, human development scholars have drawn public attention to the needs of civic, democratic, and ethics driven schooling. To address that public need in ethical citizens, Freud (1962) and Skinner (1938) began the theoretical exploration of moral (ethical) education. Around that time empirical qualitative research on moral development led by Jean Piaget and later continued by Lawrence Kohlberg took place. Significant attention of such work was
dedicated to determining the origins of moral reasoning throughout the lifespan (Boyd, 1988).

Greatly impacted by Dewey’s ideas on cognitive development, current moral (ethical) development theory, grounded in empirical findings, adopts several stages of ethics development: 1) preconventional; 2) conventional, and 3) autonomous levels. Each of those levels is associated with child’s behavioral, physical and social factors. Depending on the level, the influence of physical and social factors in one’s behavior varies. If at the preconventional and conventional stages individual’s behavior is motivated by biological and social impulses with little or no reflection on moral values, at the autonomous level behavior is grounded in constant reflection on moral principles and judging for oneself (Dewey, 1964).

Building upon Dewey’s work, Piaget attempted to define the stages of moral reasoning in children empirically (Piaget as cited in Crain, 1980). He used interviews and in-field observations to inform the notion of moral thinking. Several stages were identified: 1) the pre-moral stage; 2) the heteronomous stage, and 3) the autonomous stage. The categorization of stages was based on the extent of one’s awareness, consideration, application, and reflection on moral rules. Additionally, the stages referred to individual’s extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Specifically, Piaget implied different motivational foundations for moral reasoning stages – at the early age moral reasoning is externally guided (punishment and adult power), while at the older age reciprocity and exchange of moral rules are considered in one’s behavior (Piaget, 1948).

The aforementioned empirical and theoretical findings on moral reasoning were furthered in Kohlberg’s longitudinal and cross-cultural studies. One of the purposes of his
studies was to empirically validate characteristics of moral development stages. The moral development concept implies that the stages are: a) organized systems of thought; b) invariantly sequential, and c) hierarchically integrated (Kohlberg & DeVries, 1980). Empirical validation of these characteristics included several longitudinal qualitative studies conducted in the United States, Turkey, Canada, Britain, Israel, Taiwan, Yucatan, Honduras, and India. With regard to thought organization, the studies found that “more than 50 percent of an individual’s thinking is always at one stage, with the remainder at the next adjacent stage” (Kohlberg, 1975, p.670). With regard to stage sequence, it was noted that throughout the experiments individual’s moral reasoning either remained at the same stage or had moved up. With respect to hierarchical integration, study participants demonstrated high levels of morality comprehension at or below their own stage of moral reasoning, whereas low levels of comprehension were registered at the higher stage of their moral reasoning development. Therefore, stage characteristics refer to the structure of one’s reasoning and underlie moral assumptions and values differing among individuals.

Moral reasoning or judgment, as noted above, is rooted in cognitive reasoning or logic. Although moral judgment is a rational operation, it is primarily affected by the ability to empathize and the capacity for guilt (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Whether an individual experiences empathy or guilt, in a morally challenging situation s/he makes a choice of actions. The way the choice is explained by one constitutes the notion of moral reasoning. According to Kohlberg (1975), moral reasoning centers on ten universal moral values such as punishment, property, roles and concerns of authority, roles and concerns of affection, law, life, liberty, distributive justice, truth, and sex. The choice of these
values and justification for their selection in one’s behavior define the content of moral reasoning.

In more detail, moral reasoning refers to individual’s moral knowledge and motivation. It indicates a) what individual considers as morally valuable in making a morally difficult choice and b) why s/he finds it valuable justifying his/her choice of morally appropriate behavioral scenarios. Therefore adolescent motivation and the extent of internalization and responsiveness to moral values constitute stages of moral reasoning (Crain, 1980). Those include:

- Preconventional level of moral reasoning: 1) the punishment and obedience orientation and 2) the instrumental-relativist orientation. At this level an individual is aware of moral values and rules yet moral behavior is driven by external reinforcement (punishment, reward, adult power, exchange of goods).

- Conventional level of moral reasoning: 3) the interpersonal concordance orientation and 4) the “law” and “order” orientation. At this level, family and peer moral principles are perceived as valuable and followed regardless of immediate consequences. Moral behavior is guided by desire to please family members and peers, as well as to maintain social and authority order as a call of duty.

- Autonomous level of moral reasoning: 5) the social-contract, legalistic orientation and 6) the universal-ethical-principle orientation. At this level, moral values and principles are internalized and defined through the lenses of social good. Moral actions are the result of conscience and personal choice.

The sequential order of the above stages implies that every child is gifted with the psychological and socio-emotional capacity to progress to higher levels of moral
reasoning. The stages of moral reasoning represent the transformation occurring in child’s structure of thought and reflect the extent of integration of morality in self-concept (Kohlberg, 1973; Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Since first two levels, preconventional and conventional morality, are exclusive to young childhood, to review implications of ethics on adolescent development, the stage of postconventional morality and its major characteristics present the primary interest for the current discussion.

At the level of postconventional morality, youth learn to define moral (ethical) values and principles, apply them to life situations, and conceptualize such values, principles, and learned life examples as abstract and universal (Crain, 1980). During this process, social environment, including peers, constantly challenges youth’s ethical assumptions. Critical lenses of the adolescent social community on ethical values, principles and norms of behavior stimulate youth ethical development externally and internally. On one hand, the environment creates social and educational situations that challenge youth ethical principles and values. External social forces reflected in social and educational situations present various opportunities for adolescents to learn and absorb socially acceptable rules, principles, values, and norms. Various social systems including but not limited to family, community, peer groups, school, etc. shape youth perception on their role and place in the community they reside in, broaden their understanding of implicit connections between youth actions and other people’s welfare, teach legal consequences of socially destructive behavior, provide satisfaction from conducting ethical actions, and, as a result, increase their ethical conscience (Kohlberg,
On the other hand, adolescents themselves consciously question, reason, and evaluate their own ethical values and behavior.

Integration of moral values with personality structures takes place as a result of Type I and Type II changes in cognitive organization and behavior (Kohlberg, 1970). Kohlberg defines Type I learning as a change that is irreversible, directional, sequential, and cumulative (Kohlberg, 1970). It is perceived as cognitive and moral reasoning equilibrium. Accordingly, it has a high value for cognitive and moral functioning in later life. Although Type I learning is predictive, it occurs naturally regardless of educational settings.

Conversely, Type II learning is reversible and situational. It mostly depends on educational and social settings. Type II change is associated with content learning and on the large scale has a lesser value for one’s cognitive development in the later life than Type I change. Nevertheless, both types of learning are invaluable in moral development since they determine the breadth and depth of knowledge of moral values and moral reasoning.

As discussed previously, an increasing number of general educators and researchers emphasize the importance of the lifespan approach to the development of processes and structures crucial to one’s cognitive and social functioning. As a personality structure, leadership can and should be developed within youth; the development of youth personality and their leadership is inextricably intertwined. Knowing youth leadership structure, leadership educators can purposefully design leadership learning environment that fosters adolescent engagement in the leadership learning process and integrates their knowledge, motivation, and previous social and
leadership experiences in meaningful ways. Although leadership development is a life-long process, an emerging model of youth leadership grounded in the overall youth development and presented below is an opportunity to shift educators’ attention from adult-based theories of youth leadership development to youth-centered leadership learning.

**Youth Leadership Model**

The extent to which youth can integrate their leadership with other qualities and aspects of their personality helps explain how thoroughly youth develop their leadership (Owen, 2012). Sherif (2016) conducted a qualitative secondary analysis to explore the nature of youth leadership from a youth perspective, where rural youth described their knowledge, motivations, attitudes, and actions merging into three types of leadership: leadership for the self, family, and community. As a result of integration, synthesis, and analysis of previously described development theories and existing youth leadership scholarship, youth leadership is, therefore, defined as a complex and dynamic system that integrates leadership knowledge, motivation, attitudes toward leadership development and practice, and leadership actions. It includes four major domains. Figure 1 illustrates organization of youth leadership along with potential practices of its development, which were identified as a result of youth input and previously reviewed development theories.
Attributes of youth leadership characterizing leadership for the self, for family, and for community are synthesized into four mutually integrated domains: 1) cognitive; 2) affective; 3) motivational; and 4) behavioral. These domains reflect the complexity of personality and constitute main characteristics of youth leadership.

**Cognitive domain (youth knowledge and perception of leadership).** Youth leaders have an abundant and diverse knowledge of leadership; they perceive themselves and others as (potential) leaders and are able to explicitly articulate and exemplify major
characteristics of youth leadership (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002; Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Youth knowledge of leadership also includes information on leadership, its connections to personality, learning, and community service, its functioning, and its role in personal development and self-actualization. Youth can define leadership in various ways and outline numerous leadership characteristics and functions. They are knowledgeable of leadership impact on personal, professional and community development. Their awareness of leadership also includes thorough understanding of ethical foundations of leadership, specifically ethical decision-making, the role of responsibility in individual and group activities and projects, respect of choices of other people, importance of determination in learning and dedication to personal and group social values, etc. Youth insights on the meaning of leadership are grounded and shaped by external informational systems including but not limited to educational organizations and their members, society, family members, printed, web-based resources, and peers.

The acquisition of leadership knowledge is a life-long process and consists of several steps such as understanding, retaining, recalling, and application of knowledge (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Every step is uniquely important since each is responsible for constructing a holistic understanding of leadership. As no meaning is brought to leadership information without its understanding and retaining, likewise no value is added without its application. For example, youth might find information on leadership important, however, without retaining and recalling it, they might struggle with differentiating leadership from other social constructs. Similarly, intentionally retained and meaningful knowledge of leadership might be useless if it is not applied, reflected, and used in real life situations. More importantly, by utilizing leadership
information youth become active owners of the information, learn its value, and determine informational gaps that can either further their leadership knowledge acquisition or create misbeliefs and misconceptions.

Youth beliefs on what leadership is are summarized in youth perception of leadership. In general, perception is a result of already contained and presented in the form of beliefs and judgments information (Best, 1995). It is personalized, analyzed, synthesized, organized, and accurate depiction of youth knowledge on leadership. Enriched by and interpreted through the lenses of personal experiences, youth perception of leadership is a position that continuously evolves and develops in accordance to available youth leadership development resources, practices, and ideas of other people. Diversity of youth knowledge of and experiences in leadership results in a wide range of existing youth insights on leadership as a construct.

How does youth perception evolve? Best (1995) argues there are three major thinking processes that drive the development of perception. Those include information processing, computation, and interpretation. The processes relate to cognitive and neural systems in exploring and extracting the information from the world, changing it, enriching it, making sense of it, and producing the awareness and ideas. Specifically, youth explore external informational resources on leadership, recognize the information in relation to its importance and youth interest in leadership, create new informational structures (Crain, 1980), and reflect on them through the lenses of personal leadership experiences. Respectively, these processes allow for recognition characteristics of youth leadership in social and educational environments and discovering the relationships between personal leadership and leadership of others, its impact on the behavior of
others, its role in personal and social development, and its applicability to and usefulness in various learning and social situations.

Understanding adolescent cognitive development has numerous implications for youth leadership education. Depending on the sophistication and extent of development of youth cognitive structures, adolescents will acquire, interpret, assimilate, comprehend, and retain information and their leadership experiences differently. In designing youth leadership development interventions, educators should also consider adolescent cognitive readiness for learning leadership as a construct. Younger adolescents may need more instructional attention in understanding complexity of leadership. Furthermore, they may require different learning support and methods of knowledge and skill delivery. However, adolescents at any level of cognitive development should be offered personalized feedback and activities encouraging their interest in learning and practicing leadership simultaneously (Day et al., 2009; Owen, 2012).

As shown in the model (Figure 1), the process of development of youth knowledge and perception of leadership can be fostered through purposeful and meaningful organization of youth engagement in community and service learning, which can enrich their knowledge of leadership and broaden their perception of leadership through numerous leadership examples existing in the community. Additionally, collaboration with school faculty and educators can encourage youth understanding of the importance of being a leader and the role leadership can play in learning and personal development. School administration and staff can become leadership role models for youth and exemplify leadership through their own actions. In addition, youth knowledge of leadership can be deepened through various learning activities including school and
community projects, volunteering, and organization of activities for peers, etc. Last but
not least, continuous self-reflection on the depth and breadth of leadership knowledge can
also foster youth deeper understanding of leadership.

**Affective domain (youth emotions and attitudes toward leadership).** Actions
of youth leaders are often determined by youth emotions and attitudes toward leadership
and its practice (Cloninger, 1996). The relationship between youth leadership and youth
emotions and attitudes has been emphasized by numerous scholars such as Ricketts and
Rudd (2002), Van Linden and Fertman (1998), and others. Emotions and attitudes
experienced by youth leaders are the core of leader personality; they direct leader
behavior, motivate one’s actions, and serve as an expression of positive and negative
leadership experiences.

Specifically, emotions can be described as biological and social reactions to
events, people, other people’s actions, and situations (Cloninger, 1996). Frijda (1986)
defines emotions as “noninstrumental behaviors and noninstrumental features of
behavior, psychological changes, and evaluative, subject-related experiences, as evoked
by external or mental events, and primarily by the significance of such events” (p.4).
Such definition of emotions emphasizes the role of biological factors (psychological
changes) and sociocultural determinants (external events, subject-related experiences, and
behavior). Thus, emotions can be described from two theoretical perspectives: biological
and sociocultural (Larson & Pleck, 1999).

Depending on perspective, biological or sociocultural, emotions determine the
differences in youth leadership interactions with internal and external environments. The
biological perspective views emotions as “highly functional, built-in systems, evolved to
serve survival and social needs” (Larson & Pleck, 1999, p.27). They are biological constructs created to motivate, facilitate, and direct individual’s actions. They vary in response to social situations and active psychological support necessary for proper functioning of cognitive processes. They drive youth attention and action, set priorities, provide personally valued goals, and excite youth interest toward leadership and self-development. Yet more importantly, driven by biochemical reactions in the brain, emotions create psychological connections between events, knowledge, motivation, and youth actions. Emotions also determine youth reaction to social situations, allow youth to assess the meaningfulness of leadership experiences, contribute to the formation of future reactions to similar events, and shape individual differences in leadership.

Conversely, the sociocultural perspective describes emotions as a social construct (Larson & Pleck, 1999). Cultural and social differences dictate the way an individual defines and expresses emotions. Various cultures place different expectations on emotional expressions. For instance, some communities are more emotionally reserved than others (Larson & Pleck, 1999). The appraisals they employ are found in social rules and values and, hence, determine how emotions should be defined and expressed by an individual within a specific culture. Emotions are, therefore, shaped by social and cultural rules. Emotions reflect the underlying values and societal norms as much as they signify the order of society (community) observed in individual’s beliefs, emotional reactions, and emotional relationships with others. From that perspective, emotions experienced by youth leaders indicate youth positions in a group of peers, family, and community; display their reactions to daily activities; explain events that precipitate them, and
communicate actions involved in leadership emotional experiences (Mascolo & Fischer, 2010).

Both theoretical perspectives on the nature of emotions are greatly valuable in understanding the connections between youth emotions and their leadership actions. First, emotions define and, in some cases, drive youth leadership actions. Second, they indicate how comfortable youth feel in a specific social group (family, peers, learning community, sport team, etc.). Third, youth emotions suggest their sociocultural position and status, as well as youth acceptance of social values and norms. All of the above shapes youth attitude towards leadership and youth predisposition to lead on a daily basis.

Youth attitudes toward leadership reflect to youth feelings and emotions, their knowledge about leadership and themselves as leaders, and their experiences in leadership development and practice. In other words, attitudes towards leadership are youth dispositions and emotions “toward identifying themselves as leaders” (Van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p.41). They originate in self-assessment and self-reflection, when youth have to determine the role attitudes play in learning and leadership practice. By interpreting youth leadership actions, youth make judgments whether leadership experiences are positive or negative, whether they affect their personality or lives of other people, or whether they should continue on a leadership track or dedicate themselves to other activities.

As stated earlier, youth attitudes towards leadership change over time and are greatly impacted by their experiences in leadership practice. Interactions with other people as a result of youth leadership activity influence their attitude due to gradual expansion of knowledge about themselves as leaders in the system of human
relationships. Therefore, positive attitudes toward leadership not only expand youth perception on leadership, but also increase their competence in leadership practice and development. Moreover, their dispositions toward leadership determine the selection of certain behaviors, relationships with peers and educators, enthusiasm toward self- and leadership development, new knowledge acquisition, and understanding of their role in the world around them.

Since adolescents learn greatly within selected and constructed environments, to foster youth positive attitudes towards leadership and its development, leadership educators can imbue the theory of leadership with practical situations. Such situations can be created during service learning, in the classroom, and at any extracurricular event. Although created situations can help to integrate youth leadership knowledge, skills, and behaviors, educators should pay a careful attention to adolescent individual differences. It is crucial to engage youth in activities that will generate positive emotions and encourage youth to further their leadership. Collaboration with youth on community- and service-oriented projects, use of positive video materials that portray a positive personal and/or social change as a result of leader’s actions, and purposeful design of school activities capable of generating positive leadership experiences and inspiring adolescents to be better self, citizens, and leaders are some of the practices that can be offered to youth to foster their leadership development.

In seeking to incorporate unique characteristics of adolescent social and emotional development in leadership programming, educators can also center youth leadership activities and practices on the development of adolescent self-regulation and self-control via active self-reflection. Students should be invited to consider various self-regulation
techniques, as well as emotional control exercises. As part of leadership conversations, instructors can discuss the role of positive emotions such as joy, optimism, gratitude, etc. in developing leadership and building honest, resilient, responsible relationships with others.

Motivational domain (youth needs and motives in leadership development and practice). Youth leaders strive for personal growth and change (Gardner, 1990). Commitment to leadership values and community service requires continuous self-improvement and dedication to leadership goals. As youth continues to further their leadership potential and meet their needs in leadership development, they begin to define their short- and long-term goals that can be accomplished only through their own efforts (Gardner, 1990). Motivation to be a leader is, therefore, crucial for youth identity and their leadership specifically as it allows for satisfaction of needs in personal growth and active engagement in the goal realization process.

Recall, the term ‘motivation’ attributes “the energy or drive that impels a person to make choices” and “seek satisfaction of unmet needs” (Cloninger, 1996, pp.230-231). Owens (2004) argues motivation is internal “ongoing human proclivity to continue growing, developing and maturing, and being enriched by new experiences” (p.369). Thus, motivation is an unfolding process of becoming and maximizing full growth potential for self-direction and freedom of choice (Crandell et al., 2012). From a light of youth leadership, motivation allows adolescents to realize their capacity to fulfill leadership potential and strong leader identity. It is driven by various needs and motives and gradually evolves, leading to continued growth and development.
Besides satisfaction of basic needs such as feeling safe and secure, youth leaders emerge within and through a group of peers where they can learn about, practice, and refine their leadership. Peer groups are a cornerstone of individual youth leadership; they reflect socially valuable norms and rules of behavior, present opportunities for leadership practice, and indicate the importance of leadership for leaders, their peers and community.

In addition to group affiliation, youth leaders continuously find themselves trying to grow as leaders, expand their knowledge of leadership, and refine and apply leadership skills to real-life situations. As they learn more about leadership, they develop aesthetic appreciation of leadership development and practice, which expands their needs in leadership actualization. Engaged in purposeful leadership practice, youth are continuously motivated to broaden their understanding of interconnections between leadership and the self. As the need for leadership actualization increases, the process of leadership development and practice becomes more self-directed, autonomous, and responsible.

If needs are internal forces of youth behavior, motives guide youth readiness to fulfill the needs and take actions. They involve the “inner states and processes that prompt, direct, and sustain activity” (Crandell et al., 2012, p.327). Youth who are motivated to further their leadership are driven by several factors such as a) internalized and personally meaningful knowledge of youth leadership; b) positive experiences in youth leadership development and practice; and c) positive emotions such as satisfaction, joy, and inspiration that resulted from previous leadership experiences. Zacharatos and her colleagues (2002) emphasize the role of inspiration in bolstering intrinsic motivation
of youth leaders. Inspiration, for instance, increases leader’s awareness of goals and vision toward which s/he is working, as well as raises the expectations of what they can achieve. Inspiration, therefore, stimulates leader’s intellectual activity, especially, when they are faced with problems that require novel, creative, and non-orthodox thinking. Additionally, inspired youth are actively involved in leadership practice and exhibit characteristics of creative thinking, self-control, and self-direction. Intrinsically interested in leadership development, youth continuously devote their time to leadership inquiry, purposefully select leadership activities, and learn how to prioritize.

Although self-actualization needs and intrinsic motivation are important to youth leadership, without extrinsic stimulation and reinforcement, behavior of youth leaders can be sporadic and chaotic. One of the ways to ‘stimulate’ internally motivated behavior is to offer adolescents personally and socially valuable leadership activities. These activities should foster youth interest not only in leadership, but also in themselves as leaders, learners, family members, and friends. It is imperative for leadership instructors to help students discern their different identities and their role in personal leadership. Moreover, educators, as well as family members and peers need to recognize youth initiatives in leadership actualization, provide encouragement and support, and regularly underline the importance of leader’s actions, as well as their impact on community and environment around them.

Leadership education should also actively engage adolescents in personal self-assessment and self-reflection. Educators may introduce topics beyond curricula and encourage students to volunteer. They need to help youth foster their leadership and
communication skills through community engagement and service learning along with working collaboratively with their peers.

**Behavioral domain (leadership actions).** Youth leaders are highly participatory in school, family and community events, they recognize the importance of ethical leadership behavior, and they demonstrate their commitment to community and personal values through their actions (Whitehead, 2009). Leadership actions of youth, contrary to other domains of youth leadership, are external to youth personality and are both indicators and a source of influence generated through leader’s behavior. Specifically, youth actions are indicative of youth accumulated knowledge and perception of leadership, youth needs and motivation in leadership development and practice along with their emotions and attitudes towards leadership. Youth actions reflect the extent of leadership development, as well as the breadth and depth of interconnections between youth cognitive, motivational, and affective leadership constructs.

As a source of influence, leader’s actions continuously contribute to youth awareness and perception of leadership, fulfill youth needs in leadership practice, and further youth’s commitment and dedication to leadership, personal and community values through using their decision-making, choice and freedom for something larger than themselves. Engaged in activities that benefit others and bring happiness and welfare to other people’s lives, behavior of youth leaders is, thus, positively reinforced and encouraged. When young leaders pursue their leadership potential to meet the needs of others, there is a deep satisfaction realized by leaders that actively shapes their future behavior.
The development of youth leadership and creation of opportunities for youth to practice their leadership require a multi-faceted approach, which includes practices and techniques that range from formal academic projects to within-community/school activities. Such activities encompass volunteering, community service, collaborative work with school and community leaders, community and school improvement projects, etc. Leadership practice organized in the form of the aforementioned activities allows youth to fulfill their self-actualization needs and create positive attitudes towards leadership. For instance, volunteering as a form of broadening leadership experiences of youth is crucial to youth learning of leadership in addition to the practice of decision- and choice-making, responsibility and altruism practice, and experiences of gratitude, satisfactions, and inspiration.

**Ethics.** Why is ethics so important in youth leadership and what implications does it have? To answer these questions, it is necessary to refer back to the current understanding of relationships between ethics and youth leadership. Ciulla (2003) and Klau (2006), in their review of ethical leadership, asserted that it can be defined in regard to leader’s character, leader’s values, and ethical actions. For various reasons, leaders “often have more and greater obligations and responsibilities” (Ciulla, 2003, p.1), however, without ethical virtues, ethical principles, ethical decision making, and, as a result, ethical behavior, leadership can be destroying to oneself and people around (Ludwig & Longenecker, 1993/2003).

Leader’s personality is inseparable from virtues that “will allow [leaders] to exert rational control over their desires” (Ciulla, 2003, p.55). Philosophers and leadership scholars have identified virtues of character as feelings and actions (Aristotle, 1985/2003;
Buddha, 1967/2003; Plato, 1955) and positive traits (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Carr & Steutel, 1999; Johnson, 2009; Resick et al., 2011; Rhode, 2006). Character virtues play a crucial role in leadership (Johnson, 2009) and greatly correspond to the inner world of a leader. For instance, Aristotle (1985/2003) wrote that “we are by nature acquire [virtues], and reach out complete perfection through habit” (p.56). Only through continuous and mindful self-refinement and self-reflection an individual can acquire ethical leadership virtues such as bravery, generosity, honor, honesty, and friendliness. Based on Aristotle’s propositions, Carr and Steutel (1999) also include kindness, patience, endurance, courage, and thoughtfulness. Integrity, humility, reverence, optimism, compassion, and justice foster leader’s character as well (Johnson, 2009). A recent cross-cultural study on the meaning of ethical leadership (Resick et al., 2011) supports and broadens the list of leader’s virtues to trustworthiness, sincerity, self-discipline, authenticity, and ethical awareness.

A second key domain of ethical leadership is ethical values. They are center to moral reasoning or analysis of moral issues and are crucial in ethical decision-making (Rhode, 2006). Moreover, impelling leader actions, ethical values resonate to individual emotional and rational structures helping “protect one from acting badly at moments when one’s sympathies happen to be in abeyance” (Bennett, 1974/2003). Among leader ethical values leadership scholars identify creativity, enthusiasm, love for people, connectedness, and life purpose (Shah Iqbal, 2009); reciprocity, trust, acceptance to create an organization and the world around with a heart and soul, and welfare of others (Caldwell & Dixon, 2010); collaboration, reciprocity, and mutual responsibility (Msila,
2012) along with accountability, dignity, respect, effective communication, empathy, and tolerance (Resick et al., 2011).

Ethical behavior of a youth leader is informed by leader values, personality characteristics, and social, cultural, and economic circumstances (Knights & O’Leary, 2006). As the cross-cultural study shows, acting on ethical decisions involves complying with laws, regulations, and professional [educational/learning] guidelines, taking personal responsibility, demonstrating understanding and being helpful, making fair and just decisions, putting interests of others ahead of personal, and fostering sustainability of trusty relationships and positive impact on community (Resick et al., 2011). All of the above in addition to leader ethical personality traits and values are invaluable in our understanding the model of youth leadership.

To encourage the practice of ethical behavior of youth leaders, leadership education can and should be centered on activities that contribute to the development of youth virtues and ethical values. Leadership activities such as service learning, continuous self-reflection and purposeful learning have been observed to shift youth attitudes to community-oriented; they have empowered adolescents to be engaged and committed to community service; they have fostered adolescent personal development and decision making (Terry, 2003; Webster & Worrell, 2008). Comprehensive service learning instruction can allow for developing youth responsibility for consequences of their actions, for broadening their experiences, knowledge, and skills, and for creating an opportunity for community contribution (Kielsmeier et al., 2004). Youth leadership educators should take into account youth developing moral reasoning while teaching ethics of leadership. It is imperative for instructors to humanize and personalize ethical
values and principles, as well as develop integrity and congruence between adolescent personal actions and articulated values (Burns, 1978).

**Conclusion**

Youth leadership as a concept is well explored. However, research regarding youth leadership development and practice continues to be limited (Chan, 2000; Whitehead, 2009). Grounded in propositions of adult leadership, youth leaders develop and practice their leadership often instinctively rather than purposefully. It is therefore necessary to understand youth leadership as a construct and design a particular approach of its development reflecting its changing pro-social, ethical nature. Youth leadership grounded in ethics and specific characteristics of youth personality development offers important benefits to adolescent leadership and personal development as it represents an action toward self-realization, self-improvement, and community change.

Unfortunately, systematic and purposeful youth leadership education is not well integrated into educational interventions designed for youth personality development and formal high school curriculum to adequately meet adolescent needs in personal and leadership growth (Owen, 2012; Whitehead, 2009). Most youth leadership development models represent a limited context of personal and social values, qualities, skills, and experiences that are primarily embedded in adult understanding of leadership (Owen, 2012; Stein et al., 2005). Therefore, it is useful to explore and customize approaches of youth personal and leadership development integrating learning, practice, and community service to support youth’s ethical leadership behavior. In this paper, a model of leadership for adolescent population is presented. It reflects youth’s major personality constructs and suggests main practices of leadership development beneficial for youth
and leadership instructors. The potential to influence youth leadership presented in the model may hold a promise for dramatic improvement in youth leadership education in general and at the high school level specifically, therefore, reshaping existing paradigm of youth leadership. Providing adolescents with opportunities to self-reflect, learn from adult leadership role models, and practically apply their new leadership skills can balance current leadership activities in high schools. However, without recognition of the power and consequences of youth ethical leadership, educational efforts have little potential to foster youth drive toward personal and collective accomplishment, improved quality of life, and social progress.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter summarizes the contributions of this research to the theory and practice of youth and educational leadership. It also encapsulates methodological findings of evaluation of qualitative secondary analysis as a method. In this chapter, implications for leadership theory and practice are discussed. Finally, this chapter outlines areas for further research and recommendations for policy.

Overview

Chapter 1. Chapter 1 introduced the problem of defining youth leadership and examination of practices of its development from a rural youth perspective. It presented a brief summary of the purpose and significance of the study, outlining research questions and study design. Definitions used throughout the study were specified. In addition, theoretical frameworks used to guide the present inquiry (i.e., systems thinking, student involvement, and student voice) were described. The chapter was concluded with study limitations and organization of the dissertation.

Chapter 2. The purpose of Chapter 2 was to provide a critical review of selected literature on existing research that has explored and utilized secondary data analysis. To introduce and describe the nature of the method, an array of secondary analysis definitions were presented along with recent studies as exemplars. Quantitative and qualitative secondary analyses were compared based on criteria that included the nature of primary data, methodology of data collection, data sources, research purpose and capacity, and limitations associated particularly with the type of the method.
Qualitative secondary analysis was presented as a method that can be used to conduct valid, trustworthy, and informative qualitative research. Qualitative secondary analysis was described as an opportunity to discover new knowledge from data that may have been overlooked, thus, expanding the tools of qualitative researchers. Although the use of qualitative secondary analysis allows for unobtrusive and time-/cost-effective inquiry, it can be challenged by primary data that are insufficient and/or of a poor quality. To evaluate the quality and sufficiency of data collected for the purposes different from a present study, several criteria were presented for consideration. These criteria included the fit between secondary research questions and qualitative data, the context of the original research and its study sample, the breadth and depth of data, original data set sustainability, and a possibility to follow-up with study participants from the original study to eliminate the chance of missing, problematic, and/or outdated information.

Once the original qualitative data are examined and determined to be of an expected quality and sufficiency, it is important to select an approach of analysis of secondary data. Chapter 2 outlined several approaches that can be taken to analyze observational, interview, and document data. Driven by inductive or deductive analysis, qualitative secondary analysis may employ conventional, directed, summative content analysis or interpretive description. While the use of these approaches is determined by the purpose of secondary research and differs in data coding and interpretation, they equally contribute to generation of strong, sufficient, sound, valid, and trustworthy research findings.

**Chapter 3.** In Chapter 3, interview, observational, and document data were examined via secondary analysis to determine the conceptualization of leadership and
practices of its development from a rural high school youth perspective. Background information about qualitative secondary analysis and questions guiding the evaluation of quality and sufficiency of data utilized for the secondary analysis were summarized. A brief explanation of the context of the original study and secondary study design were described.

An analysis of commonalities in participants’ views on youth leadership provided a general context for situating the rural youth’s insights and segregating their personal experiences in leadership development and practice. The primary data contained frequent references to every young person’s ability to be a leader regardless of social and economic circumstances. The participants noted that being a leader is a choice that lays in their willingness to recognize leadership potential within themselves and others and actively work towards its realization. Participants also emphasized three major areas that young leaders can positively influence. They spoke of the capacity of personal leadership to impact the self or, in other words, facilitate and foster personal and professional growth; the family, where young leaders can learn and practice their leadership by serving and caring for their family, putting interests of family members before their own, and being committed to family values; and the community as a place to prepare to be contributing adults in their communities, expand their understanding of leadership and community values, rise to more complex social and policy challenges, and practice their decision-making and ethical leadership for the welfare of others.

The individualized and unique experiences of rural youth that evolved as a result of the development and practice of their leadership were captured in their leadership stories. These served to identify leadership development practices considered by students
as effective and contributing to the realization of their leadership potential. Identical practices were discussed by the adult study participants. The commonalities in the participants’ experiences portray volunteering, community service, leadership development course projects and exercises, collaboration with school administration and faculty, and self-reflection as practices most contributing to youth leadership development. These practices, as stated by the participants, helped shape youth understanding of leadership, motivate and inspire them to be more ethical, effective, and responsible leaders for themselves, their family and community, as well as learn from their peer and adult leadership role models, and evaluate their leadership potential and its impact on a personal, family, and community change. Development of leadership via the aforementioned practices also enabled youth to build long-lasting collaborative relationships with school faculty and community members, mutually understand common developmental needs, create awareness of opportunities for growth, and actively participate in their own life planning.

**Chapter 4.** The fourth chapter presented a youth leadership model that could be used to guide the design and implementation of successful practices to support the development of youth leadership at the personal, school, family, and community levels. This model was based on an extensive review of literature that focused on research studies that have explored leadership and its development within youth. Additionally, the model reflected the findings from the qualitative secondary analysis study discussed in Chapter 3. Each component of the model is grounded in propositions of theories on youth cognitive, motivational, affective, behavioral, and ethical development, reflecting the complex, interconnected, and pro-social nature of youth leadership. Youth leadership is,
therefore, suggested to be understood as a complex and dynamic system that integrates leadership knowledge, motivation, attitudes toward leadership development and practice, and leadership actions taken to positively and ethically influence personal, professional, family, and community change. Although the chapter does not provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the model to develop youth leadership, it can serve as an important framework for operationalization of the phenomenon, as well as design, planning and implementation of leadership development and practice.

**Implications for Youth and Educational Leadership**

When addressing implications for youth and educational leadership, there are two areas to consider. One aspect is the implications from what can be learned about leadership and practices of its development from a perspective of rural high school students. The second area examines the implications of lessons learned about the application of a qualitative secondary analysis as a methodology to be used to generate new knowledge in the social and education sciences.

The stories rural youth told about leadership and practices of its development shaped their leader identities and accentuated the need for educational leaders and educators of youth leadership to view adolescents as capable of leading and making responsible, ethical, and trustworthy decisions. This finding suggests that assumptions and understandings present in the prevailing youth leadership scholarship may need to be reexamined. As secondary education administrators, educators and practitioners design programs and interventions aimed for youth leadership development, they can use the findings from this research to evaluate their understanding of youth leadership and practices of its development with respect to the extent their views match the insights of a
targeted rural youth population. Moreover, to motivate youth participation in leadership interventions, it appears crucial to consider ties between family, community, and youth leadership, perceive youth as active members of society, and allow them to share their insights on successful leadership activities and play a role in addressing community and policy challenges.

As this research revealed, there were numerous times when youth appeared to use leadership characteristics different from definitions existing in the adult leadership literature. These were characteristics young leaders wanted adults to know about related to who they are as leaders and how they practice their leadership. The importance of these accounts cannot be underestimated for youth leadership research; they should be incorporated into leadership education and the re-conceptualization of youth leadership models. Results of this study can serve as a foundation for future inquiry to engage more diverse rural youth populations in exploring how their leadership ideas and experiences are shaped over an extended period of time and how they continue to realize their leadership potential after high school graduation.

In addition, this working model of youth leadership can enable educational leaders and youth leadership scholars to reshape an existing paradigm of youth leadership. Creation of learning and social environments where rural youth are provided with opportunities to self-reflect, learn from their peer and adult leadership role models, and practice their newly developed leadership and decision-making skills can impact existing leadership programs and activities in high schools. To foster youth’s strive for improved quality of life, social progress, and long-term positive personal change, youth leadership education should center on ethics.
Finally, this study provides guidance to novice and experienced researchers in the methodology of applying secondary analysis to qualitative data. The method allows for development, extension, and exploration of a phenomenon in a flexible, cost and time efficient, and unobtrusive way. The strength of the method lies in generating new knowledge from or providing rich and descriptive detail to data that may have been overlooked. Guidelines for evaluation of quality and sufficiency of data used for the purposes of secondary analysis provided in this study can enable qualitative researchers in the field of social and education sciences to apply this method to help overcome methodological challenges that arise in qualitative secondary research. Adherence to these guidelines can also yield credible, valid, trustworthy, and informative results proving the reliability and effectiveness of secondary analysis in qualitative inquiry.

**Policy Implications**

This study emphasizes the complexity and dynamism of youth leadership. After hearing voices of rural youth on characteristics of leadership and practices of its development, education of rural high school students in leadership and their involvement in community are not confined to available educational resources. The practice of youth leadership is inextricably linked to their engagement in family, school, and community affairs. To further increase the realization of youth leadership potential in school and community settings, adolescents can be engaged in the examination of existing school and community policies related to youth, as well as in evaluation of existing policy alternatives. By incorporating youth perspectives into policy review, development, and implementation, young leaders are encouraged to become active educational and community stakeholders who have a voice in present decisions and future outcomes.
Empowerment of youth to take an active position in school, community, and policy development enables adolescents to become active agents of educational and social change and equally contribute to their learning and community programs.

As rural youth are recognized as responsible, ethical, and civic leaders, they can participate in the process of decision-making at multiple educational and social levels. Their input can be utilized to create educational and leadership development programs and activities for youth across the state and country, therefore, expanding their worldview of social norms and values and existing community issues. These collaborations with educational, community, and policy leaders can encourage youth to participate in activities they are most interested in, while greatly contributing to fostering their confidence, skill enhancement, and ethics.

Finally, young leaders could and should equally be allowed to contribute to confronting serious social and school problems. By transforming adolescents from passive learners to active citizens engaging in educational and community change, they are empowered to view themselves as school and community development agents capable of transforming their and other people’s lives. Taking into account youth voice in decisions that transform policies reinforces youth contributions to making education and learning organizations more accountable and effective while providing opportunities to serve as leaders of self, family, and others.

Conclusions

Two conclusions emerge from this research. First, for rural high school students, youth leadership is a complex and dynamic construct that integrates youth knowledge of leadership, their motivation to and attitudes towards its development and practice, and
their leadership and ethical actions dedicated to personal, family, and community change. Youth foresee leadership as a powerful catalyst of personal and professional growth. It allows for serving family and community members by creating a positive environment for transformation and empowerment.

According to youth, leadership development can be fostered by providing adolescents with opportunities to volunteer, serve their school and community along with getting involved in formal leadership education, collaboration with school leadership and faculty, and purposeful self-reflection. Encouraging youth to participate in volunteering and community service projects can strengthen their relationships with community members, as well as acquire hands-on experience in goal and vision development, expand their perception of local and global community issues, and realize the cause to which they can dedicate their leadership. As a result, volunteering and community service can serve as a practice to empower youth to be responsible, civic, ethical, and change-oriented community members.

Along with volunteering and community service, realization of youth’s leadership potential can occur through establishing collaborative relationships with school staff and administration. As shown in this research, young leaders can play an important role in improving learning, student engagement in school affairs, and organizational planning. Grounded in trust, mutual responsibility for school success, and professional relationships, inviting youth to be part of an educational dialogue can increase their commitment to school values and provide an opportunity to positively influence administrative processes.
To foster youth knowledge and experiences in leadership, purposeful organization of youth leadership education through leadership development course activities and projects is important. As noted by youth in this research, course activities designed to further their leadership allowed them to deepen their understanding of leadership, apply leadership knowledge and skills to specific life situations, and develop personal confidence in their leadership styles. Leadership development course projects can also be used to encourage peer collaboration and engagement in school- and community-valuable activities, thus, enabling youth to learn from each other and transmit their leadership expertise to those who are less leadership experienced and knowledgeable.

As youth worldview and conceptual thinking becomes more categorical and systematic with the emphasis to the self, it is crucial for educators to create an environment for young leaders to self-reflect. Methodical and guided self-reflection can encourage youth to evaluate accrued leadership experiences in respect to their role for personal and community change and internalize gained leadership insights. Self-reflection also appears a valuable practice to minimize youth impulsive behavior allowing them to translate socially significant values and responsibilities into more complex commitments and purposes.

Second, this research conceptualizes the use of secondary data analysis and offers methodological guidance on the use of the method and evaluation of original data in qualitative inquiry. Secondary data analysis can be a viable and reliable approach to maximizing the use of data and generating new informative and descriptive knowledge. Qualitative secondary analysis has been described as an unreliable and untrustworthy method due to the lack of concrete criteria guiding evaluation of data quality, sufficiency,
and suitability (Boris, 2015; Coltart et al., 2013; LeCompte, 2000; Mitchell, 2015; Murphy & Schlaerth, 2010). This research demonstrated how this challenge can be addressed by careful attention to the relevance and fit between secondary research questions and original data, data set completeness, breadth, and depth, background information accompanying the data, trustworthiness of a data set, its sustainability, and possibility to follow up with study participants. Therefore, qualitative secondary analysis can adequately support researchers’ intents in adding to the knowledge base and exploring the environment in a flexible and unobtrusive way.

Because this study sought to re-analyze rural youth perspectives on the nature of leadership and practices of its development, research is needed to explore and define perceptions about leadership and its development according to other rural and urban youth who were not part of this study. Moreover, hearing the voices of more diverse study population may reveal new characteristics of youth leadership. The findings from such a study may enable leadership educators and educational leaders to navigate and understand the concept of youth leadership more clearly.

Additional research that collects perceptions of youth who are not involved in leadership development courses and/or activities may provide greater understanding about the meaning of and role leadership plays in adolescent lives. If conducted as a survey-based study, an extensive leadership profile can broaden scholars’ understanding about how to engage youth in leadership learning and foster their leadership development outside of formal secondary education.
### APPENDIX A

**EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST:**

**CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION IN A SECONDARY ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA**

Criteria for determining **relevance** of original data set to present research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for determining relevance of original data set</th>
<th>Present in sufficient depth</th>
<th>Unable to determine</th>
<th>Not present in sufficient depth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept of interest is reflected in data set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity of new research question is easy to estimate</td>
<td>Present in sufficient depth</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Not present in sufficient depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New research questions can emerge</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>Not likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study sample could experience this concept/situation</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>Not likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size is similar to that in primary study</td>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>Somewhat similar</td>
<td>Not similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed research question is similar to that in original study</td>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>Somewhat similar</td>
<td>Not similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context of primary study is similar to that in present study</td>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>Somewhat similar</td>
<td>Not similar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criteria for determining general **quality** of primary study data set

<table>
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<th>Present in sufficient depth</th>
<th>Unable to determine</th>
<th>Not present in sufficient depth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ready access to study documents (interview tapes; interview transcripts; field notes; memos or interpretive notes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credentials of team members to conduct primary study</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available documents are complete (i.e., no missing papers/ tapes)</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy of transcriptions</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal or insignificant typographic errors</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of interviews</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing format allowed responses of descriptive depth</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus/meaning/subject of responses can be determined</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample plan is assessable</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of sampling plan is clear</td>
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<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of original study</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for determining <strong>trustworthiness</strong> of primary study data set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background information about the sample and its diversity</td>
<td>Present in sufficient depth</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Not present in sufficient depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of study participant recruitment procedures</td>
<td>Present in sufficient depth</td>
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<td>Not present in sufficient depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed context of procedures and settings of data collection</td>
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<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Not present in sufficient depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for determining <strong>sustainability</strong> of primary study data set</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research timeline is accessible</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity to follow up with study participants is present</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data set of sufficient quality, completeness, trustworthiness, sustainability, and fit with secondary research question(s)</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

ORIGINAL STUDY IRB APPROVAL FORM

TO: Victoria Sheriff
   c/o Wayne Lewis, Ph.D.
   111 Dickey Hall 0017
   Ph phone #: (502) 572-0438

FROM: Chairperson/Vice Chairperson
       Non-medical Institutional Review Board (IRB)

SUBJECT: Approval of Protocol Number 14-0253-P4S

DATE: April 25, 2014

On April 23, 2014, the Non-medical Institutional Review Board approved your protocol entitled:

   Examination of Youth Leadership within the Context of High School Youth Leadership Development Course

Approval is effective from April 23, 2014 until April 22, 2015 and extends to any consent/assent form, cover letter, and/or phone script. If applicable, attached is the IRB approved consent/assent document(s) to be used when enrolling subjects. [Note, subjects can only be enrolled using consent/assent forms which have a valid "IRB Approval" stamp unless special waiver has been obtained from the IRB.] Prior to the end of this period, you will be sent a Continuation Review Report Form which must be completed and returned to the Office of Research Integrity so that the protocol can be reviewed and approved for the next period.

In implementing the research activities, you are responsible for complying with IRB decisions, conditions, and requirements. The research procedures should be implemented as approved in the IRB protocol. It is the principal investigators responsibility to ensure any changes planned for the research are submitted for review and approval by the IRB prior to implementation. Protocol changes made without prior IRB approval to eliminate apparent hazards to the subject(s) should be reported in writing immediately to the IRB. Furthermore, discontinuing a study or completion of a study is considered a change in the protocol's status and therefore the IRB should be promptly notified in writing.

For information describing investigator responsibilities after obtaining IRB approval, download and read the document "PI Guidance to Responsibilities, Qualifications, Records and Documentation of Human Subjects Research" from the Office of Research Integrity's Guidance and Policy Documents web page [http://www.research.uky.edu/ori/human/guidance.html#PIresp]. Additional information regarding IRB review, federal regulations, and institutional policies may be found through ORI's web site [http://www.research.uky.edu/ori]. If you have questions, need additional information, or would like a paper copy of the above mentioned document, contact the Office of Research Integrity at (859) 257-9428.

Chairperson/Vice Chairperson
APPENDIX C

ORIGINAL STUDY RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

I am a Doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Kentucky. I and my faculty advisor Wayne Lewis, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Kentucky, are working on a project “Examination of Youth Leadership within the Context of High School Youth Leadership Development Course” beginning in Spring 2014 and continuing through the end of 2014-2015 school year. The study focuses on youth's perception of leadership, their motivation to practice leadership, their attitude toward leadership development and its role in their personal life and community. In this study, we aim to answer such questions as "What do adolescents think leadership is? What role does it play in their personal development? And what are the pathways that foster the development of leadership in youth?"

We need your child's help to answer these questions. We would like to ask you for the permission of your child to participate in this study by answering our questions. If you are interested, we enclosed a consent form in this letter. Please read, sign, and send the consent form back to us. I would be glad to answer any of your questions or concerns that you might have regarding this study. You may contact me via e-mail at victoria.sherif@uky.edu or at my telephone number (502)572-0438 at your convenience.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Victoria Sherif
Doctoral Student
Graduate Researcher
Educational Leadership Studies
111 Dickey Hall
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506-0017
APPENDIX D

ORIGINAL STUDY CHILD ASSENT FORM

You are invited to be part in a research study being conducted by Victoria Sherif from the University of Kentucky. You are invited because you are currently enrolled in the "______" course. Your knowledge and experience are considered a valuable source and will help me to better understand leadership and its role in your life.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to share your opinion on leadership and the role it plays in your life, lives of your peers and family, your school and community. I would like to hear about your experiences in learning and practicing leadership in your family, school and after-school activities you are involved in, and your community. The questions will ask only about what you think. There are no right or wrong answers because interview and focus group sessions will not test your knowledge on academic disciplines. The researcher will also observe your interactions and relationships with peers, your behavior and reactions to activities you will be engaged into throughout the course. Please note if you do not agree to participate in this study, the researcher will still be observing the class, but will collect no information relative to you. Additionally, your essays, journal and discussion notes, personal statements, and written comments/post will help the researcher to better understand your opinion on leadership and its role in your academic and personal life.

There will be no cost associated with your participation or non-participation in this study. You will receive no payment for taking part in the research. However, you will be offered some refreshments (pizza) with your course mates who also agree to participate in this study. Pizza parties will organized by the researcher throughout the study period.

Your family will know that you are in the study. We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us the information, or what the information is. Your name will be kept separate from the transcripts and verbal information you give during the interviews and focus groups. These information resources will be stored in the investigator's personal computer with a password-protected access. Tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the study. Please note that confidentiality during the focus groups cannot be guaranteed because other focus group participants present will know what was said and by whom.

If something makes you feel bad while you are in the study, please tell Victoria Sherif or your course mentor ______. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you want.

Any time if you have any questions or concerns about anything in this study, you can ask Victoria Sherif. You can also ask your parent any questions you might have about this study.
Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name of Participant</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of (Authorized) Person Obtaining Assent</td>
<td>Date</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX E

ORIGINAL STUDY PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Purpose of Study

Your child is being invited to take part in a research study for the purposes of examination of youth's perception of leadership, their motivation, and pathways of youth leadership development process. The study also aims to identify practices at the local school level that support the development of youth leadership. Your child is being invited to participate in this research study because of his/her current enrollment in the "____" course. His/her knowledge and experience are considered a valuable source and will help the investigators to better understand leadership and its role in your child's life.

Please take whatever time you need to discuss this study with your family members and friends, or anyone else you wish to. The decision to let your child join, or not join, is up to you.

The people conducting this study include Victoria Sherif (Investigator, the Education Sciences Doctoral student) and Dr. Wayne Lewis (Faculty Advisor, Assistant Professor) from the University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.

Description of Procedures

If your child joins the study, he/she will be asked to share his/her opinion on leadership and the role it plays in his/her life, lives of his/her peers and family, his/her school and community via a series of interviews and focus groups. These interviews will be conducted during the period listed in the study information sheet attached to this form. Each interview will last for 15-20 minutes. Focus groups will engage other students from your child's class and will last for 30-50 minutes each. If you agree for your child to participate, interviews will include questions about your child's perception of leadership and the role it plays in his/her personal development, his/her attitude toward youth leadership development course, its activities, and their importance for leadership development. Focus groups will aim to initiate discussions on the meaning of leadership for personal and professional development, its impact on school and community as well as your child's experiences in leadership development and its practical application. Additionally, we will ask about your child's possible motivation of developing leadership, joining the course, and helping in school and community affairs. With your permission, we would also like to audiotape the interview and focus group sessions.

Observations of your child's interactions and relationships with peers, his/her behavior and reactions to activities he/she will be engaged into throughout the course, academic records such as essays, journal and discussion notes, personal statements, photos shared for the course purposes, and written comments/post will help the researcher to better understand your child's opinion on leadership and its role in his/her academic and
personal life. If you or your child do not agree to be in the study, the researcher will still be observing the class, but the data on non-subjects will not be collected.

The investigators may stop the study or take your child out at any time they judge it is in your child's best interests. They can do it without your consent.

**Risks and Benefits**

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. He/she may choose to participate or not to participate. Your or your child's decision not to participate will not cause the loss of any benefits or rights you would normally have if he/she chooses to volunteer. He/she can stop participating at any time during the study and still keep the benefits or rights he/she had prior to volunteering.

To the best of our knowledge, there are no risks to participation in this study. In other words, the things that your child will be asked to do have no more risk of harm than he/she would experience in everyday life.

The benefit of your child's participation includes the clarification of youth leadership perception and identification of practices and activities that have the potential for facilitating more successful leadership development in adolescents. Your child and his/her course mates will be also offered refreshments provided by the researchers throughout the study period. There is no guarantee that you or your child will get any benefit from taking part in this study.

There will be no study cost associated neither to your child nor your family with your child's participation or non-participation in this study. Neither your child, your family, or you will receive payment for participating in this study.

The interview and focus group sessions will be audiotaped and further transcribed. Your child will not be identified in the transcripts. Reports from this study will include combined information. We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that your child gave us the information, or what the information is. Your child's name will be kept separate from the transcripts and verbal information he/she gives during the study; any collected information resources will be stored in the investigator's personal computer with a password-protected access. Tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the study. Please note that we might be required to provide the information that identifies your child to people who determine whether the study is conducted adequately and correctly; these would be people from such institutions as the University of Kentucky. Also we cannot guarantee complete confidentiality of data given during focus group sessions because other subjects present will know what was said and by whom.

Your child's information will be combined with the information received from other individuals taking part in this study. When we report the findings and share this study
with other scholars, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. Your child will not be personally identified.

If you decide that your child joins the study, you or your child still have the right to later decide at any time that you or he/she no longer want to continue. Deciding not to participate or choosing to leave the study will not result in any penalty or loss of rights/benefits to which your child is entitled, and it will not harm his/her relationships with peers, the course mentor, or the investigator.

Voluntary Consent

I have read the above information, or it has been read to me, and I certify that I understand it. I have had a chance to ask questions to help me understand what my participation involves. If I have additional questions, I can contact the investigator Victoria Sherif at (502)572-0438 or faculty advisor Wayne Lewis, Ph.D., at (859)257-8921. If I am not satisfied with their responses or if I have any questions about my rights as a participant of this study, I understand that I can contact the staff in the Research Subjects Office at the University of Kentucky at (859)257-9428 or toll-free at 1-866-400-9428.

A copy of this Agreement of Informed Consent will be given to me. By signing my name below, I, as a parent or legal guardian, authorize __________________________________________________ (child's name) to become a participant in the research study described in this form and give my permission for the teacher/school to release my child’s academic records to the researcher until I decide otherwise.

I authorize the participation of my child in the following (please select):

- all research activities associated with this study
  - observations, interviews, focus groups, and review of academic records

发布时间: [ ]

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature: __________________________ Date: __________

Printed Name of Parent or Legal Guardian: __________________________
APPENDIX F

ORIGINAL STUDY SEMI-STRUCTURE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date and Time
Duration
Site
Interviewee

Part I. Welcome

Hi. First of all, I would like to thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. I appreciate your willingness and time. Please make yourself comfortable and I will tell you a little about this interview and its purpose. Before we do that, however, I wanted to ask your permission to audiotape our conversation. It will help me to remember important details of our conversation. The tape will be transcribed for further analysis. The content of our conversation will remain confidential. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you may ask me to turn off the recorder and I will turn it back on when you are ready. If you have any questions, please let me know. So, would that be OK if I use the audio recorder during our conversation?

Thank you very much. As you know from before, I am really interested in your opinion about youth leadership. So, today I would like to ask you a few questions on your definition of youth leadership and its major components. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Part II. Questions

1. How would you define “youth leadership”?

2. What makes you think that?
3. Are there any major components of youth leadership you may distinguish?

4. What are they?

5. Why do you think so?

6. Have you noticed any characteristics of youth leadership by observing which you can confidently say it is youth leadership?

7. What are those characteristics?

8. Have you ever observed them in your peers and adults?

9. When and where have you observed them?

10. Is there anything else you would like to add that will help me better understand how you view youth leadership?

**Part IV. Conclusion**

Thank you very much for this conversation. I greatly appreciate your opinion. The answers you shared with me today will remain confidential. Your insights are very helpful and valuable for this study. Thank you very much again. It was a pleasure talking with you today!
APPENDIX G

ORIGINAL STUDY FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Date and Time

Duration

Site

Number of Participants

Supplies Needed:

- Audio recorder
- Set of batteries
- Agenda
- Sign-in sheet
- Pens
- Paper sheets

Part I. Welcome

Hi. First of all, I would like to thank you for volunteering to participate in this focus group. I appreciate your willingness and time. Please make yourself comfortable and I will tell you a little about this focus group session and its purpose. Before we do that, however, I wanted to ask your permission to audiotape this focus group session. It will help me to remember important details of today's conversation with you. The tape will be transcribed for further analysis. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you may ask me to turn off the recorder and I will turn it back on when you are ready. If you have any questions, please let me know.
Today we are going to discuss what makes a person a good leader in his family, among peers, and community. Also, I would like us to talk a little about leader's role in school, local and global community. I have provided you with agenda for today's focus group session. Please take a look and if you have any questions or concerns, I would be glad to answer. *(Distribute the agenda among the focus group participants)* Please, also note that you received clean sheets of paper. I would like to ask you to write down your opinion on the questions discussed further in our focus group. Your written comments will be combined with audio transcripts. You do not need to write your name down. Please note that confidentiality of information shared and/or discussed during this focus group session cannot be guaranteed because other participants present will know what was said and by whom.

**Part II. Guidelines and Norms**

As we are going to get to our main purpose for being here, I would like to discuss some norms for this focus group. First, we need to make sure that this is a safe place for each of you to share your thoughts and knowledge about the topic we will be discussing. So, we need to ensure that every person's opinion is respected. At the same time, we need to feel comfortable offering alternative points of view. The purpose of this focus group is that we get all of our thoughts about the topic. So, please, respect your peers and feel free to offer different opinions.

Additionally, please allow your peers to talk. You might have strong opinions about some questions I ask. Please share your opinions, but also know that I and your group members need to hear from all of those in the group who would like to comment or share his/her insights on the topic discussed.
Finally, if you have not offered an opinion on a topic, I may ask you what you think. If you would like to comment, please do so. If you do not want to, please feel comfortable to tell me that your opinion has been stated by others or that you would like not to share your insight at this point.

If you have any questions or additional comments to the guidelines, please feel free to add or ask now. Thank you!

**Part III. Questions**

There are many different views on what youth leadership is. Each person understands leadership in its own unique way and adds his experiences and feelings to this understanding. The questions I would like to ask you today intend to help me better understand YOUR vision of leadership, its structure, and characteristics.

1. I would like to begin by asking you to think about leadership. Specifically, **what does leadership mean to you?** Please write down your answers and share them with us if you feel comfortable.

2. Great job! From your perspective, what personal qualities does youth leadership consist of? Please, write down your thoughts and share them with us if you feel comfortable.

3. Specifically, what are the components of leadership?

4. What role do you think leadership plays in your life? Does it play any role at all? If it does, in what light? Please write down your ideas and share them with us if you feel comfortable.

5. Was the class you took helpful in developing your leadership? If so, in what ways?
6. Can you think of anything you would like to add about leadership and its role that we have not covered yet?

Part IV. Conclusion

Thank you very much for participating in this focus group today. Your thoughts and knowledge will be used to define leadership. Later on I will offer you an opportunity to reflect on your comments and whether I captured your ideas correctly. And again thank you!
References


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Sherif, V. (2016). Hearing the voices of rural high school youth (*Under review*).


Thorne, S. (2000). Data analysis in qualitative research. *Evidence Based Nursing, 3*, 68-70. doi:10.1136/ebn.3.3.68


van den Berg, H. (2005). Reanalyzing qualitative interviews from different angles: The risk of decontextualization and other problems of sharing qualitative data. *Qualitative Social Research, 6*(1), 1-14.


http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=12021&context=rtd


Vita
Victoria Sherif

ACADEMIC DEGREES

M.Ed. in Education and Psychology 2009-2011
Pavlodar State Pedagogical Institute, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan

B.A. in Education and Psychology 2004-2008
Pavlodar State Pedagogical Institute, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan

PROFESSIONAL AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant 2013-2016
Center for Clinical and Translational Science, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

Data Analyst 2014-2016
Evaluation Unit, Human Development Institute, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

Instructor 2015-2016
Educational Leadership Studies, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

Graduate Teaching Assistant 2013-2015
Educational Leadership Studies, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

Researcher 2006-2011
Education, Pavlodar State Pedagogical Institute, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan

PUBLICATIONS


**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**


Sherif, V. (November, 2014). *Youth leadership and ethics: Concepts and challenges.* Graduate Student Abstract Exchange Presentation at the University Council for Educational Administration, Washington, DC.


Sherif, V. (April, 2014). *Youth leadership development and ethics.* Presentation at the Spring Research Conference, Cincinnati, OH.
ACADEMIC SERVICE

Chair of Evaluation Session at the Spring Research Conference  March 2016
University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

College of Education Ambassador  2015--2016
University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

Graduate Student Reviewer for International Journal of Leadership in Education  2014-2015
Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Wallace Charles Hill Graduate Fellowship in Administration and Supervision  2015-2016
College of Education, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY  2014-2015

Graduate Fellowship  2009-2011
Pavlodar State Pedagogical Institute, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan

Undergraduate Scholarship  2004-2008
Pavlodar State Pedagogical Institute, Pavlodar, Kazakhstan