

**EXPLORING OCCUPATIONAL RESILIENCY AND RETENTION AMONG  
MULTI-GENERATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS**

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of the Requirements for the  
Executive Fire Officer Program

by  
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## **Abstract**

The fire service is quickly transitioning its workforce from baby boomers and Generation X to the millennial and Generation Z population. Understanding the resiliency, recruitment, and retention of the millennial and Generation Z population are critical areas of concerns for the future of fire service leadership. This study reflected on millennial and Generation Z employees' resiliency through adversity, recruitment, and retention within the fire service. Qualitative interviews were conducted including 19 participants belonging to the millennial and Generation Z generation, resulting in over 19 separate responses for analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify themes that emerged from the collected data. Support from leadership emerged as one of the primary components necessary for the recruitment and retention of millennial and Generation Z employees. Mentorships and employee appreciation and recognition were also identified as common themes among the sample size. Career development plans, exploring schedules that promote a healthier work-life balance, and competitive compensation were also identified as critical areas for the fire service to consider supporting millennial and Generation Z employees in the long term.

### **Acknowledgments**

This study is dedicated to the firefighters of Greenville Fire/Rescue who have remained consistent throughout the adversities the organization has faced in the past decade. I am also indebted to the devotion of my wife for keeping me focused and on task, as she continues to support my dreams in the fire service.

My affiliation with the Greenville Fire/Rescue Department is provided as biographical information. No official sponsorship or endorsement of this Capstone Research Paper by the Greenville Fire/Rescue Department was provided or should be inferred.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The American Fire Service has transformed from a tradesman workforce to a multi-generational workforce that encompasses opportunities and challenges alike. The complexity of risks that personnel are exposed from traumatic events, time in grade, and organizational culture are all factors in occupational resiliency (Clarke, 2007). While staffing shortages among fire departments affect fire service personnel through longer hours and increased stressors, recruitment and retention is also affected through generations that have interests in technology and a healthy work-life balance (Anderson, 2022). As fire service leaders of the future, considering life experiences, diversity, and embracing change through flexibility is critical in addressing multi-generational concerns (Blume, 2021).

According to the American Psychological Association (2014), resilience is "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress" (p. 1). While resiliency can be defined a number of ways, common themes of adversity and positive outcomes are directly associated with the definition (Muriithi et al., 2022). According to Muriithi et al. (2022) "occupational resilience is the capacity for persistence in the performance of an occupation, whereby capacity is reflected in both duration and intensity of engagement in a specified occupation" (p 10). Executive leaders in the fire service enhance resilient communities and organizations through adaptive challenges incorporating efforts through increase personnel resiliency, recruitment, and retention efforts (United States Fire Administration [USFA], 2023).

### **Background**

As of 2022, the United States had 27,163 registered fire departments; however, only 9.5% are registered as fully career (USFA, 2022). Fire service organizational cultures are

transitioning from tradition and resistance to change in efforts to champion generational differences, fostering organizational growth in the future (Center for Public Safety Excellence, 2020). Greenville Fire/Rescue falls into the small percentage of career departments in the nation. The department is unique in the fact that Greenville Fire/Rescue hosts the largest fire-based EMS system to include paramedic transport in North Carolina (Harris 2023). Over the past decade, Greenville Fire/Rescue, along with other career-based departments face challenges in retaining staff to complete the mission. Departments across the nation have addressed community resiliency through initiatives such as National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST, 2016) Community Resilience Program. It is necessary to explore how fire departments provide training for resilience and what fire departments can do to build a resilient workforce through the adversities personnel face throughout their career. According to Joyce et al. (2018), preparing employees with cognitive and behavioral training and treating things such as anxiety will be positive strategies for successful individual resilience training, decreasing mental health issues, and enhance organizational resiliency when faced with adversities.

Throughout this capstone, the study explored beyond the fire/rescue field to note any similarities with organizational cultures, generations, and retention efforts to acknowledge and define occupational resilience. While many believe resilience is an individual trait, occupational resilience relates to organizations that work to foster a positive environment, healthy work-life balance, and social network for the common goal (Kossek & Perrigino, 2016). The vision of the United States Fire Administration (USFA) is for "prepared and resilient fire and Emergency Medical Services" (USFA, 2019, p. 5). Successful fire service leaders will embrace change and organizational environments that promote sustainability in community response through staffing

and technology leveraged off applicants of today's fire service (Center for Public Safety Excellence, 2020).

### **Significance of the Study**

Occupational resilience beyond the individual level identifies traits that similarly link triggers affecting retention among different demographics, generations, and adaptations of the given workforce (Kossek & Perrigino, 2016). Developing leadership skills and an organizational culture that can work through adversities is critical in retaining employees (Brown, 2023). While no one individual in the fire service is alike, many factors contribute to fire service workforce being sustainable. Additional factors contributing to resilience in our occupation also relate to fatigue. Day-to-day and chronic fatigue affects individual performance through exhaustion and burnout as fire service employees are exposed to high stress situations for long periods of time (Burnett, 2017). This study explored the resilience of millennial and Generation Z employees to increase the recruitment and stop the rotating door of employees. Understanding how employees adapt to the high-stress environment while exploring multiple generations will benefit fire departments in building a resilient workforce.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem is that fire service staffing shortages continue to increase, creating a need to attract and retain younger generations. Leaders are faced with a labor market where employee turnover associated with wages, toxic cultures, and failed employee recognition programs are factors of employee retention (Sull et al., 2022). The fire service is entering a time that millennials are now leading, and understanding how to engage them on the job is challenging. Millennials, born between 1981-1998 typically do not accept rejection and have different expectations than previous generations (Neal, 2017). Critical factors such as timely feedback,

career opportunities, and having an engaged and meaningful mission statement aid in retaining today's workforce (Stahl, 2019). Generation Z is entering a workforce that is being led by generations with similar characteristics and values, as baby boomer leaders are career oriented and focusing on hard work (Srinivasan, 2012). Generation Z, born between 1998 and 2012 will bring more diversity and open minds to the workforce than any generation, with over 57% of the generation having an education beyond that of a high school (Igielnik & Parker, 2020).

Understanding the new generation of firefighters can aid organizational retention and resiliency.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore the experiences between individual resiliency, recruitment, and retention in millennial and Generation Z firefighters. This research will utilize descriptive research through a career fire department in North Carolina to identify career roadblocks, identify how millennials and Generation Z deal with adversity, and provide recommendations on ways to recruit and retain millennial and Generation Z employees.

Identifying gaps in employee resiliency is critical in understanding and retaining fire service employees. This study aims to explore millennial and Generation Z employees to seek and provide resiliency training to specific generational groups while engaging leadership with tips to retain the millennial and beyond employee.

### **Research Question(s)**

Two research questions will be utilized throughout the capstone to explore the problem. Research question #1-What impact does the working environment have on fire service's ability to recruit millennial and Generation Z employees? Research question #2-What can leaders do to be successful in the retention of employees hired from the millennial and Generation Z generations?

## Summary

The need for additional research in the area of resiliency throughout each generation in the workforce is present. Throughout chapter 2 literature will define the problem and aid in the initial research that currently exists with similar occupations and similar generational workforce. This research is not intended to assume that any particular organization is succeeding or failing due to leadership, personnel, training, or size. Without understanding the root of the problem and embracing generational concerns, the fire service will not grow to accept the changes that are preventing us from growth. Chapter 3 will describe the methodology approach utilized for the study, while chapter 4 discusses the study results discovered.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Resilience continues to be a challenge in the fire service organizations as the cultures of organizations change with the younger generation of firefighters entering the fire service (Kossek & Perrigino, 2016). A review of the literature was conducted to include generational differences, resiliency, recruitment, and retention of generations making up the fire service. Common research themes in resilience and retention of generations including baby boomers, Generation X, millennials, and Generation Z. Literature from both the fire service and private sector was utilized. The existing knowledge on the topic was explored through a review of scholarly literature.

The term occupational resiliency is related to the field of work and stressors related to the prescribed job (Kossek & Perrigino, 2016). While completing this research study, looking specifically at the "in-field" of fire service employees was a challenge to find in academic research as it related to generational resilience. Throughout the research process, similar workforces of the generations that encompass the fire service workforce were referenced to gain a better perspective of resilience, recruitment, and retention.

### **Existing Literature**

#### **Generations**

The American workforce is transformational, spanning over five generations as employers focus on adjusting their organizational cultures to address generational conflicts (Carpenter & Charon, 2014). Baby boomers, the oldest generation in the workforce, is a group that is politically involved while looking forward to progress with satisfaction found in one's success (Srinivasan, 2012). Making up approximately 27% of the United States workforce, baby

boomers seek hard work as the most important character trait in the work environment, while believing newer generations are driven by monetary gains and not the value of the work performed (Seifert et al., 2023). Wanting to be involved in decision-making, baby boomers make commitments to personal development while contributing to the overall effectiveness of the given organization (Govitvatana, 2001).

Generation X are diverse in the aspect of tradition, as they are the first generation seeking a work/life balance (Srinivasan, 2012). This generation grew up in a time when their parents faced corporation layoffs and a recession, providing trust issues for employers attempting to retain them once Generation X entered the workforce. Generation X employees struggle to commit to a single career, are extremely flexible, and bring forth inclusiveness in the workforce (Govitvatana, 2001). Being the generation often overlooked in the workforce, Generation X employees want recognition and praise on the job along with compensation that is equal to those of other generations doing complete work ("Dealing with Generational Conflict in the Workplace" 2023).

Millennials, also known as Generation Y, are looking to improve the lives of those around them. Millennials are not afraid of any technological challenge the fire service workforce may face ("Dealing with Generational Conflict in the Workplace" 2023). Millennials approach issues with confidence and optimism, and appreciate that their opinions are valued in the workplace (Srinivasan, 2012). Millennials seek feedback that is timely and meaningful. This is a generation that has jobs readily available, while working for employers that do not put value into mentorships and relationships will lead to the millennial seeking employment elsewhere ("Dealing with Generational Conflict in the Workplace" 2023).

Generation Z is the youngest generation entering today's workforce. The Generation Z population shares some similarities to that of baby boomers, as this generation is competitive, responsible, and career-oriented (Seifert et al., 2023). Generation Z has been raised by parents who lived through recessions, with leadership skills that have been absent through other generations who are realists of the problems at hand. Generation Z however, causes challenges for some public safety agencies in an effort to both recruit and retain this generation (Acheampong, 2021).

Each generation in the workforce impacts agencies differently depending on the job tasks at hand. While the largest group of the U.S. Fire Service are ages 30-39 years, the fire service being built with tradition will be challenged as the millennials who bring technology to the table enter leadership roles in the workforce. Creating and fostering open environments is crucial to the survival of the millennial workforce that is versed in cultural change (Miller et al., 2021).

### **Retention Factors in Gen X, Millennial, and Beyond**

Generation X likes putting forth effort and personal attributes to get a task completed. Employers that are not setting the expectation high could be a concern for retention of this generation (Calloway, 2018). Many public sector employees post COVID learned to deal with flexibility and adaptability to the work plan, with Generation X employees being the leaders of many agencies. To survive, Generation X employees still need the one-on-one mentorships available to them with opportunities to strive in career development (McGraw, 2023). Much like the generations behind them, Generation X can job search at their fingertips. With loyalty to the workplace, Generation X will become curious about other opportunities when employers are not meeting the needs of employees (Calloway, 2018).

As millennials have entered the workforce it has become a challenge to retain them. As noted by Hassan et al. (2021), only 165 of 500 current employees who are millennials were content with remaining in their current jobs for the next 10 years. While these numbers are less than ideal for the private sector, this is more of a concern for the public sector, primarily public safety. Millennials are no longer influenced by family members to pursue blue-collar work, as the generation did not carry forth the same traits that are representative of the fire service (Neal, 2017). While millennials are the most educated generation, the millennial generation prefers a healthy work-life balance therefore many times do not meet the expectations of the employer working long hours to meet deadlines. Millennials want a purpose in their work. Contrary to the negative stereotyping that many organizations may place on millennials, they favor employers who offer career advancement and security in their job (Buenrostro, 2022). One study contributed that attrition rates for the millennial generation and beyond are 33% higher than with the Generation X (Neal, 2017).

Generation Z is known to be the most racially, culturally, and gender-diverse generational cohort in the United States (Dool & Beal, 2022). This could be an opportunity for the fire service as organizations attempt to recruit diverse employees to meet the demographics of the community served (Center for Public Safety Excellence, 2020). As addressed by Waugh and Koster (2015), individuals who suffer from depression have a lower resiliency factor with elevated depression symptoms when exposed to traumatic situations. Noting that the population of Generation Z employees is smaller than that of both baby boomers and Generation X, the threat of losing these employees increases as the job market competes for this generation in the workforce (Vierling, 2023).

## **Resiliency Factors**

Each employee possesses traits and behaviors that control the resilience of an organization. As noted by Hayes et al. (2020), employees who love their jobs have a higher resiliency factor than those who struggle to come to work. Being able to come to work and have fun, having security in the work, and having a management team that supports and fosters strong relationships are keys to building resilient team members (Siebert, 2006). Placing work above personal lives decreases the psychological security of individuals in the workplace, thus decreasing the resiliency factor individuals have for the given occupation. Simply put, having an organization that is committed to employee well-being and personnel with high cognitive output throughout their duties has higher resiliency demands (Kossek & Perrigino, 2016). For firefighters, while the job is highly physical, the cognitive and physical demands on the job create opportunities for injury or loss of time at work. Having a plan for firefighters to cope with the stressors of the job decreases the likelihood of injuries or long-term mental health issues.

## **Leadership Factors**

Transformational leadership was presented as an empowerment tool for the health and welfare of firefighters, which changed employee perception of safety and well-being while decreasing anxiety and stress (Smith et al., 2023) The leader of a team or organization is a variable that can shape the resiliency factor of an individual or organization (Hayes et al., 2020). Creating an environment where employees can be involved, provide feedback promptly, and the ability to promote participatory leadership aids millennials in engaging in the fire service workforce (Neal, 2017). Employees in the 21st century want a leader who looks for the collective interest of the organization, employees, and society. Today's employees look for leaders who are equitable in treatment while providing collaboration among employees within

the organization (Certutti et al., 2020). When passive leaders are not actively engaged in the safety and welfare of firefighters, this increases the anxiety of personnel and increases the risk of injury.

### **Synthesis of the Existing Literature**

In a review of the literature, it was found that generations pose similarities and differences in what each generation values in employers. Generation X and Generation Z employees pose similarities in leadership traits, values, and work ethic (Seifert et al., 2023). Generations in the workforce today including the fire service are facing children who do not have the same perception of work that their parents did. Millennials and Generation Z employees, where technology creates ties between work and personal lives making it difficult to disconnect from work when at home (Neal, 2017). The literature review also highlighted weaknesses that each generation faces within organizational leadership. As millennials become the largest workforce in the labor market, leaders who have transformed from an authoritarian leadership to participatory leadership styles are more successful at engaging younger generations (Neal, 2017). The literature review linked some historic recurrence among generations, as Generation Z traits were similar to that of baby boomers and Generation X, there is still opportunity in research on the resilience of Generation Z in the workforce (Dool & Beal, 2022).

### **Summary**

The literature review supported a need for research of the millennial and Generation Z generations regarding resilience, recruitment, retention, and leadership traits desired for leading today's fire service. The review of the literature and information contained can be utilized to address perceived assumptions that leadership may have regarding certain generations in the fire service. The research section of this study aims to provide information for fire service leaders to

consider for generational practices to be successful in maintaining effective personnel in the public safety workforce.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to complete this study. Focusing on the view of experiences from personnel within the fire service, it was determined qualitative methodology was most appropriate. Qualitative research explores individual's attitudes and beliefs with the given topic, allowing the study to answer questions about personal experiences (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Understanding that the study has no alliance to one specific method of qualitative research, generic qualitative approach allowed flexibility throughout the interview process from a participants' perspective (Kahlke, 2014). The research was designed to explore participants' views, behaviors, and trends as they related to the fire service generational differences and similarities while identifying retention factors among the multigenerational workforce. The study specifically focused on Generation Z and millennial generations that are currently employed in the fire service.

The study focused on a qualitative approach analyzing personal experiences, behaviors, and attitudes within the fire service through perspective of millennials and Generation Z employees. Interviews, focusing on millennials and Generation Z employees were conducted with open-ended questions providing the participants a chance to describe their experiences throughout the interview process. Throughout the process, participants provided input, trends, and described challenges that organizations could face in the future of the American Fire Service.

### Research Design

Selecting the appropriate research method took into account that the study would address the research questions identified in chapter 1. This included determining appropriate participant characteristics, the types of data being collected, and how the data would be analyzed.

Identifying the research was based on personal views and perspectives, qualitative research methods best fit as open-ended interviews assisted in gathering these perspectives, behaviors, and attitudes (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Qualitative study is flexible in the means of its final report as its research is interpretative based on experiences of the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In comparison, there are multiple approaches associated with qualitative research such as phenomenology, ethnography, and grounded theory. The use of generic qualitative inquiry aided in the study as it allowed the experience and perceptions to be expressed from individuals within the fire service. The generic qualitative inquiry method allows reflections on individual experiences, taking account of their attitudes and beliefs while being completed by a novice researcher (Kennedy, 2016).

### **Population and Sample Size**

The study population included members of personnel in both operations and administration roles within Greenville Fire/Rescue. The Greenville Fire/Rescue Department is the largest fire-based Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agency in the state of North Carolina. The department answers over 20,000 calls a year with 170 uniformed personnel (Harris, 2023).

Inclusion criteria included all members of Greenville Fire/Rescue who were on the active roster and assigned to shift or administrative roles within the department. Members must range in years of service from 1-23 years to focus on the millennial and Generation Z population. Members must have held the rank of firefighter/EMT, driver/operator, captain, or battalion chief, and be between the ages of 19-42 years. Exclusion from the study included members outside the age range of 19-42 years, enrolled in the fire academy with less than one year of service, and those on administrative leave from the department. Individuals who met the inclusion criteria but who were direct reports, and/or with whom there was a personal relationship were also excluded

from the study. While sample sizes may vary in qualitative research, the qualitative interview sample size is dependent on the participants providing new information throughout the interview process (Malterud et al., 2015). A total of 19 participants were interviewed for this study. Participants were representatives of both the operations and administrative staff of the department. The battalion chiefs interviewed provided an executive-level view of generational concerns, while lower ranks provided a perspective of the line staff. Age and years of service were the only demographics in the selection criteria as the age and positions in the department allowed the research to obtain different perspectives about leadership traits, resiliency, and retention. The inclusion of participants was chosen to identify new views and accounts of the generations being explored.

### **Instrument**

Interview questions were developed to extract information from the participants' perspectives on the topic of their generation, resiliency, and retention in the fire service. Interview questions were broad during development as there was a lack of knowledge of the participants regarding the research study (Roberts, 2020). Semi-structured interviews allowed the focus to remain on the subject while allowing additional clarification to questions as appropriate. Interview questions were designed to be open-ended questions that engaged the participants on providing their experiences, be non-judgmental of the participants, and be open to interpretations of the participants involved. Interview questions were field tested with two individuals who hold terminal degrees and who have expertise in qualitative research methods. A third field test was performed with a fire chief. The interview questions were revised based on feedback from the individuals who assisted with the field test. The following interview questions were used. A list of these questions can also be found in Appendix D.

1. Into which of the following age ranges do you fall? 19-27 years (Generation Z) or 27-42 years (millennial)?
2. How many years have you been in the fire service?
3. In your experience, what character traits (individual qualities or attributes) does the 19-42 year old employee demonstrate after faced with adversities in the fire service?
4. Describe strategies that you may have developed to help you bounce back from failure on the job?
5. What can organizations do, if anything, to improve job satisfaction specifically in the Millennial and Generation Z employees?
6. In your experience, please share life experiences (gained through living) that have helped you work through adversities on the job.
7. In your perception, what opportunities might the administration have to better prepare you for the calls that are physically and socially challenging? Provide an example.
8. In your experience, what are some characteristics that fire service leadership appreciate and value in employees in the fire service?
9. How would you describe your experiences communicating with those from the command staff of the organization?
10. What leadership traits do your leaders exhibit when you feel that you are at your best in achieving your goals in the fire service?
11. In your perception, what can fire service leaders enhance to provide opportunities for millennial and Generation Z employees to recruit in the fire service?
12. What actions do you see that fire departments and local governments can take to retain the fire service workforce?

13. Do you have anything else you would like to add that I have not asked?

### **Research Process**

With the permission of the fire chief, a recruitment letter was shared with the Greenville Fire/Rescue Department through email outlining the purpose of the applied research study (see Appendix A). The recruitment letter included an overview of the purpose and nature of the study, the approximate length of the interview, along with the inclusion and exclusion criteria for participation. Contact information for those interested in participating in the study was also provided for those seeking additional information regarding the study.

Individuals who responded expressing interest in participation were asked to confirm that they met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Those who met the criteria for eligibility were provided an informed consent form (see Appendix B) to sign and return. Participants were informed through the consent process that each interview would be recorded and maintained on a private device. Individuals were then provided a calendar invite to schedule a time for the interview that was most convenient to them. At the start of the interview, participants were reminded that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time, and that they could choose not to answer any questions. To de-identify the data, each participant was assigned an alphanumeric identifier such as P1, P2, P3, etc. to ensure confidentiality in the data that was included in the research process.

Interviews conducted in person were completed with the permission of the fire chief at the Emergency Operations Center for the City of Greenville. In person interviews were recorded through MP3 audio recording device and transcribed utilizing Google Drive talk-to-text. Participants who opted not be interviewed in person were offered to complete interviews via Microsoft Teams. Interviews that were completed via Microsoft Teams were recorded through

the Microsoft Teams application, transcribed through Google Drive talk-to-text, then exported to a private storage device. Qualitative interviews were then conducted with (see Appendix D) questions that were open-ended with the intent to obtain the participants perspective. In accordance with the requirements of the National Fire Academy, data will be retained for a period of four years from the completion of the study, and then destroyed. No transcribed content was edited throughout the review process that pertained to the behaviors, attitudes, or opinions of the participant. A total of 19 individuals participated of various ranks within the department including participants from both generations of millennials and Generation Z, with ages of participants between 19-42 years.

Microsoft Excel was utilized to code the results of the interview to aid in identifying themes or similar responses. Thematic analysis with constant comparison was utilized throughout the process (Percy et al., 2015). The 13-step process for analysis will be completed to include;

1. Reviewing and identifying information that pertains to the study.
2. Retaining the data and comparing it to the research question to ensure it relates.
3. Removing data that is not relevant to the research question.
4. Coding the data.
5. Grouping the data to show patterns.
6. Comparing new data to that of the first set of data completed. As each new participant is interviewed, comparing data throughout for constant comparison.
7. The researcher throughout the interviews will attempt to identify patterns.
8. Attempting to identify themes in the data while looking for patterns.
9. Identifying patterns that shift throughout the process.

10. Identifying themes from all interviews for additional patterns.
11. Describing each theme identified through data collection
12. Identifying quotes from the data collection and supporting themes with these.
13. Following up with each pattern with correlating themes (Percy et al., 2015).

Transparency was critical to each interviewee, as each interview was confidential with names and rank being excluded from the interview.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The ethical responsibility of the study is to maximize the benefits of the study while not harming any participants (Yip et al., 2016). Ensuring participant confidentiality throughout the study was critical to ensure transparency. Participants were advised from the beginning that the study was voluntary and that participation in the study would have no impact on their jobs. Information was provided to each participant on how to contact the researcher in writing and by phone regarding the information presented or the findings of the research. Additionally, participants were informed that if they did not feel comfortable answering they could skip a question or voluntarily withdraw their participation during the interview. Throughout the research process, the goal is to reduce risks to participants by ensuring that information is cited properly, and data is presented in the appropriate manner representing the data appropriately (Wester, 2011). To de-identify the data, each participant was assigned an alphanumeric identifier such as P1, P2, P3, etc. to ensure confidentiality in the data that was included in the research process. Each participant was provided an informed consent form that was signed by the participant. Each consent form was scanned and filed on a private device, along with the data collected throughout the study in two separate electronic folders on the private storage device.

At no point was a name or rank shared in the study other than age as this aligns with the generational purpose of the research study. Throughout the interview process, the role of the researcher was a mediator between the interview questions and the participant's experience or response to the question (Sanjari et al., 2014). The confidentiality of participants was maintained throughout the process by securing documents on a personal device, and by storing signed informed consent forms separate from de-identified data.

### **Summary**

Throughout Chapter 3 the summarization of the methodology utilized in the study of firefighter resiliency, recruitment, and retention among generations in the fire service. Generic qualitative inquiry through qualitative interview questions was utilized throughout the research process. The survey studied individuals from each generation currently serving the workforce, with rank not being a variable in the selection of candidates. Research information was transcribed with Google Drive text-to-talk maintained through Microsoft Word to identify common responses and themes. The research has provided information on how different generations are impacted by adversities faced by the job, what issues they face that leadership may not anticipate, best communication practices among the generations, and what style of leadership works in today's fire service.

## **CHAPTER 4: STUDY RESULTS**

This study included interviewing a total of 19 participants of the Greenville Fire/Rescue Department from the millennial and Generation Z generation. Interviews were conducted in person, recorded using a MP3 device, transcribed utilizing text to talk feature on Google Drive. Interviews that were completed via Microsoft Teams were recorded through the Microsoft Teams application, transcribed through Google Drive talk-to-text, then exported to a private storage device. An excel document was utilized to hand-code the data and identify themes that emerged. Exploring individual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, qualitative interview questions were developed based on two research questions. Research question #1-What impact does the working environment have on fire service's ability to recruit millennial and Generation Z employees? Research question #2-What can leaders do to be successful in the retention of employees hired from the millennial and Generation Z generations?

### **Demographics of the Participants**

The demographics of the participants included fire service members that were from the millennial or Generation Z generation ages 19-42 years old. Members included personnel from Greenville Fire/Rescue that encompassed all ranks including that of firefighter/EMT, driver/operator, lieutenants, captains, and battalion chiefs. There were four participants from Generation Z, and 15 total participants were from the millennial generation. Appendix E illustrates the inclusion criteria in age of the 19 individuals that participated in the study, and the specific generation that each participant belonged. The participants' years of service varied from 1-23 years. There were eight participants with 1-10 years of service and 11 total participants with 11-23 years of service. Appendix F illustrates the years of service for personnel within the study.

## **Research Results**

In addition to the demographic questions answered, 11 interview questions were answered to explore the perceptions and attitudes of the members of Greenville Fire/Rescue regarding the recruitment, retention, and resiliency specific to the millennial and Generation Z generations. The responses to the interview questions emerged qualitative research themes that answered the research questions in chapter 1 of the study. Six themes emerged through the thematic analysis to include:

### **Resiliency during Adversity**

Addressing research question one, participants defined that current fire department cultures play a part in with the way individuals respond to adversities. P5 shared “it’s not as taboo to deny failure, as folks today are more versed in culture, acceptable for feedback, help, and change.” P6 added that “biggest role in today’s workforce is how you respond and react to adversity.” Participant 1 stated, “you have to be a caring, resilient individual with a desire to do this job, as this job is not meant for everybody.” Adding to resiliency, participants answered interview question 4 such as P3 “stating self-reflection on how failure occurred, learn and grow from it.” P6 perspective included ownership with adversity, stating “being ok with failure as it is natural, but taking ownership to face the failure head on defines resiliency to keep it from happening again.” Resiliency was mentioned in 3 different interview questions, with adversities on and off the job being utilized as examples along with participants addressing resiliency with bouncing back from adversities as well. P11 included “resiliency is changing the mindset of a individual from everything will play out to a what kind of challenges will I face today.” Overall, 36 % of participants mentioned resiliency in responses. The word ownership was also linked to resiliency throughout the responses.

## **Employee Recognition**

Answering research question two, employee recognition programs from both the organizational level and governing agency level. P8 “believes that personnel are jumping ship because they don’t like the challenges our department faces.” A large number of participants (53%) stated that organizations need to show appreciation and value to employees when asked how to improve job satisfaction. P2 included that “our generation appreciates being recognized for what we are doing along with compensation for doing it.” P8 added “employees feel dehumanized when the department and city fails to recognize the work they daily under all conditions.” Being engaged assisted this generation in feeling that they were part of the team. P1 explained that “listening to their input and allowing that employee to engage was a powerful way to value his input.” When asking P6 what organizations could do differently he explained “find out what motivates an employee and then praise this generation, public praise is huge!” Participants defined value and appreciation in both the leader and employee through interview questions 5, 8, 9, and 10.

## **Support and Mentorship**

Support and mentorships answers related to both research questions 1 and 2. While Mentorships and support was themed into mentorship programs, participants’ believed this could help recruit and retain the specific generations interviewed. Overall, supportive leadership was mentioned 74%, while mentorships mentioned 53%. Participants stated support through feedback, mentorships, and follow through in the decision making process were behaviors participants mentioned throughout the interviews. P19 on question 10 stated that “the first thing is having a leader that supports the people through mentorships and understanding where people come from will make an organization successful.” In response to question 10, P13 reflected on

“leaders being supportive in the decision making process, following up on them, and not leaving him out to dry in tough situations” further stating that “he appreciated the guidance and support.” P2 stated that “reaching out to the senior, informal leaders help you improve and prevent failure in the future. They check the attitude box.” P11 shared “accept failure, but seek guidance for feedback.” Several participants linked ownership with mentorships, such as P11 stating that accepting failure but seeking guidance” when asked how to address failure. P6 stated “mentors set you up for success through getting others on board with processes in the department” when asked what administration could do to better prepare employees. Regarding the same question (7), P4 stated “the mentor was the real learning, as you can read all you want in the book, but until you experience it in the field you haven’t learned anything.” P4 continued to say “the mentorship he [P4’s mentor] had provided him with a solid foundation and how to communicate with the community for the younger generation on the job.”

### **Job Satisfaction and Career Development**

Through interview questions 5, 11, and 12, participants stated that the need for a transparent career path/plan could aid in both recruitment and retention. Answering research question one and two, P3 stated when answering question 12 “clear department goals coupled with a defined and clear career development plan with the opportunity for growth in the department meant more than a solid benefits package.” P5 stated that “a meaningful career development plan to push you out of the comfort zone would improve our level of services.” Personnel also linked recruitment with retention, as P13 believed that “fire service leaders could recruit millennial and Generation Z employees by discovering what makes them tick and provide informed decisions on career paths prior to employment.” Others such as P10 answered question 10 stating “a career path coupled with short and long term goals matched with a vision.” The

employee was eluding that “this would make it worth wild to stay in the department.” Another participant (P8) answered question 11 stating that “to recruit this generation transparency on what it takes to grow, where the generation needs to be, and how are we going to get there.” P3 also supported this claim through “millennials and Generation Z recruits what to know the what, who, and how.” In question 5, P15 stated “involving this generation in the job is critical to success.” P5 stated that “having a pathway with employees being able to make a decision for him/her answering the whys.”

### **Work-life Balance**

Answering research questions one and two, interviews identified that 43% of the participants expressed an enhanced work/life balance was needed in this line of work for this generation. P12 answered question 5 with a strong believe that the quick rebound from shift to shift led to a quicker burnout. P12 also stated that “time off is not quality time off as we are rebounding from running calls.” P11 supported this claim as well stating “we spend a 3<sup>rd</sup> of our lives at the fire station that doesn’t include overtime, training, and preparing for career advancement.” This participant (P11) clarified that “culturally our generation has shifted more importance to be present and prioritize time with loved ones and friends.” Mentioned with work life balance was motivation. P6 shared “seeking way to improve the work life balance of this generation may be the motivation to the employee to make him/her stay or leave.” Participants answered question 12 with responses to work life balance as a motivator for retention sharing “addressing the concerns with the amount of time we work is a long-term concern.” P12 mentioned work life balance through 3 different questions, reflecting on “matching the time off that matches the time and the effort we put in at work” as a factor for him to remain in this career. Participants stated that the schedule was not appreciated, as “there were no options for

personnel outside the 24/48 schedule to work at the fire department and be successful” and as shared by P9 “people don’t appreciate a schedule and the organization could seek additional options for shift personnel.”

### **Compensation and Benefits**

Answering research questions one and two, participants included in 74% of the responses in question 12 alone addressed the overall pension plan being something that organizations needed to address for millennial and Generation Z employees. Including longevity, healthcare, and compensation, participants were overall concerned with post-employment benefits. P16 eluded that the city had a pay study but did not follow through with it stating, “make Greenville more marketable compared to other agencies.” Another perspective through P17 with experience in the union workforce shared that “unionized department employees have a say in his/her future pay on the yearly contract.” P17 explained that while we have a union, it did nothing in the department for benefits. P10 shared “when local governments took most of these away (benefits), the allure of working public sector jobs for less pay but good pension caused the workforce to move from place to place.” P10 added that “real performance-based incentive and merit pay would reward good work.” Overall participants talked about people jumping job to job, sharing “people are jumping ship for the highest bidder”, however in the same context P8 shared that “incentivizing people that stay to stay through benefit packages and getting back to our roots with post-employment benefits is a start.” P4 perhaps tied it together well, sharing that a mentor “broke down the dollar amount and really what the long-term benefits were are critical for this generation to understand.” Participants addressed this theme with not only the current market value, but post-employment benefits as well.

Out of the six themes that emerged from the study, five of the six assisted in answering research question one. Participants explained that employees being resilient in the face of adversity affected the working environment. Organizations have opportunities to share both career development plans and compensation packages during recruitment processes. Exploring working options that are non-traditional for fire service employees was also identified through the interview question as a way to identify and improve the work-life balance. Generation Z and millennial employees put as a priority.

Five of the total six themes also answered research question two. Participants' perception however was two part through the study, as both the organizational leadership and governing agency had responsibility when answering research question 2. Participants expressed through experience that leadership works for employers who had a responsibility for recognition programs, job satisfaction, supporting mentorships, work schedules, and compensation and benefits.

### **Summary**

The qualitative study utilizing interviews was conducted with 19 participants of the Greenville Fire/Rescue Department. Rank varied among the participants, while the age of all interview participants were under the age of 43. The interviews obtained the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of both millennial and Generation Z employees in the department. These participants assisted in answering the research questions noted in the start of the study, while identifying common themes. The themes included values that millennials and Generation Z seek in organizations and leadership while providing leadership with a perspective of challenges these specific generations face related to resiliency and recruitment.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of the Results

The fire service continues to face challenges to adequately recruit and retrain individuals from the millennial generation and Generation Z. Additionally, identifying what attributes both millennials and Generation Z employees' exhibit when faced with adversities challenges the 21<sup>st</sup> century fire service leader in participatory leadership to be effective (Neal, 2017). Understanding resiliency levels while addressing retention issues with millennial and Generation Z employees could aid in recruitment efforts by organizations.

The literature review assisted in identifying similarities that both the fire service and private sector employees are experiencing with millennial and Generation Z employees. Millennials want a purpose in their work, as the generation prefers a healthy work-life balance (Buenrostro, 2022). Generation Z employees present challenges to retain as this group of employees are the smallest generation in the workforce, creating a competition in the job market for these employees (Vierling, 2023). The literature review identified differences and similarities in recruitment, retention, leadership styles, and resiliency factors among the generations spanning from the baby boomer through Generation Z. The literature review aided in the development of 13 interview questions (Appendix D), which were administered to 19 millennial and 19 Generation Z participants. Six themes emerged in data analysis collected through qualitative interviews with participants to include:

- Support and mentorship
- Employee recognition
- Resiliency during adversity
- Job satisfaction and career development

- Work-life balance
- Compensation and benefits

Thematic analysis utilizing consistent comparison throughout the data collection created patterns from participants with correlating themes.

### **Conclusions Based Upon Your Results**

The results of qualitative data collection and analysis in this study were used to answer the research questions developed to guide the study. The fire service is transitioning leadership styles for autocratic to participatory and servant leadership as millennial and Generation Z employees enter the field of work (Neal, 2017). The fire service has opportunities for both command staff and senior privates in the organization to transform its membership. Based on the themes identified in this study, fire personnel understand that experience is not as prevalent in the fire service as it once was and need to know that they have support from senior staff members and officers to complete tasks. Of the themes identified, 16% revolved around character traits desired for leadership to be successful. Understanding the most important element of tools at the fire department, millennials and Generation Z look for support and appreciation from leadership as a high priority.

The qualitative interviews addresses that participatory leadership engaged the millennial workforce that supported findings by Neal (2017), stating millennials wanted involvement from leadership with prompt feedback. Collective efforts from leaders to collaborate with employees to stimulate engagement, equitable treatment, and support were commonly used as successful tactics in retention (Certutti et al., 2020). Another theme that emerged during qualitative data collection was that management teams that support and foster relationships aid in building a resiliency in teams through both research and data collected through interviews. The ability for

organizations to understand what motivates the current generation assists leadership with succession planning that incorporates the millennial and Generation Z views.

Millennials and Generation Z participants also identified that organizations have opportunities to enhance their experiences of their generation in the fire/rescue field. Participants discussed that 50% of themes related with organizational responsibility to include a healthier work life balance, career development plans, and a meaningful benefit package. Throughout the data collection, research identified that millennials favor organizations that offer career advancements opportunities. Participants of the study viewed career development plans an opportunity for growth and an answer to the how in career planning and advancement. A career development plan coincides that the employer will support with the employee through the process. Additionally, participants were concerned with a healthy work life balance that offered equitable time off. The literature supported this view as well noting that today's generation prefers a work life balance that meets the individuals' expectations (Buenrostro, 2022). Lastly, participants shared that meaningful benefits were needed for organizations to be successful in recruitment and retention long term. While some fire departments may be bound by municipal government bureaucracy, revisiting long term benefit packages to include hourly increases, post-retirement health insurance, and longevity were important among those interviewed.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations in this study. The Greenville Fire/Rescue department is composed of 170 employees. The sample size utilized for this qualitative study was limited to 19 participants. While these interviews were sufficient to reach data saturation, the sample size limited the perspectives or data collected to only what Generation Z and millennial generation identified. This study did not account for an executive level view, as members of the command

staff of the department largely were excluded from the sample size due to the exclusion criteria of being over the age of 43. A recommendation is to complete an additional study to include the beliefs of Generation X and baby boomers in regards to the same subject material. While all interviews were conducted in face-to-face with an open line of communication, the study material may have been affected by the researcher's rank being a battalion chief within the department sampled. Similar studies outside the Greenville Fire/Rescue Department are recommended from different regions, including a larger sample size and diverse make up of years of service while keeping the same criteria to support generalizations being made.

### **Implications and Recommendations to the Field**

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be made to improve the resiliency, recruitment, and retention of both millennial and Generation Z employees in the fire service. The first recommendation is for fire departments to establish a comprehensive career development plan (CDP). Creating a CDP that rewards a combination of training and experience enhances public safety services that a department could provide. The development of a CDP should consider a step-by-step vertical process for promotion while exploring horizontal educational growth opportunities for the current rank of each position in the organization. Being transparent with such a plan and publishing the document outside the network of individual employees could enhance recruitment opportunities for the future.

Secondly, the recommendation for organizations to complete a work analysis study to address a work-life balance. Determining organizational thresholds, rest and recovery time for personnel, and optimal utilization of units all are factors of a healthier work-life balance. Collection of data from internal stakeholders can assist organizations in identifying globally the

concerns personnel may have regarding the shift schedule they work, exploring non-traditional fire service work schedules that meets the needs of the individuals performing the work.

Third, fire departments should look for opportunities to provide employee appreciation programs. Appreciation programs can be broken down into 3 categories; formal, informal, and everyday programs. Formal recognition programs completed annually by executive staff of organizations recognize promotion, valor, and strategic achievements. Informal recognition programs completed quarterly by leadership and peers for station level actions and community acknowledgement. Lastly everyday recognition that is addressed by leadership and peers for meeting short-term goals.

Finally, the fire service should seek opportunities to enhance their compensation and incentives. Organizations need to be competitive in compensation strategies that aid in retention and motivate employees to seek advanced skills. Seek lateral transfer incentives to recruit employees with matching benefits, retirement and health insurance, and other options for talented staff that rewards members through incentivized compensation plans for additional skill sets.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Throughout the study, interview sessions identified a need for additional research on mental health in the fire service specific in the millennial and Generation Z employees. Additionally mental health and inclusion were both mentioned throughout the interview process with a small sample size of participants. While diversity, equality, and inclusion have been identified by millennial and Generation Z employees as important, the recommendation of additional research on the millennial and Generation Z employee belonging in the fire service is needed.

Study participants identified the need for recruits to be resilient. Opportunities are present for departments to explore recruitment criteria and determine if hiring practices are applicable. The current identified that participants believed the current generation is resilient based on life experiences. For future research organizations could seek to assess the pros and cons of applicant psychological testing and how to best screen for resilient individuals.

The study participants identified that Generation Z and millennials appreciated mentorships. This topic is bountiful in the fire service as many agencies have leadership and mentorship programs. Future research could explore methods of engaging personnel for difficult conversations, or creating paths of engaging employee participation for success.

Participants of the study also discussion employee motivation as it relates to retention in the fire service. The topic of motivation was not explored and therefore not included in the study. Future research could include what motivates certain groups of employees, or how can motivation be improved for Generation Z or millennial employees. Further research on how employee motivation affects retention in the fire service, or does employee motivation affect employee recruitment activities at job fairs.

The study hopefully aided in bridging resiliency within the fire service occupation, more importantly occupational resiliency. It is the aim of the study to bring realization for fire service leadership of the future to address the needs of the personnel performing the role of the public servant. Furthermore, the hope is that this study will aid others in defining retention strategies for millennial, Generation Z, and beyond generations in the fire service.

### **Conclusion**

A qualitative research study examining the occupational resiliency, recruitment, and retention of multi-generational firefighters was conducted to include a comprehensive literature

review that encompassed generations, retention factors, and resiliency, and leadership. The interview process assisted in understanding behaviors, views, and attitudes of the Greenville Fire/Rescue millennial and Generation Z employees. Lastly, recommendations made were intended to provide fire service leadership with opportunities to improve and enhance current and future members of departments while increasing their over job satisfaction.

Increasing leadership's ability to recruit, retain, and prepare the fire service for millennial leaders and Generation Z employees will hopefully aid organizations in building a resilient workforce. Building a resilient workforce focuses on the internal stakeholders of an organization. The change agent for the future of the fire service includes employee involvement, employee appreciation, career development, and fire service agencies that prioritize incentive and compensation programs for its employees.

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## Appendix A

### Introduction for Participation in Research Project

I am Mervin Taylor, a Battalion Chief with Greenville Fire/Rescue in Greenville NC. I am a student in the Executive Fire Officer program at the National Fire Academy. I am completing my Applied Research Paper for my final class, and am seeking assistance from the department for research participants for my applied research paper (ARP), "Occupational Resiliency and Retention among Multi-Generational Firefighters." The problem statement for my ARP is that fire service staffing shortages continue to grow, creating a need to attract and retain the new generation. Leaders are faced with a labor market that is open for business, while the baby boomers are ending careers preparing for retirement.

The interview will be conducted with confidentiality in mind, as the final research paper will not have department names, interviewees names, or any personal identifiers. Participants chosen will be between the ages of 19-42 and of all ranks of the department. Members that may be excluded from the study include those outside the age range, currently in the fire academy, or on administrative leave from the department. All interviewees will be identified with a participant number in the final research paper and all interview material will be locked away for four years and then destroyed. Individuals who met the criteria but who were direct reports and/or with whom there is a personal relationship with will be excluded from the study.

The interview will be in-person or through an on-line Teams Meeting, and consist of 13 open-ended questions, as well as applicable follow-up questions, dealing with the success, or struggles you faced with your generation in the fire service. The interviews will be recorded, transcribed into a word document, personal information and identifiers redacted, and participant numbers included for data coding and confidentiality for the final research paper. Each interview is expected to last between 30 to 60 minutes, with the ability for any participant to withdraw at any time.

If you are interested in participating, I ask that you respond via email and provide a contact number so I am able to reach out to further discuss the process and answer any questions. I thank you in advance for your valuable assistance. Please reach out to me at [mtaylor@greenvillenc.gov](mailto:mtaylor@greenvillenc.gov) or my cell at 252-258-7307 so we are able to plan a time to discuss the process.

Sincerely,

Mervin T. Taylor  
Battalion Chief  
Greenville Fire/Rescue

## Appendix B

### Interview Consent Form

#### Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Mervin T. Taylor from the National Fire Academy (NFA). The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of a critical issue in the fire and emergency services. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of their final project.

#### Research Procedures

Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of an interview that will be administered to individual participants. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to your experience within a particular community. An audio/video recording of the interview will be taken for transcription purposes. The audio/video file will be deleted at the conclusion of the study and will not be shared with anyone other than the researcher. You may turn off your camera if you do not wish to be filmed.

#### Time Required

Participation in this study will require approximately 45 minutes of your time.

#### Risks

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (That is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life). The NFA and its contractors take no responsibility for the actions or outcomes of the research study.

#### Benefits

There are no direct benefits to the participant; however, information from this study may benefit your and other communities in the future.

#### Incentives

There are no incentives (financial or otherwise) associated with participation in this study.

#### Confidentiality

The results of this research will be presented to NFA program faculty and students. The results of this project will be coded in such a way that the respondent's identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. While individual responses are confidential, aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual respondents with their answers (including audio and/or video recordings) will be destroyed. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.

#### Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

### Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during your time of participation in this study, or after its completion, or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

#### **Mervin T. Taylor**

Student

Executive Fire Officer Program

National Fire Academy

[mtaylor@greenvillenc.gov](mailto:mtaylor@greenvillenc.gov)

#### **Dr. Mary Lannon**

Faculty Advisor

Columbia Southern University

[Mary.Lannon@ColumbiaSouthern.edu](mailto:Mary.Lannon@ColumbiaSouthern.edu)

### Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form, and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have received satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

I give consent to be filmed and audio recorded during my interview \_\_\_\_\_ (interviewee initials)

I give consent to be audio recorded during my interview \_\_\_\_\_ (interviewee initials)

Interviewer Name		Date	
Interviewer Signature		Date	

Interviewee Name		Date	
Interviewee Signature		Date	

## Appendix C

## Approval Letter for Scientific Research



January 3, 2024

National Emergency Training Center  
16825 South Seton Avenue  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Re: Battalion Chief Mervin Taylor

To Whom It May Concern:

Battalion Chief Mervin Taylor is currently enrolled into the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. As part of the program, he is permitted to conduct scientific research for the program utilizing Greenville Fire/Rescue personnel. This may include sample questions, interviews, and/or surveys. As an EFO graduate, I appreciate the research for the Greenville Fire/Rescue Department and the fire service as a whole. I look forward to the forthcoming research and how we can use it for our department.

If I can be of further assistance concerning this letter of support, please do not hesitate to call me at 252-329-4395.

Sincerely,

Brock H. Davenport  
Fire/Rescue Chief  
[Bdavenport@greenvillenc.gov](mailto:Bdavenport@greenvillenc.gov)

## Appendix D

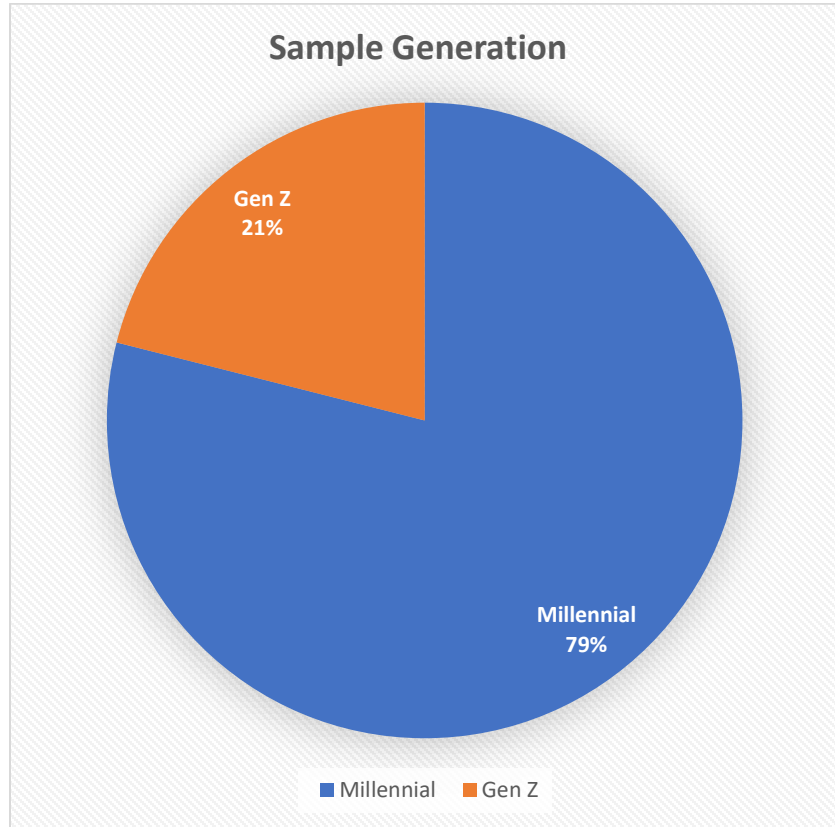
### Interview Questions

1. Into which of the following age ranges do you fall? 19-27 (Generation Z) or 27-42 (millennial)?
2. How many years have you been in the fire service?
3. In your experience, what character traits (individual qualities or attributes) does the 19-42 year old employee demonstrate after faced with adversities in the fire service?
4. Describe strategies that you may have developed to help you bounce back from failure on the job?
5. What can organizations do, if anything, to improve job satisfaction specifically in the Millennial and Generation Z employees?
6. In your experience, please share life experiences (gained through living) that have helped you work through adversities on the job?
7. In your perception, what opportunities might the administration have to better prepare you for the calls that are physically and socially challenging? Provide an example.
8. In your experience, what are some characteristics that fire service leadership appreciate and value in employees in the fire service?
9. How would you describe your experiences communicating with those from the command staff of the organization?
10. What leadership traits do your leaders exhibit when you feel that you are at your best in achieving your goals in the fire service?
11. In your perception, what can fire service leaders enhance to provide opportunities for Millennial and Generation Z employees to recruit in the fire service?
12. What actions do you see that fire departments and local governments can take to retain the fire service workforce?

13. Do you have anything else you would like to add that I have not asked?

### Appendix E

#### Sample Generation



## Appendix F

### Years of Service

