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## Nonprofit Strategies for Alternative Revenue Generation and Sustainability

Aretha LePearl Day  
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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Aretha Day

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Walden University  
2020

Abstract

Nonprofit Strategies for Alternative Revenue Generation and Sustainability

by

Aretha Day

MBA, Walden University, 2014

BS, Hollins University, 2012

Consulting Capstone Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

December 2020

## Abstract

In the post-2008 Great Recession era of a highly volatile global business environment of increased competitiveness, diminishing predictable revenues, and depleting philanthropy, many nonprofit leaders struggle to sustain their organizations. Volatility is important to nonprofit leaders because such fluctuations create unpredictability, which threatens their organizations' financial stability for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. Grounded in Elkington's triple bottom line conceptual framework, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. The participants comprised 3 senior leaders in a nonprofit located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States who used successful short-term survivability and long-term sustainability strategies. Data were collected from semistructured interviews, the organization's archival documents, and GuideStar. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, yielding themes of strong ethical governance and leadership, systemic strategies, robust programmatic processes, and proactive revenue generation. A key recommendation is that nonprofit leaders adopt an entrepreneurial leadership mindset and use social entrepreneurial activities as alternative revenues to increase income streams by creating added value to sustaining supporters. The implications for positive social change include leaders of nonprofit organizations directly sustaining opportunities for the most disadvantaged citizens to receive services.

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## Dedication

First and foremost, I give Almighty God all the glory and praise for the blessing, opportunity, and strength to pursue and complete this doctor of business administration (DBA) study. I dedicate this DBA study to my late father, Reverend Roosevelt Moore Galloway, and my late mother, Thelma M. Green, for the foundation they laid to prepare me for this moment of achievement and responsibility. I am thankful for the previous generations' lives, sacrifices, and lessons that shaped my reaching this monumental goal. I am thankful for and dedicate this DBA study to my son, who has always been my motivation, and future generations. I hope this achievement is an inspiration to you to achieve your dreams with faith in God, planning, hard work, diligence, and perseverance, even against all odds. I pray that my life's works will have a positive social impact, help others overcome challenges, and reach their dreams, goals, and potential. Last but not least, I dedicate this DBA study to vulnerable and marginalized populations and the leaders who seek to make a positive social change in those populations' lives.

## Acknowledgments

I acknowledge that my completion of this DBA journey was not a solo effort. I received an abundance of support and encouragement from family, professors, and cohorts. I begin by thanking the Walden University's founders and leadership for their vision and mission of marrying higher education for adults and social change in an accessible manner, as well as the multitude of resources and the world-class staff that administer those services. I thank the DBA program's leadership for their programmatic excellence. Your exercises in perceiving us as "future" doctors helped me to keep my eyes on the prize and press toward the mark of completion. I am grateful to the DBA consulting capstone interview committee, who gave me the opportunity to become a real-world scholar-consultant. I extend a special acknowledgment to the late Dr. Hockin, who ensured that I attended my first residency. I offer an abundance of thanks, appreciation, and gratitude to my doctoral committee, Dr. Anthony, committee chair; Dr. Dwyer, second committee member; and Dr. Garfield, university research reviewer; for your unyielding guidance, support, encouragement, expertise, rigor, and examples of stellar scholars and professionals in your disciplines. I thank the client organization's leadership for allowing me into your nonprofit as a researcher to study your organization in depth. I give a wholehearted thank you especially to the executive director of the client organization, who reserved a considerable amount of time by phone and email over 2 1/2 years to answer questions, follow-up questions, and provide numerous documents. Your professionalism, candor, and unwavering commitment to this study even during organizational crises and the COVID-19 pandemic is commendable.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Section 1: Foundation of the Study .....	1
Background of the Problem.....	1
Problem Statement.....	2
Purpose Statement .....	3
Nature of the Study.....	3
Research Question .....	4
Interview Questions.....	4
Conceptual Framework .....	5
Operational Definitions .....	6
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations .....	7
Assumptions .....	7
Limitations.....	9
Delimitations .....	10
Significance of the Study.....	10
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature .....	11
Triple Bottom Line History and Definition.....	14
Triple Bottom Line and Corporate Performance Measurement .....	31
Triple Bottom Line and Organizational Values .....	32
Triple Bottom Line and Three Types of Capital .....	37

Triple Bottom Line Standards of Accountability .....	40
Triple Bottom Line and Sustainable Investment .....	47
Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals .....	49
Small Business and Microenterprise Sustainability .....	57
Nonprofit Sustainability .....	65
Sustainability Matters .....	108
Transition.....	111
Section 2: The Project .....	113
Purpose Statement .....	113
Role of the Researcher.....	114
Participants .....	117
Research Method and Design.....	119
Research Method .....	119
Research Design .....	120
Population and Sampling.....	121
Ethical Research .....	122
Data Collection Instruments .....	126
Data Collection Technique .....	127
Data Organization Techniques .....	130
Data Analysis.....	130
Reliability and Validity .....	132
Reliability .....	133

Validity .....	134
Transition and Summary .....	136
Section 3: Organizational Profile .....	137
Key Factors Worksheet .....	137
Organizational Description and Key Characteristics.....	138
Organizational Environment .....	138
Vision, Mission, and Values.....	139
Product and Service Offerings.....	139
Processes.....	140
Workforce.....	143
Assets .....	145
Regulatory Requirements .....	145
Organizational Relationships.....	146
Organizational Leadership Structure .....	146
Senior Leader.....	148
Volunteers.....	150
Customers and Stakeholders.....	151
Suppliers and Partners .....	152
Key Performance Indicators .....	153
Technology and Communication .....	154
Fundraising Events .....	154
Financial Structure.....	155

Income .....	156
Expenses .....	157
Organizational Situation .....	157
Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers.....	163
Leadership .....	163
Strategy .....	176
Customers .....	182
Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results .....	186
Workforce.....	187
Operations.....	194
Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management .....	202
Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results .....	211
Product and Process Results .....	213
Customer Results .....	216
Workforce Results .....	218
Leadership and Governance Results .....	221
Financial and Market Results .....	224
Key Themes.....	229
Project Summary .....	238
Application to Professional Practice .....	240
Leadership .....	242
Legal and Ethical Behavior .....	245

Fiscal Responsibility and Strategy .....	246
Customers .....	248
Workforce and Other Stakeholders .....	251
Innovation.....	255
Implications for Social Change .....	258
Recommendations for Action.....	259
Recommendations for Future Research.....	267
Reflections .....	268
Conclusion.....	269
Sign of the Times.....	270
References .....	273
Appendix: DBA Interview Protocol.....	301

## List of Tables

Table 1. Results for Court Reports Submitted.....	215
Table 2. Results for Assignments of Advocacy Volunteers.....	216
Table 3. Results for Client Reassignments to Different Advocacy Volunteers .....	217
Table 4. Results for Staffing of Advocacy Volunteers.....	220
Table 5. Results for Ethical Breaches, Fiscal Going-Concern Audit Opinions, and Adverse Regulatory Actions.....	223
Table 6. Results for Financial Performance Including Budgetary Performance, Grant Approvals, and Fundraising.....	227
Table 7. Results for Financial Performance Including a 3-year Budgetary Itemization of Income and Expenses .....	228
Table 8. Aggregated Results of Client Organization’s AOC Reports.....	228

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Process for a child entering protective services, foster care, and advocacy. ...	143
Figure 2. Permanency planning: Priority of placement.....	169
Figure 3. The systemic strategies used by the client organization’s leadership for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.....	242

## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In Section 1, I discuss (a) the background of the problem; (b) problem statement; (c) purpose statement; (d) nature of the study; (e) research question and interview questions; (f) conceptual framework; (g) operational definitions; as well as (h) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations; in addition to (i) the significance of the study. I also present a review of the professional and academic literature.

### **Background of the Problem**

Nonprofits play an essential role in society. Nonprofits undergird communities by providing critical services that government officials and business leaders are unable to address for various reasons. Nonprofits are critical to the survival of (a) individuals, (b) families, (c) communities, and (d) society, increasingly more than ever since the 2008 Great Recession, but many leaders of nonprofit organizations are struggling to survive and keep their organizations from closing. Nonprofit leaders realize that governmental and philanthropic support continues to diminish, which increases the strain to satisfy both their mission and margin. Nonprofit leaders' experience paradoxical tensions and complexities between the need to fulfill their organization's social mission and achieve their organization's financial goals to remain solvent, also known as *the mission or the margin* (Kellner et al., 2017). Nonprofit leaders face shifting rules of engagement and an evolving landscape in the nonprofit sector, including technology and hybrid entities, which encourage increased competition and fewer predictable, recurring donations (Bravo, 2016; Colley, Fretwell, & Bourdea, 2017; Han & McKelvey, 2016; Kellner, Townsend, & Wilkinson, 2017; Mataire et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015; Shier,

Handy, & Jennings, 2019). Many nonprofit leaders remain challenged on how to transform their organizations to address these threats to their existence. Some nonprofit leaders struggle to make sense of these changes and develop viable strategies to counteract the rapidly occurring shifts (Jensen, 2018; Lloyd & Woodside, 2015; Ramanath, 2016). In this study, I identified the various challenges that nonprofit leaders face through the conceptual lens of the triple bottom line (TBL) and the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019; Elkington, 1994). The purpose of this study was to identify viable strategies for economic and competitive short-term survival and long-term sustainability as a result of a single-case study of a nonprofit in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

### **Problem Statement**

In the post-2008 Great Recession era of a highly volatile global business environment of (a) increased competitiveness, (b) diminishing predictable revenues, and (c) depleting philanthropy, many nonprofit leaders realize the need to reassess their organization's survivability; yet, they remain challenged on how to transform their organizations from solely donor recipients to social entrepreneurship for long-term sustainability (Kellner et al., 2017). A survey of U.S. nonprofit organizations found that 50% of first-time donors donate only one time, and nonprofits have attrition rates annually of 30% for repeat donors (Ramanath, 2016). The general business problem is that some nonprofits leaders do not fundamentally understand why generating new income streams is critical to sustaining their competitive advantage. The specific business

problem is that some nonprofit leaders lack strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. The targeted population comprised three senior leaders in a nonprofit organization located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States who used successful strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. The implications of this study for positive social change include providing nonprofit leaders viable strategies and action plans for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability through (a) transformational leadership, (b) social entrepreneurship, (c) innovation, and (d) organizational development to ensure the vulnerable and potentially marginalized populations of society continue to receive the (a) assistance, (b) care, and (c) advocacy they need.

### **Nature of the Study**

Qualitative research is an interpretive philosophy in which the researcher seeks to understand a phenomenon by socially constructing meanings regarding the studied phenomenon and subjects (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The methodology selected for this study was qualitative rather than quantitative or mixed method because researchers employ open-ended questions as a qualitative method of analysis to understand a social construct and gain a rich understanding of data through (a) multiple types of data, (b) their interpretations, and (c) realities. In contrast, as a quantitative method of analysis, researchers use closed-ended questions to collect precise empirical

data to analyze and arrive at one universal reality by examining variables' relationships or differences (Saunders et al., 2016). Additionally, mixed-method researchers use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to explore and examine complex phenomena (Saunders et al., 2016). A qualitative method was most advantageous for this study to explore strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability rather than testing hypotheses, which is a characteristic of quantitative and mixed methods.

### **Research Question**

The following research question was designed to explore the specific business problem: What strategies do nonprofit leaders use for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability?

### **Interview Questions**

1. How did you develop your strategy for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability?
2. How did your strategy development process stimulate and incorporate innovation?
3. How did you collect and analyze relevant data and develop information for your strategic planning?
4. How did you decide which key processes your workforce executes and which key processes your external suppliers and partners handle?
5. What are your organization's key strategic objectives and timetable for achieving them?

6. How do your strategic objectives achieve appropriate balance among varying and potentially competing organizational needs?
7. What are your key short- and longer-term action plans?
8. What are your key workforce plans to support your short- and longer-term strategic objectives and action plans?
9. What key performance measures or indicators do you use to track the achievement and effectiveness of your strategies and action plans?
10. For these key performance measures or indicators, what are your performance results and projections for your short- and longer-term planning horizons?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The TBL by Elkington (1994) served as the conceptual model and foundational justification for this research of a specific business problem. Elkington (1994) introduced the concept of TBL, and later, Elkington (1998) (a) published, (b) expanded, and (c) elaborated on the previously introduced concept. The TBL encompasses three distinct bottom lines of (a) people, (b) planet, and (c) profit for organizational sustainability (Zak, 2015). Additionally, the Baldrige Excellence Framework (2019) is a tool that researchers use as a holistic, systems-based evaluation of the strengths and opportunities for improvement evident in the processes and performance outcomes of a client organization. Malcolm Baldrige, the secretary of commerce in the 1980s, was a proponent and practitioner of quality management. President Ronald Reagan commissioned Baldrige to focus on the issue of American competitiveness in response to U.S. government officials' and industry leaders' concerns that U.S. companies were losing competitive advantage in

the global market and needed to compete on quality. The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987 established the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Program at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, U.S. Department of Commerce, which later became the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. The Baldrige Excellence Framework (2019) is a tool for researchers to assess seven interconnected processes and categories of (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) customers, (d) measurements, (e) workforce, (f) operations, and (g) results. I used the TBL concept to assess nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Double Bottom Line:* Nonprofit leaders' paradoxical tension and complexities experienced between the need to fulfill its social mission and achieving its financial goals to remain solvent, also known as *the mission or the margin* in various literature (Kellner et al., 2017).

*Enviropreneurial Marketing:* A representation of the convergence of (a) social and environmental issues, (b) business performance goals, (c) corporate innovation orientations, and (d) marketing strategy through integrating environmental concerns into marketing policies and practices, as a proactive business sustainability strategy (Ferro et al., 2019; Menon & Menon, 1997).

*From Cradle to Grave:* An emphasis on various stakeholders requiring the history of a product's supply chain and life cycle from the inception stage to the disposal stage (Norman & MacDonald, 2004; Onyali, 2014).

*Going-Concern Audit Opinion:* An official reporting by an independent auditor that a firm's short-term survivability is bleak at best and indicates doubt of the firm's long-term sustainability (Suroto & Kusuma, 2017).

*Social Enterprise:* A nonprofit organization that derives a significant portion of its revenues from commercial-market activities that are different from the organization's core mission and uses that revenue from its commercial ventures to fund the nonprofit services (Wicker et al., 2015).

*Social Entrepreneurship:* The behavioral characteristics of commercially viable, social purpose firms with six distinct characteristics—(a) innovativeness, (b) proactiveness, (c) risk management, (d) social mission orientation, (e) sustainability orientation, and (f) effectual orientation—that distinguish social enterprises from a solely for-profit or nonprofit organization (Dwivedi & Weerawardena, 2018).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are facts that a researcher considers true despite being unable to verify the (a) idea, (b) belief, or (c) notion (Gallop, 2011). Assumptions are subtle, inescapable aspects of research that can be overlooked because assumptions are not obvious, but implicit. Assumptions are risks a researcher should recognize as such whether the assumptions are objective or construed (Martin & Parmar, 2012). I identified that four key assumptions exist in the literature related to business ethics and management decision making in (a) theory, (b) research, and (c) practice, which are (a) the role of construal, (b) social embeddedness of the decision maker, (c) speed of

decision process, and (d) range of reason (Martin & Parmar, 2012). *Construal* is the decision makers' role in constructing the process of decision making, including (a) receiving information, (b) cues, (c) processes, and (d) accurate answers to understand the problem (Martin & Parmar, 2012). *Social embeddedness* of the decision maker is the contextual influences on the decision maker, including (a) organizational culture, (b) extent of organizational centralization, (c) time pressures, (d) use of technology in decision making, (e) risk propensity, and (f) emotions (Martin & Parmar, 2012). *Speed of decision process* includes two cognitive processes for decision making: a fast, intuitive system that is an immediate, unarticulated knowing and a slow, deliberate cognitive system that is a delayed, rational reasoning process (Martin & Parmar, 2012). *Range of reasons* is the reason choice ranging from consequentialism and duty to others to self-interest that decision makers use when making various decisions (Martin & Parmar, 2012).

My main assumption was that the client leader would tell me the truth in response to the research question and follow-up questions. My second assumption was that the archival documents I reviewed would be accurate and the most current versions for the review periods. My third assumption was that the client leader uses a dual system of fast and slow cognitive processes for decision making to arrive at the optimal decisions for the client organization. My fourth assumption was that the client leader uses a range of reasons in decision making that are appropriate and ethical based on regulatory requirements as well as organizational (a) bylaws, (b) policies, and (c) procedures to arrive at the best outcome for the organization and stakeholders. My overall assumption

was that the client leader has (a) ethical principles, (b) values, (c) character, and (d) leadership capabilities based on the position held in the organization.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are shortcomings and weaknesses out of the control of a researcher that are addressed through discussions with a (a) forthright, (b) practical, and (c) accurate self-criticism of the research (Brutus, Aguinis, & Wassmer, 2013; Ellis & Levy, 2009). A case study is an in-depth investigation into the real-life environment of a subject or phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Single-case studies are subject to vulnerabilities and criticisms because of the inherent nature of the design. A researcher uses only one case to explore a research question in a single-case study design (Yin, 2018). A single-case study's limitation is the minute sample size, but the single-case study has interesting and significant setting data (Gibbs et al., 2007). Critics of the single-case study point out that the information gathered during the study is not generalizable because the data are reflective of (a) an individualized, (b) unique organization, (c) setting, and (d) set of circumstances (Yin, 2018). The focus of my single-case study was one nonprofit organization in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States and I contacted only the organization's senior leaders. Thus, the scope or limitation of my study was narrow and specific because the study did not include more than one nonprofit in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States or nonprofits in any other regions throughout the United States or in other countries.

## **Delimitations**

Delimitations are boundaries and a constrained scope of the research, which a researcher expresses through discussions about the management of the research (Ellis & Levy, 2009). A researcher helps the reader understand the perimeters of a study with a delimitations discussion (Ellis & Levy, 2009). I chose to study only three senior leaders, including the executive director and two board members, of one nonprofit organization in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. In compliance with the terms of the approval of my research by Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I chose not to study any other organizational members, such as the nonprofit's office staff or volunteers. I chose a qualitative, single-case study design. I selected a research question focusing on nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. Each of these choices formed the boundaries of my study.

## **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for alternative revenue generation for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. Insights may reveal opportunities to positively impact the double bottom line of nonprofits (Kellner et al., 2017) by communicating the research outcomes and business implications. According to Stephan, Patterson, Kelly, and Mair (2016), organizational leaders can effect positive social change through transformational organizational processes that intentionally advance the well-being of society. Positive social change within an organization and society is most evident in innovative organizational thinking and creative solutions (Pares, 2015). This study's potential significance is to expand the

body of knowledge regarding understanding how nonprofit leaders apply strategies and action plans for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

Nonprofit leaders are struggling to survive and keep their organizations operative. Fifty-five percent of U.S. nonprofit organizations are without adequate cash reserves to sustain their operations beyond 3 months (McDonald et al., 2015). Scholars and practitioners could gain in-depth understanding about strategies for short-term survivability as well as how some nonprofit leaders position their organizations for long-term sustainability. The implications for positive social change are that nonprofits' survivability and sustainability have a direct impact on the most disadvantaged citizens in terms of services provided such as (a) food, (b) shelter, (c) physical, (d) mental and spiritual health, (e) education, (f) elderly well-being, (g) jobs training, (h) havens for the abused and neglected, (i) childcare, (j) community reentry of former prisoners, (k) transportation, as well as (l) advocacy. The positive social impact of nonprofits fosters outcomes of (a) self-worth, (b) self-esteem, (c) dignity, (d) safety, (e) health and well-being, (f) development, and (g) self-reliance for all individuals and organizations, which extend in benefits to all as part of the greater good.

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The purpose of a literature review is to conduct an exhaustive exploration of the existing body of knowledge concerning the conceptual framework used in a study (Saunders et al., 2016; Schwarz, Mehta, Johnson, & Chin, 2006). The literature review is also an opportunity for a researcher to conduct critical analysis and synthesis of the existing body of knowledge to demonstrate (a) familiarity, (b) understanding, and (c)

mastery of the literature on a chosen research topic (Saunders et al., 2016; Schwarz et al., 2006). The purpose of the literature review is not to ascertain answers based on what a researcher discovers about a topic (Yin, 2018). A researcher uses the process of the literature review to identify and formulate informative questions about the subject matter (Schwarz et al., 2006; Yin, 2018). Another critical aspect of the literature review is for a researcher to address (a) strengths, (b) weaknesses, and (c) gaps in the literature and then subsequently add to the existing body of knowledge with new revelations garnered from the review of the literature and the findings of the research (Saunders et al., 2016; Schwarz et al., 2006). The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. The logical approach chosen to organize the review and achieve a comprehensive understanding of the literature begins with the history and definition of the conceptual framework followed by discussions, in the context of the conceptual framework, focused on (a) corporate performance measurement, (b) organizational values, (c) types of capital, and (d) standards of accountability. Additional topics reviewed concerning the research question and conceptual framework include (a) sustainable investment, (b) sustainable development and sustainable development goals, (c) small business and microenterprise sustainability, (d) nonprofit sustainability, and (e) why sustainability matters.

The strategy for searching the literature began with a search for the overarching keyword *sustainability*. Subsequent searches were a broad range of related organizational sustainability topics, such as (a) *leadership*, (b) *strategy*, (c) *ethics*, (d) *corporate social responsibility*, (e) *stakeholders*, (f) *operational performance*, (g) *financial performance*,

(h) *customer satisfaction*, (i) *customer loyalty*, (j) *brand value*, (k) *marketing*, (l) *social media communication*, (m) *social media engagement*, (n) *workforce performance*, (o) *employee engagement*, (p) *employee retention*, (q) *risks and mitigation*, (r) *cybersecurity*, (s) *measurements*, and (t) *key performance indicators (KPIs)*. My search also included crucial other search words, including (a) *sustainable development*, (b) *sustainable development goals*, (c) *sustainable investment*, (d) *entrepreneurial sustainability*, (e) *nonprofit leadership*, (f) *fundraising*, (g) *donor engagement*, (h) *donor retention*, and (i) *nonprofit sustainability*. Each of these search terms was a significant contribution to gaining an in-depth understanding of organizational sustainability. I accumulated a total of 159 sources. There were 140 peer-reviewed sources, which is 88% of the total references. There were 74 sources within the past 5 years, which is 46% of the total references, including 66 peer-reviewed sources and eight government sources, leaving 54% of the sources older than the past 5 years. A detailed breakdown of the sources follows: 66 peer-reviewed sources were within the past 5 years, and 75 peer-reviewed sources were older than the past 5 years. There were eight sources from government websites and six references from nongovernmental organization websites. There was one reference from (a) a business website; (b) two academic, nonpeer-reviewed sources; and (c) one source from a dissertation.

The TBL concept by Elkington (1994) served as the conceptual model and foundational justification for the research of the specific business problem. Elkington (1994) introduced the concept of TBL, and later, Elkington (1998) (a) published, (b) expanded, and (c) elaborated on the previously introduced concept. The TBL

encompasses three distinct bottom lines of (a) people, (b) planet, and (c) profit for organizational sustainability (Zak, 2015). Additionally, the Baldrige Excellence Framework (2019) was used in this study as a tool to ensure a holistic, systems-based review of organizational strengths and opportunities and includes criteria considerations for how organizational leaders integrate suppliers into their organizational practices, including considering the risks and opportunities associated with the partnership, which could positively or negatively affect an organization's sustainability. The Baldrige Excellence Framework (2019) is a tool for researchers to assess seven interconnected processes and categories of (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) customers, (d) measurements, (e) workforce, (f) operations, and (g) results. I used the TBL concept and the Baldrige Excellence Framework Program (2019) as the conceptual framework and tool, respectively, to assess the client leader's strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

### **Triple Bottom Line History and Definition**

To understand the TBL concept, researchers must first understand the forerunners of sustainability and sustainable development. The degree that businesses affect (a) society, (b) the natural environment, and (c) the world economy is undeniable as evidenced by (a) societal inequalities, (b) rapidly shifting climate patterns, and (c) the 2008 Great Recession, as well as (d) supply shortages during pandemics, such as the novel coronavirus and COVID-19 (Svensson et al., 2016). Researchers in academia have focused on sustainability issues such as these since the 1950s (Ferro, Padin, Hogevoold, Svensson, & Varela, 2019), including Carson's (1962) most notable research in the late

1950s and work in the 1960s, which led to an awareness of hazards caused by chemical companies to people and the environment (Ferro et al., 2019).

Interest of ethical issues related to the environment and society has increased over the past 20 years, between 2000 and 2020, initiated by Elkington's (1998) published work (Ferro et al., 2019). Academic researchers have developed and combined multiple theories and disciplines as business sustainability evolved, resulting in theories such as (a) resource-based theory, (b) stakeholder theory, (c) institutional theory, (d) the political theory paradigm, (e) enviropreneurial marketing, (f) corporate social responsibility (CSR), (g) corporate social performance, (h) corporate environmentalism, (i) cause-related marketing, and (j) sustainable supply chain theory (Ferro et al., 2019). Some researchers have chosen to concentrate on the overarching study of sustainability and issues affecting business sustainability, and other researchers have focused their attention on sustainability within specific disciplines (Ferro et al., 2019).

The political economy paradigm emerged with Buchanan's work (1964) and was later developed by Stem and Reve (1980), adding further research to the body of knowledge. Buchanan (1964) believed in social choice theory, in which individuals' values influenced government through discussion and debate, but also individuals' values changed through those discussions and debates during the decision-making process to arrive at a social or stakeholder decision. Other researchers furthered Buchanan's research (1964) by later analyzing how sociopolitical and economic factors influence the behavior of distribution-channel actors (Stem & Reve, 1980). Governance through discussion and debate creates a sustainable, collective government and economy in which

businesses and nonprofits can thrive in the long term, which in turn creates a societal contribution of healthy, stable economic growth and development as well as healthy, stable inclusive (a) communities, (b) families, and individuals. The political economy paradigm is useful for understanding how various forces on the macrolevel contribute to or hinder organizations' behavior and ability to perform in a sustainable manner, such as the TBL framework. Resource-based theory was a focus of interest for Wernerfelt (1995), and Barney (1991) expanded the theory with innovative work (Ferro et al., 2019). Wernerfelt (1995) argued that businesses must assess and exploit their resources to gain and keep a competitive advantage in the marketplace, while Barney (1991) later expounded on Wernerfelt's (1995) work by arguing that resource assessment and leverage is necessary to gain and retain a sustainable competitive advantage. Wernerfelt (1995) noted that the marketplace eliminates businesses that are less than par through collective market forces.

**Triple bottom line and comparable theories.** Scholars studied how resource-based theory is relevant to organizational leaders achieving competitive advantage through the (a) acquisition, (b) integration, and (c) efficient management of organizational capital, including (a) human talent, (b) physical assets, and (c) financial resources (Ferro et al., 2019). Resource-based theory evolved from human resource theories, which include a focus on (a) knowledge, (b) skills, (c) learning mechanisms, (d) organizational behavior, and (e) organizational culture as well as (f) organizational resources, (g) systems, and (h) processes that create a complex organizational web (Ferro et al., 2019). Resource-based theory is advantageous for organizational leaders seeking to

discover new strategies for adding significant value to the organization while simultaneously decreasing competitors' ability to emulate key competitive advantages (Ferro et al., 2019). Resource-based theory is relevant to businesses and nonprofits in the context of the TBL concept because organizations that fully exploit their resources (a) reduce waste, (b) increase creativity and innovation, and (c) engage human resource talents. The development of stakeholder theory emerged with Freeman (1984, as cited in Ferro et al., 2019) with subsequent studies performed by Donaldson and Preston (1995), Jones (1995), and Laplume et al. (2008) with similar focuses (Ferro et al., 2019). Freeman's premise (1984, as cited in Ferro et al., 2019) was that a business's central goal is to generate profits and create value for individuals and groups influenced or affected by the business's activities.

Stakeholders are vulnerable to business activity, but businesses are equally vulnerable to stakeholder actions. Strategic business management becomes a crucial activity to analyze and formulate strategies that consider stakeholders in the context of stakeholder theory for business sustainability because of their ability to positively or negatively affect business activities and outcomes (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Jones (1995) provided a stakeholder theory perspective based on (a) stakeholder analysis, (b) economic theory, (c) behavioral science, and (d) ethics. The central theory is that a subcategory of ethical principles, such as (a) integrity, (b) trustworthiness, and (c) cooperation, lead to a unique competitive advantage because consumers and other stakeholders conduct business with trustworthy organizations that make equitable, ethical decisions for all parties affected by those decisions (Jones, 1995). The stakeholder theory

is a direct forerunner to the TBL concept, in which the (a) people, (b) planet, and (c) profit aspects are direct stakeholders of organizations' (a) strategy, (b) decisions, and (c) operational activities.

DiMaggio and Powell as well as Scott (as cited in Ferro et al., 2019) concentrated on institutional theory and the outcomes related to organizational sociology and ethics. DiMaggio and Powell (as cited in Ferro et al., 2019) established detailed arguments about the relationships between institutional (a) structures, (b) systems, and (c) patterns in the context of organizational sociology and their influence on society and societal institutions. DiMaggio and Powell's arguments (as cited in Ferro et al., 2019) indirectly deal with (a) the TBL concept, (b) business sustainability, and (c) stakeholder theory, because the organizational (a) leadership, (b) structures, (c) norms, (d) systems, and (e) culture determine organizational decisions and performance.

Menon and Menon (1997) introduced an innovative theory known as enviropreneurial marketing as an alternative field in the discipline (Ferro et al., 2019). The idea of an enviropreneurial marketing strategy was a representation of the convergence of (a) social and environmental issues, (b) business performance goals, (c) corporate innovation orientations, and (d) marketing strategy through integrating environmental concerns into marketing policies and practices, as a proactive business sustainability strategy (Menon & Menon, 1997). Enviropreneurial marketing is applicable to this study and the TBL concept because organizations that consider how their marketing integrates environmental concerns into organizational policies and marketing

practices, as a proactive business sustainability strategy, could gain a unique competitive advantage as a sustainable leader in their industry and marketplace.

Faber, Jorna, and van Engelen (2005) considered the foundational concepts of sustainability and the sustainability of sustainable development (Ferro et al., 2019). Faber et al. (2005) analyzed the underlying developments of sustainability, which included (a) the artefact of sustainability (the what), (b) the goal orientation of sustainability (relative versus absolute), and (c) behavioral interaction (static versus dynamic) to understand the conceptual and practical implications of sustainability. Sustainability is not a static-achievable state, but rather a dynamic state of continuous evolution relative to current societal and environmental issues, in which the organization acquires knowledge and learning to remain relevant by addressing current and future sustainability issues and problems (Faber et al., 2005). The sustainability of sustainable development is relevant to this study in the context of the TBL concept because the notion of achieving sustainability is one of (a) constant learning, (b) development, and (c) evolution, after crossing a benchmarked level of sustainable practices, rather than a final, achieved state.

Glavic and Lukman (2007) concentrated on sustainability ideologies and their explicit significance (Ferro et al., 2019). Various terms related to sustainability as well as sustainable business and practices needed clarification and summarizations as the field of study began to develop including (a) cleaner production, (b) green chemistry, (c) pollution prevention versus pollution control, (d) eco-design, and (e) resource usage minimization, to name a few (Glavic & Lukman, 2007). Glavic and Lukman's (2007) work is important to this study and understanding the TBL concept because of the

clarification of sometimes easily misconstrued terminology in the field of sustainability. Seuring and Muller (2008) focused on creating a framework for sustainable supply chain management (SSCM) (Ferro et al., 2019).

Seuring and Muller (2008) identified specific strategies employed in SSCM, which includes risks and performance management as well as sustainable products management. Most of the research focus is on environmental and economic sustainability as well as the lack of literature related to social sustainability, which completes the three-fold approach to the sustainability concept, most-widely known as the TBL concept (Seuring & Muller, 2008). Sustainability represents a balanced state based on the sum of the three-fold dimensions, represented as (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic responsibility. One can question if a sustainability argument is whole in the absence of one of the dimensions. An understanding of the SSCM framework as well as the environmental and social dimensions of sustainability is vital for businesses and nonprofits to recognize the responsibilities and liabilities associated with their entire supply chain affiliations in addition to their internal organizational sustainability policies and practices. Vaaland, Heide, and Gronhaug (2008) studied CSR in a marketing context (Ferro et al., 2019). Vaaland et al. (2008) determined that empirical research is necessary to broaden the perspective in the CSR marketing field, including extending the focus to a larger sample of stakeholders beyond the consumer population.

The above-mentioned approach builds a multidimensional view of CSR marketing, including conducting an in-depth inductive, exploratory research (Vaaland et al., 2008). A multidimensional view of CSR marketing research is important to gain a

360-perspective of various stakeholder (a) needs, (b) wants, and (c) expectations, which in turn leads to (a) sustainable developments, (b) innovation, and (c) evolution in an organization as well as competitive advantages. Organizational leaders that employ a 360-perspective of CSR marketing research exploits an aspect of the organization's resources as argued in the resource-based theory.

Guest (2010) also noticed a trend occurring in business by studying how climate change affected the business side of sustainability (Ferro et al., 2019). The focus was on explaining for the general business reader complex concepts such as the intersection of environmental science and the economics of business sustainability in the context of environmental damage resulting from climate change (Guest, 2010). Those contributions relate directly to arguments in the TBL concept, such as how organizational actions negatively affect or damage the environment and how those long-term effects hurt the present as well as future generations. Guest (2010) provided economic analysis of environmental sustainability outcomes at various levels of business consumption and pollution as well as substantiates and advances the arguments related to the TBL concept and business sustainability.

Kolk and van Tulder (2010) appraised the correlation between (a) international business, (b) CSR, and (c) sustainable development (Ferro et al., 2019). Kolk and van Tulder (2010) focused on institutions and paid particular attention to institutions in developing nations. CSR drivers such as (a) industry dynamics, (b) firm-specific resources, (c) firm-specific capabilities, as well as (d) downstream and upstream positioning as firm-specific advantages affected sustainable development at the

organizational level (Kolk & van Tulder, 2010). Kolk and van Tulder (2010) acknowledged the difficulties with implementing CSR and sustainable practices throughout the supply chain. Kolk and van Tulder (2010) recommended that researchers concentrate on the above-mentioned drivers that create sustainable competitive advantages for international businesses. Seuring and Muller (2008) identified specific strategies employed in SSCM, which includes risks and performance management as well as sustainable products management, while Kolk and van Tulder (2010) studied specific CSR drivers affecting sustainable business outcomes. An understanding of the internal and external factors affecting business sustainability is essential to managing business sustainability within the TBL framework.

Shrivastava and Berger (2010) assessed sustainability principles and future-related directions (Ferro et al., 2019). Sustainability principles represent specific purposes expressed as sustainable values. Shrivastava and Berger (2010) identified how to translate those principles into values to make them effective and persuasive arguments to (a) corporations, (b) states, (c) nonprofit organizations, (d) stakeholders, and (e) generally concerned societal members. Pelozo and Shang (2011) investigated value creation strategies for stakeholders by employing CSR (Ferro et al., 2019). Pelozo and Shang (2011) echoed Vaal et al. (2008) suggestions by emphasizing the need for additional CSR marketing research. CSR practices are central to customer value creation rather than other-oriented value creation (Pelozo & Shang, 2011). Pelozo and Shang (2011) and Vaal et al. (2008) valued the need for a 360-stakeholder view with an intention of customer self-oriented value creation rather than solely organizational-oriented value creation. CSR

marketing with a customer self-oriented value creation complements the foundational concepts signified as the social aspect of the TBL concept.

Leonidou and Leonidou (2011) conducted a bibliographical analysis by examining studies in the field of environmental management and marketing (Ferro et al., 2019). The field of environmental management and marketing research evolved, in which researchers (a) used sophisticated research designs, (b) conducted longitudinal and cross-sectional research, and (c) presented advanced and in-depth statistical analysis (Leonidou & Leonidou, 2011). Leonidou and Leonidou's (2011) conclusions are useful for drawing inferences regarding the importance of ethical environmental marketing as related to the TBL concept and sustainable business practices.

Chabowski, Mena, & Gonzalez-Padron (2011) itemized the developments of the marketing sustainability framework from 1958-2008 to share a deeper understanding of the role of sustainability in marketing as well as long-term possibilities in the field (Ferro et al., 2019). Chabowski et al. (2011) examined 1,320 sustainability articles in 36 peer-reviewed journals. The stakeholder theory, citizenship behavior, corporate performance, the TBL concept, and business sustainability were essential topics within sustainability research (Chabowski et al., 2011). The five subjects were essential to sustainability in the context of marketing, which are (a) external-internal focus, (b) legal-ethical-discretionary intent, (c) social-environmental emphasis, (d) marketing assets, and (e) corporate financial performance (Chabowski et al., 2011). Readers will find the five topics addressed in the contextual discussions of this study.

Gimenez and Tachizawa (2012) conducted a methodical review of the literature to understand how to comprehensively integrate suppliers into an organization's sustainability practices creating a sustainable supply chain (Ferro et al., 2019). A manifold of appraisal and cooperation have positive effects on environmental sustainability and CSR outcomes for both organizations and their partner suppliers, but sustainability proponents emphasize that the current collaborative model is insufficient as a standalone evaluation of sustainability and CSR success (Gimenez & Tachizawa, 2012). The Baldrige Excellence Framework (2019) used in this study as a tool to ensure a holistic, systems-based review of organizational strengths and opportunities includes criteria considerations for how organizational leaders integrate suppliers into their organizational practices including considering the risks and opportunities associated with the partnership, which could positively or negatively affect an organization's sustainability.

Ashby, Leat, and Hudson-Smith (2012) identified key links between sustainability and supply chain management (Ferro et al., 2019). Ashby et al. (2012) noted that researchers treat the environmental and social aspects of sustainability as two separate veins of study in the literature without any regard for integration. The social dimension of sustainability in the SSCM has fewer research studies as a focus than the environmental aspect (Ashby et al., 2012). The TBL framework integrates fully the (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic aspects of sustainability with equitable considerations for each dimension given to how various stakeholders affect and are affected by each dimension.

Goyal, Rahman, and Kazmi (2013) scrutinized the relationship between (a) CSR, (b) sustainability, and (c) corporate performance by creating a taxonomy of sustainability performance and organizational performance using 101 research studies (Ferro et al., 2019). Results for sustainability performance and corporate performance vary by country and cultural context, in which the businesses operate (Goyal et al., 2013). Goyal et al. (2013) is relevant to this study by exposing limitations based on contextual factors such as geographical location and cultural norms. Ferro et al. (2019) noted that many of the previously mentioned researchers relied on qualitative, inductive methods by reviewing the literature and evaluating case studies rather than quantitative, deductive methods of research. Qualitative data and secondary sources dominate the sustainability literature, which are conceptual frameworks rather than (a) quantitative data, (b) sampling techniques, and (c) primary sources to substantiate theoretical underpinnings, especially in the marketing and management disciplines (Ferro et al., 2019). Quantitative data from experiments and surveys dominated the CSR studies (Ferro et al., 2019). Various limitations related to the literature on (a) international business, (b) CSR, and (c) sustainability included (a) limited literature, (b) a lack of thoroughly defined key concepts, (c) insubstantial data, and (d) research focused almost exclusively on the developed world (Ferro et al., 2019). Scholars concluded that the social aspect of sustainability continues to evolve as an important business sustainability focus for organizations in addition to the environmental focus of previous decades (Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming, Wise, Hansen, & Sams, 2017).

Scholars noted another growing trend for peer-reviewed management journals in the management field concentrate on CSR and sustainability because of the increased focus on these subjects than in the past two decades (Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming et al., 2017). Several scholars' findings confirmed the growing organizational focus on value creation in relation to social responsibility (Ferro et al., 2019; Matteini, 2018; Norman & MacDonald, 2004; Zak, 2015). Ferro et al. (2019) noted that the previously mentioned studies all share common themes of focus in varying combinations, which are the (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic elements, known in business sustainability as the TBL concept.

***Forerunners of the triple bottom line concept.*** The social audit system (SAS) by Freer Spreckley is another forerunner of the TBL concept (Spreckley, 1997). Spreckley and his team at Beechwood College, Wales, UK, began in the late 1970s to develop the SAS (Spreckley, 1997). The purpose of the SAS was for social enterprises and cooperative organizational leaders to evaluate their entire operation rather than solely financial performance (Spreckley, 1997). An emphasis on accountability to (a) stakeholders, (b) the community, (c) employees, (d) customers, (e) suppliers, (f) partnerships, and (g) the environment were key factors in the SAS's process for leaders evaluating their organizations' performance (Spreckley, 1997). Spreckley (1997) later published the SAS as a book entitled *Social Audit: A Management Tool for Co-operative Working*.

Another forerunner to the TBL concept was the establishment of The Brundtland Commission, previously named the World Commission on Environment and

Development (WCED), by the United Nations in December 1983 with Gro Harlem Brundtland as the organization's chair (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987; Hourneaux, Gabriel, & Gallardo-Vázquez, 2018). The purpose of the Brundtland Commission was to study the deterioration of the world's natural resources and environment on a global scale (Leal-Arcas, 2017). The Commission released a report, *Our Common Future*, also known as the Brundtland Report, in 1987 (Leal-Arcas, 2017). The Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as a country's sustainable advancement that satisfies current requirements of present generations without jeopardizing future generations capacity to satisfy their requirements (Ferro et al., 2019; Hourneaux et al., 2018; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The European Commission also helped to define standard sustainability (a) guidelines, (b) language, and (c) practices in the business and academic communities with their 2001 Green Paper, *Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility* (Depken & Zeman, 2018).

Sustainability is a challenging concept to define and implement due to its often-competing requirements to a plethora of stakeholders (Ferro et al., 2019; Hourneaux et al., 2018). Elkington's (1998) ability to distill and convey these complex, competing concepts into a simplified framework that was understandable began to gain interest by busy organizational leaders and managers who were looking for solutions to sustainable development (Ferro et al., 2019; Hourneaux et al., 2018; Zak, 2015). Profitability remains a chief goal of businesses, but societal circumstances and conditions altered dramatically the focus of business leaders that understand these acute societal issues jeopardize their

organizations' short-term survivability and long-term sustainability (Svensson et al., 2016).

Organizational leaders use the TBL to encapsulate the essential nature of sustainability by measuring an organization's tangible footprint on the present physical world and intangible footprint on society and future generations expressed as (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic stewardship. Leaders use the TBL to succinctly expresses an organization's (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic values in those same three bottom lines (Zak, 2015). The notion of a threefold bottom line is a fundamental element of CSR (Zak, 2015). The TBL is a sustainability paradigm based on sustainable business development practices, including the balancing quest between three specific dimensions of CSR defined as an (a) ethical responsibility, (b) environmental responsibility, and (c) economic responsibility (Zak, 2015).

The TBL concept is widely known as the 3P, meaning (a) *people*, (b) *planet*, and (c) *profit* (Zak, 2015). The expression 3P is meant to convey the same three dimensions of (a) social responsibility, (b) environmental responsibility, and (c) economic responsibility in a simplified manner for scholars and practitioners to convey the concept (Zak, 2015). Other designations for the TBL concept include (a) people, planet, and profit; (b) the 3BL; and (c) The Three Pillars (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). The Green Paper on CSR defined the three-fold bottom line as the idea that an enterprise's performance should be held accountable and measured based on the enterprise's amalgamated contribution to (a) social prosperity, (b) environmental excellence, and (c) economic wealth (Zak, 2015). A deeper expounded definition of the TBL concept that

goes beyond CSR with a focus on sustainability is the measurement of goods and services created by any type of organization ([a] for-profit, [b] nonprofit, or [c] government) employing systems and processes that refrain from polluting the environment while simultaneously preserving natural habitats in addition to conserving natural resources and energy, as well as advancing sustainable economics in a way that is wholesome and safe for (a) customers, (b) employees, (c) vendors, and (d) communities, as well as (e) innovatively beneficial for society (Zak, 2015).

The notion of corporate responsibility is not a new one (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). Most individuals in and outside the world of business have long agreed that businesses have different responsibilities towards their stakeholders (Norman & MacDonald, 2004; Schaltegger, Horisch, & Freeman, 2019; Svensson et al., 2016). The Johnson & Johnson Credo is a well-known example of a company that has long held the value that businesses hold the primary responsibility to all its stakeholders first before making a profit (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). Robert Wood Johnson, Johnson & Johnson founder, crafted the sustainable-conscious credo just prior to taking the company public in 1943 (Johnson & Johnson, 2019; Norman & MacDonald, 2004). Some scholars opined in over the past 20 years between 2000 and 2020 that multinational corporations have a responsibility to practice sustainability because of their far-reaching (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic influences into a multitude of communities and ecosystems (Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming et al., 2017; Zak, 2015). Other scholars purported that societal expectations are that all organizations have a responsibility to conduct

business in a sustainable manner regardless of their (a) size; (b) level of influence in society; and (c) for-profit, governmental, or nonprofit designation (Svensson et al., 2016).

Some business leaders misuse the notion of corporate responsibility and TBL interchangeably, but the difference in the two terms lies in the call by TBL proponents for (a) measurement, (b) audit, and (c) public reporting of the social and environmental bottom lines of organizations rather than merely listing their CSR initiative programs in public communications such as (a) websites, (b) press releases, and (c) annual reports (Ferro et al., 2019; Norman & MacDonald, 2004; Zak, 2015). The body of experts at AccountAbility, cofounded by Elkington (1994), introduced the TBL term in the organization's discussions on sustainability during the earlier part of the 1990s (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). The newness and differentiation of the TBL concept gained popularity when Elkington (1994, 1998) argued that corporations should (a) measure, (b) evaluate, and (c) disclose their social and environmental activities to the public in the same manner that they report their financial performance in their annual reports (Ferro et al., 2019; Norman & MacDonald, 2004; Zak, 2015). The concept's notoriety expanded further when respected industry leaders such as (a) AT&T, (b) The Body Shop, (c) British Telecom, (d) Dow Chemical, and (e) Shell began using the term in their public communications, including (a) annual reports, (b) press releases, and (c) various other documents (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). The academic world lagged with a minimal interest in the concept initially, which resulted in only a few published articles (Norman & MacDonald, 2004).

### **Triple Bottom Line and Corporate Performance Measurement**

An understanding of corporate performance measurement is essential before delving deeper into the discussion of the TBL concept because the term, *bottom line*, represents a specific result of the organization's overall performance. Corporate performance measurement is the assessment of an organization's aggregated results based on various critical organizational parameters (Masa'deh, Tayeh, Jarrah, & Tarhini, 2015; Onyali, 2014; Seifzadeh & Rowe, 2019). Operational performance and financial performance are the two main categories of corporate performance management (Masa'deh et al., 2015; Onyali, 2014; Seifzadeh & Rowe, 2019). Operational performance includes the organization's (a) product or service quality, (b) marketing prowess, and (c) market share as well as (d) implementation, (e) efficiency, (f) quality, and (g) improvement (Masa'deh et al., 2015; Onyali, 2014; Seifzadeh & Rowe, 2019). Financial performance divides into two subsets of accounting-based measures and market-based measures (Masa'deh et al., 2015; Onyali, 2014; Seifzadeh & Rowe, 2019). The subset of accounting-based measures includes (a) return on sales (ROS), (b) return on assets (ROA), and (c) return on equity (ROE), which represents the profitability of the organization (Masa'deh et al., 2015; Onyali, 2014). The subset of market-based measures includes (a) stock price, (b) earnings per share (EPS), and (c) dividend payout, which represents the financial strength of the organization (Masa'deh et al., 2015; Onyali, 2014; Seifzadeh & Rowe, 2019). The bottom line is the net income of the organization, representing the organization's final performance results after the firm deducts all expenses from all revenue (Masa'deh et al., 2015; Norman & MacDonald, 2004). Net

profits or net earnings are two other terms used interchangeably with the term, bottom line (Masa'deh et al., 2015; Norman & MacDonald, 2004). The bottom line essentially represents the overall value of the organization. The next consideration is how this bottom line translates into the values of each bottom line in the context of the TBL concept.

### **Triple Bottom Line and Organizational Values**

Organizational leaders use the TBL framework to assess their (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic contributions as well as (d) the destruction of the observed threefold values (Zak, 2015). The use of the TBL is an opportunity for organizational leaders to take a balanced evaluation of their activities to determine whether various organizational activities should be increased or decreased to achieve the TBL threefold values of (a) social prosperity, (b) environmental preservation, and (c) resource conservation as well as (d) economic wealth-creation (Zak, 2015). There are five levels of business sustainability that an organizational leader engages in to achieve TBL goals (Ferro et al., 2019). The first level is *nonconformity*, in which the organizational leader does not practice any sustainable development activities (Ferro et al., 2019). The second level is *conformity* in which the organizational leader only practices sustainable development activities to comply with the law, such as regulatory requirements (Ferro et al., 2019). The third level is realization, in which the organizational leader begins to practice sustainable development activities beyond regulatory requirements because of the realized benefits such as increased revenues or decreased employee turnover (Ferro et al., 2019). The fourth level is full amalgamation, in which the organizational leader fully

integrates sustainable development into the organization's long-term planning and strategy (Ferro et al., 2019). The fifth level is sustainability, in which the organization consistently and successfully practices sustainable development on all three of (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic dimensions over the long-term (Ferro et al., 2019). The organizational leaders that reach the fifth level of sustainability must also remember that sustainability is a continuous process of evolution rather than a finite state.

Some organizational leaders might use this threefold approach as a minimal measurement to examine and report the (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) business performance of an organization to various stakeholders such as stockholders or complying with regulatory requirements (Ferro et al., 2019; Zak, 2015). This use of the TBL by an organizational leader only crosses the threshold of employing the TBL concept in this manner (Zak, 2015). The maximum use of the threefold approach by an organizational leader includes incorporating the TBL concept and practices into the organization's (a) values, (b) strategy, (c) business models, (d) systems, (e) processes, and (f) daily routines from the boardroom to the frontline over the long term (Zak, 2015). An organizational leader uses the TBL concept and practices fully to maximize its sustainability efforts and mitigate harmful consequences derived from the organization's activities with the results examined and reported transparently for scrutiny by stakeholders (Ferro et al., 2019; Zak, 2015). An organizational leader committed to the TBL practices and performance also considers the (a) needs, (b) expectations, and (c) effects that the organization's decisions and actions have on (a) stockholders, (b) stakeholders, and (c) society in general (Ferro et al., 2019; Svensson et al., 2016; Zak,

2015). Svensson et al. (2016) defined stakeholders as any part of society or the environment that participates in or affected by the wealth-creation efforts of a business, whether in the present or future generations. The TBL concept is a consideration of direct, transactional interactions with (a) customers, (b) employees, (c) vendors, and (d) suppliers as well as indirect, nontransactional interactions with (a) local citizens, (b) communities, (c) governments, and (d) the environment (Ferro et al., 2019; Zak, 2015).

Other organizational TBL practices and reporting might fall somewhere between the two extremes on the continuum by focusing on one or two of the TBL lines as earnest sustainability efforts, such as financial responsibility and social responsibility or financial responsibility and environmental responsibility (Ferro et al., 2019; Zak, 2015). Most organizational leaders grapple with the TBL as a challenging concept because the threefold approach insinuates that an organization's responsibilities are broader than economic wealth creation for its owners through (a) demand-based product and service production, (b) customer and employee satisfaction, as well as (c) adherence to regulatory requirements (Ferro et al., 2019; Zak, 2015). Most business leaders find organizational efficiency hard to measure in the context of sustainability because of global complexities and nanosecond technological changes that shift (a) competitive advantages, (b) performance, and (c) measurements rapidly, which increases when coupled with the complexity of the TBL sustainability concept (Ferro et al., 2019; Hubbard, 2009). Some scholars criticized the lack of integration in the fundamental workings between the three bottom lines, which inhibits the successful implementation of the TBL (Ferro et al., 2019).

Another criticism by scholars involves the reliability and validity of the TBL concept because of the variance of (a) business industries, (b) business contexts, (c) national cultures, and (d) periods in which business leaders and managers apply the TBL framework (Ferro et al., 2019; Svensson et al., 2016). Willard (2012), presented in his book, *The Sustainability Advantage: Seven Business Case Benefits of a Triple Bottom Line*, a thoroughly reexamined business case of the TBL, which focused on seven comprehensible advantages and benefits aligning with recent evidence-based factors that are the major sustainability components contributing to profitability, as follows (Zak, 2015): (a) revenue increases, (b) energy expenses reduction, (c) waste expenses reduction, (d) materials and water reduction, (e) employee productivity increases, (f) hiring and attrition expenses reduction, and (g) strategic and operational risks reduction. Svensson et al. (2016) echoed Willard's (2012) arguments that few business leaders understand the potential beneficial effects of incorporating sustainable practices into the organization with positive outcomes rippling from their businesses to their (a) larger networks, (b) the marketplace, and (c) society in the short- and long-term.

Organizational leaders discovered a prominent complication of the TBL approach is that the individual bottom lines are challenging to tally and compare (Ferro et al., 2019; Zak, 2015). Norman and MacDonald (2004) argued that what is new in the TBL concept is not measurable, and what is measurable in the concept is not new. All environmental, sustainability, and governance (ESG) variables are critical elements to achieve global sustainability, although all ESG variables do not affect all business sectors (Matteini, 2018). A prevalence of competing approaches to sustainability complicates the already

difficult task of deciding on a viable approach and reporting standard (Hubbard, 2009; Matteini, 2018; Svensson et al., 2016). Business sustainability mirrors business itself with dynamic rather than static characteristics, thereby continually (a) changing, (b) evolving, and (c) adapting to market activities, which requires various approaches to meet varying industry and contextual needs (Svensson et al., 2016).

Another criticism of the TBL concept is the plentifulness of lofty sustainability ideals with no guiding methodology for calculating the data to result in a net bottom line for social and environmental responsibilities (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). Hubbard (2009) insisted that sustainability measurements are fundamentally conceptual and consistent with easy applications for practical use. A viable sustainability measurement must have a simplistic approach, thereby allowing organizational leaders to (a) measure, (b) assess, and (c) report all three bottom lines in a universally understood manner (Hubbard, 2009). Organizational leaders can easily track and report the financial bottom line while the people and planet bottom lines are challenging to express in comparable monetary terms (Ferro et al., 2019; Zak, 2015).

Some scholars argued that the environmental bottom line, although difficult to calculate, is less challenging to quantify than the social bottom line (Hubbard, 2009; Onyali, 2014). Other scholars argued that the people and planet bottom lines are incalculable (Ferro et al., 2019; Zak, 2015). Some scholars challenged the ability to measure the people and planet bottom lines in terms of present costs and long-term effects on society and the environment when unethical or reckless business practices cause damage to (a) individuals, (b) families, (c) communities, (d) nations, (e)

ecosystems, (f) biomes, and (g) the environment such as (a) fake holdings, (b) fraudulent accounting practices, (c) massive oil spills, (d) predatory lending, (e) unsustainable farming and fishing, (f) gentrification and displacement of entire communities for deforestation or other purposes, (g) extinction of entire species, and (h) world-financial crises (Oirere, 2016; Zak, 2015).

Some critics might also question whether the TBL concept is acceptable for use in other spheres outside of the business sector (Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming et al., 2017; Zak, 2015). One could answer that question by noting that the TBL does not explicitly reference corporate in the name (Zak, 2015). Elkington (1994, 1998) uses the TBL concept to move responsibility beyond solely for-profit entities (Zak, 2015). Various organizations operating in the different spheres of (a) public, (b) private, and (c) nonprofit could implement the TBL concept of sustainability (Zak, 2015). All organizations have commonalities beyond their (a) for-profit, (b) nonprofit, or (c) for the public formation (Zak, 2015). All organizations have (a) missions, (b) values, (c) strategies, (d) objectives, (e) budgets, (f) systems, (g) processes, (h) regulatory requirements, (i) internal and external stakeholders, as well as (j) an environmental and social footprint (Onyali, 2014; Zak, 2015). The TBL is applicable and implementable in any organization, regardless of type or size (Zak, 2015).

### **Triple Bottom Line and Three Types of Capital**

The threefold approach concentrates on three categories of capital: (a) economic, (b) social, and (c) environmental (Zak, 2015). The bountifulness or scarcity of each capital influences the (a) local, (b) regional, (c) national, and (d) global developmental

viewpoints, attitudes, and positions (Zak, 2015). The main point is to emphasize that the TBL concept and practice focus on preserving the global ecosystems' power to regenerate itself, which in turn maintains future environments required for the sustaining of future generations (Zak, 2015). The term, *people*, denotes ethical, equitable, and beneficial business practices for direct, transactional stakeholders as well as indirect, nontransactional stakeholders such as (a) employees, (b) customers, (c) the community, and (d) the region where the organization conducts business (Zak, 2015). An organizational leader employing TBL practices constructs an interdependent social framework that supports an interdependent network of the organization's interests, such as the selling of goods and services, as well as the various concerns of stakeholders (Zak, 2015). Stakeholders' concerns might include the fair, honest treatment of employees by (a) providing safe, comfortable work environments; (b) equitable wages; and (c) professional development (Zak, 2015). An organizational leader who embraces the TBL practices does not use child labor and ensures that the organization's (a) subsidiaries, (b) vendors, (c) suppliers, and (d) partners do not engage in the use of child labor as part of their business practices and operations, thereby fostering a sustainable supply chain (Zak, 2015). TBL-minded business leaders also seek to engage in and underpin fortifying practices to (a) empower, (b) build up, and (c) advance the local village in beneficial concerns such as (a) training and development, (b) healthcare, as well as (c) environmental preservation (Zak, 2015).

Assessors might consider the effects on the people and planet bottom lines (Zak, 2015). The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) developed related standards that for-profit

and not-for-profit organizations alike could use to assess organizations' statements on the social effects of their practices (Zak, 2015). Accountability for the natural setting (the planet), namely ecological accountability, is evident as part of carrying out the organizations' economic activities (Zak, 2015). Organizational leaders express this ecological accountability in the avoidance of contamination of the land, water, and air (Zak, 2015). Ecological accountability by corporate leaders likewise involves separation and disposal of waste, using suitable equipment and materials in addition to the operation of filters and wastewater treatment facilities (Zak, 2015). A TBL-based organization attempts to maintain the (a) natural atmosphere, (b) minimize its effects, and (c) do no harm to the present state of the environment or the community in which the organization operates (Zak, 2015). An organization should not provide jobs for people to make a decent living while also ruining the environment in which those same people need to live now as well as in the future (Zak, 2015). Two supermajor oil companies purportedly are examples of multinational companies (MNCs) harming the present environment and communities in which the organization operates (Oirere, 2016). Oirere (2016) stated that the MNCs admitted to 551 oil spills in Nigeria during 2014 that polluted the (a) water, (b) land, and (c) air of (a) children, (b) women, and (c) men in the Niger Delta for years to come. TBL-minded business leaders evaluate their products by determining the full TBL expense of the product's supply chain and life cycle from inception to disposal (Ferro et al., 2019; Zak, 2015). This new emphasis by various stakeholders on a product's supply chain and the life cycle is a term known as from-cradle-to-grave responsibility, including (a) raw material extraction rights, (b) child labor, (c) packaging, and (d) disposal or

recycling processes (Matthews, Tse, Wallis, & Marzec, 2018; Norman & MacDonald, 2004; Onyali, 2014). Economic accountability is the monetary gain (profit), which renders a financial benefit to society as part of the viable growth of society rather than only an internal monetary gain for the organization (Zak, 2015). A continuous, sustainable effect on the society occurs because of the organization's activities within the setting of the organization, including (a) leadership's strategic decisions; (b) management's execution of strategy to achieve business objectives; and (c) frontline's daily activities, including interactions with customers and the environment (Zak, 2015). One should not misinterpret the TBL approach as the traditional accounting bottom line with the people and planet bottom lines tacked on as a good measurement of the organization's responsibility and accountability of sustainable practices (Zak, 2015). The TBL-minded organizational leader, as an actor in sustainable evolution, uses the TBL approach to achieve increased equitable (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic processes and outcomes (Zak, 2015). The TBL-practicing organization thereby demonstrates its intentions as a collaborator to comaintain a healthy, sustainable (a) economy, (b) community, and (c) environment rather than an outsider that acts upon the community and environment solely with the goals of monetary gain without regard for human and nonhuman community members (Zak, 2015).

### **Triple Bottom Line Standards of Accountability**

The TBL approach is the necessity to monitor organizations' societal and environmental activities and results with the same rigor that independent third parties monitor organizations' financial activities and results, which organizations detail in their

annual reports and regulatory filings (Zak, 2015). National control systems such as the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) are examples of national control systems that legally require various annual filing requirements of organizations' financial activities in the United States (Zak, 2015). Many organizations also have dedicated internal control systems to monitor the accuracy of their financial activities and reporting, such as independent third-party audits (Zak, 2015). The purpose of the TBL concept is to establish the necessity for social and environmental reporting as *equal, fundamental reporting requirements* for organizational short-term survivability and long-term sustainability in the new business era of social and environmental justice in the same vein as financial reporting (Zak, 2015). Sustainability and business issues are synonymous, thereby influencing the bottom line and corporate value (Matteini, 2018). An organization's social and environmental reporting, as bottom lines, indicates the organizations' added or decreased value by the enhancement or depletion of social and environmental resources, which one can denote as social and environmental capital (Zak, 2015).

Investors must scrutinize ESG data to analyze not only the bottom line but also corporate value and investment risks accurately and thoroughly to mitigate ESG investment risks (Matteini, 2018). One could argue that the largest marine oil drilling spill in history decreased not only the oil company's financial bottom line but also the corporation's environmental and social (a) bottom lines, (b) capitals, and (c) values because of the short- and long-term effects of the oil spill on the region's ecosystems and residents including (a) 11 fatalities, (b) 17 injuries, and (c) countless animal and plant

deaths as a result of the disaster that occurred (Norman & MacDonald, 2004; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2019a). Another example of the TBL's significance is that sustainability investors could use the TBL framework to compare the increased or decreased value of organizations based on their environmental and social bottom lines (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). One might consider that the major oil company's environmental and social values ranked lower than other oil company's environmental and social values immediately after the spill (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). A major accounting firm's social value diminished alongside the firm's financial bottom line, in comparison to the other big five accounting firms that collectively comprise the largest professional services networks in the world, after the revelation of the firm's involvement with a major oil and gas company's scandal (Norman & MacDonald, 2004). Social and environmental values have immeasurable worth and do not effortlessly simplify into monetary terms (Zak, 2015).

Many organizations struggle with assessing, accurately, the social and environmental measurements that are consistent with economic results, as defined in the TBL concept (Ferro et al., 2019; Zak, 2015). Another difficulty that organizations face when attempting to implement sustainability practices is the plethora of tools and methods available to evaluate sustainability activities, which vary widely in breadth and depth (Ferro et al., 2019; Hubbard, 2009). Ferro et al. (2019) argued that opportunities exist to develop comprehensive TBL measurements from the organizational viewpoint that eliminates confusion with (a) measuring, (b) auditing, and (c) reporting each bottom line. Hubbard (2009) identified four major approaches for measuring sustainability

performance including (a) a five-tiered macroeconomic system for sustainable development, (b) the quality management approach, (c) the TBL approach, and (d) broadening the sustainable balanced scorecard (SBCS) with an accompanied organizational sustainable performance index (OSPI). Hubbard (2009) noted the flaws in each approach, which failed to achieve the TBL's lofty goals for sustainability.

**Advantages and disadvantages of the macroeconomic system.** The advantage of the macroeconomic system is the ability to choose the applicable performance measurements for sustainability development (Hubbard, 2009). The disadvantages of the macroeconomic system are the innate complexity and the focus on the system rather than sustainability performance results (Hubbard, 2009).

**Advantages and disadvantages of the quality management approach.** The advantage of the quality management approach is the focus on synthesizing large amounts of information from various internal subsystems and processes, based on systems theory as well as national governing bodies and supranational bodies theory (Hubbard, 2009). This sustainability approach has four organizational perspectives, including (a) the constitutional perspective, (b) conceptual perspective, (c) behavioral perspective, and (d) evaluative perspective (Hubbard, 2009). The disadvantages of the quality management approach are its overly complicated and solely conceptuality without definitive allotments for social and environmental concerns and measurements as well as the focus on the system rather than the outcomes (Hubbard, 2009).

**Advantages and disadvantages of the triple-bottom-line approach.** The advantages of the TBL approach are the broad stakeholder perspective as well as the

consideration for future generations (Hubbard, 2009). The disadvantages of many TBL approaches are the lack of standardization and internationally recognized benchmarking for organizations' environmental and social sustainability performance, resulting in arbitrary measures and reporting (Hubbard, 2009).

#### **Advantages and disadvantages of the sustainable-balanced scorecard**

(SBSC). The advantages of the SBSC are the widespread acceptance of the original balanced scorecard (BSC) and simplicity, which also includes internal and external stakeholder measurements as well as short- and long-term perspectives, thereby combining the BSC and TBL concepts (Hubbard, 2009). The SBSC has present and prior year reporting columns to note performance trends, which leaders and managers rate on a 1 (bad) to 5 (excellent) scale (Hubbard, 2009). The aggregation performance measures culminate in the OSPI with trends indicated for the present and prior years (Hubbard, 2009). The disadvantages are the lack of identification and targeting of specific environmental and social issues beyond standard measurements such as (a) resource usage (air, water, raw materials, and emissions); (b) employee satisfaction; and (c) community relations, that are a threat to sustainable development, such as (a) ethical separation and disposal of waste, (b) human rights-indigenous rights, as well as (c) direct and indirect stakeholder impact (Hubbard, 2009). The SBSC instead are only generic category titles without allotted space for expanded, specific social and environmental activity reporting (Hubbard, 2009). The focus of the SBSC is on the conceptualized process rather than the particular results (Hubbard, 2009). The SBSC has overall, at-a-

glance benefits for the busy executive or manager who seeks a snapshot understanding of the organization's sustainability performance indicators.

Academics and practitioners of sustainable business witnessed developments since Hubbard's (2009) criticisms of the TBL concept, which are hopeful for measuring and benchmarking consistently internationally recognized sustainability activities and practices (Hubbard, 2009; Zak, 2015). For the social measurement, one supportive tool is the SA1000 AccountAbility Principles (AP1000), which is a globally recognized framework and guideline-based on sustainable principles that organizations can use to (a) define, (b) prioritize, and (c) react to issues and problems in a sustainable manner to enhance efficiency over the long term (AccountAbility, 2019; Zak, 2015). The Social Accountability International's SA8000 Standard is another supportive tool to assess TBL activities, which is a globally recognized certification leader in socially sustainable practices in places of work, such as (a) factories, (b) offices, and (c) construction sites to name a few (SGS, 2019; Zak, 2015). For the environmental measurement, the GRI's Sustainability Reporting Standards, which is a globally respected nonprofit organization that assists organizations of all types (a) comprehend, (b) interpret, and (c) communicate their social and environmental affects about important issues related to (a) climate change and global warming, (b) political and business corruption, as well as (c) human rights (Global Reporting Initiative, 2019; Zak, 2015).

The World Economic Forum developed yet another sustainability resource, the environmental sustainability index (ESI), which quantifies and assesses the environmental practices and stewardship of countries, based on a synthesized profile of

aggregated datasets from empirical research (Hubbard, 2009; World Economic Forum, 2019). The Institute 4 Sustainability is another internationally recognized organization that holds workshops and forums for various stakeholders to learn about and share regarding sustainability (a) megatrends, (b) practices, and (c) experiences (Onyali, 2014). Some of the sustainability performance measurements included in these various tools and resources are (a) ethics, (b) values, (c) principles, (d) TBL commitment, (e) transparency and accountability, (f) social and economic development, (g) competition and pricing, (h) marketing and advertising, (i) training and development, (j) human rights-indigenous rights, (k) workplace safety and conditions, (l) biodiversity impact, (m) community impact, (n) child labor, (o) fair wages, (p) natural resources used, (q) greenhouse gas emissions, (r) air quality, (s) noise pollution, (t) radiation, (u) waste heat, (v) waste disposal, (w) waste reduction, (x) political contributions, (y) bribery and corruption, (z) consumer safety, (aa) eco-efficiency, (bb) direct and indirect stakeholder impact, and (cc) basic human sustenance (AccountAbility, 2019; Global Reporting Initiative, 2019; Hubbard, 2009; SGS, 2019; United Nations, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2019).

The translation of social and environmental values into bottom lines parallel in importance to the financial bottom line, thereby solidifying the idea that organizations, whether a (a) for-profit, (b) nonprofit, or (c) government designation, are accountable for their influence on the social-environmental-economic effects of the present as well as the future (Zak, 2015). An organizational leader's awareness of business sustainability and the TBL concept has the potential for the entire organization to understand the benefits of embracing and realizing the gains from integrating such goals and concepts into the

organization's practices, even without stakeholder pressure or mandatory requirements (Fleming et al., 2017). The TBL approach is null and void unless individuals in an organization from the board of directors to the frontline employees embrace the TBL concept beginning with an awareness of the necessity for business sustainability moving to an actionable-commitment of the TBL concept as well as implementing TBL strategies and practices consistently (Zak, 2015). The TBL concept used otherwise is merely a good marketing slogan and talking point to appease various stakeholders such as (a) customers, (b) investors, (c) employees, (d) business partners, and (e) community advocates (Zak, 2015). A major oil and gas company had an extensive code of ethics and guiding principles, which did not prevent widespread wrongdoing and breach of social responsibility to many stakeholders that were vastly affected by the organization's financial and social irresponsibility because the organizational leaders did not fully embrace the organization's code of ethics and principles (Norman & MacDonald, 2004).

### **Triple Bottom Line and Sustainable Investment**

Rubinstein, (a) a social entrepreneur, (b) attorney, and (c) innovative thinker, founded the Triple Bottom Line Investing Group (TBLI) in 1998 (Harmon, 2018). The creation of the TBLI Group signaled a shift in the significance of the TBL concept and its importance to corporate performance measurements and values to investors (Harmon, 2018). Sustainable investment is on the rise since 2016 (Matteini, 2018). Trends are indications that sustainable investment is growing with an exponential trajectory (Matteini, 2018). The Global Sustainable Investment Alliance reported in 2016 that global negative/exclusionary screening assets under management (AUM) totaled \$15

trillion (Matteini, 2018). ESG integration AUM totaled over \$10 trillion in 2016 (Matteini, 2018). Other sustainable investments on the rise in 2016 included corporate engagement/shareholder activism strategy totaling over \$8 trillion (Matteini, 2018). The United Nations manages over 2,000 Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) signatories totaling over an aggregated \$81 trillion AUM (Matteini, 2018).

Although sustainable investment interests continue to grow among investors, investment apprehension remains because of the lack of historical data for (a) company performance, (b) investment execution, and (c) market behavior related to ESG variables (Matteini, 2018). Matteini (2018) echoed the arguments of Hubbard (2009), noting that there are no standard requirements for reporting ESG measurements across (a) sectors, (b) industries, and (c) organizations, which leaves investors piece milling strategies for successful sustainable investing techniques. The TBLI Group continues to lead on the innovative forefront of sustainable investing with a think tank of over 500 global sustainability experts spanning over 60 disciplines such as (a) finance, (b) operations, (c) science, and (d) academics. The TBLI Expert Network's (TEN) purpose is to assess clients' challenges and needs to create a tailored solution for sustainable investing (TBLI, 2019). The Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) has a viable framework for ESG reporting, although the framework is not a mandatory reporting by the U.S. SEC or any other regulatory body (Matteini, 2018). The EU Nonfinancial Reporting Directive is a required regulatory report for over 6,000 large European organizations, which also has considerable leeway in disclosure information (Matteini, 2018). One must ponder and exercise skepticism of discretionary accountability when organizations have the privilege

of deciding what they should and should not report. A major oil and gas company that fell from grace employed self-regulated reporting activities, which should remain as a stark reminder of how discretionary accountability could go awry.

### **Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals**

Sustainability is the buzzword in the business world since the 2008 Great Recession. Organizational leaders should recognize sustainability as an indisputable reality into today's fiercely competitive, globally complex business environment infused with social and environmental stakeholders as well as advocates (Ferro et al., 2019). The TBL practices are advantageous possibilities for organizational leaders to enhance their (a) strategic underpinnings, (b) reduce costs, and (c) increase efficiency, thereby strengthening their strategic value and competitive position (Ferro et al., 2019).

Sustainable development is a highly esteemed goal for many organizations although (a) financial accountability, (b) social responsibility, and (c) protection of the environment often result in (a) increased stringent legislation, (b) restrictive industry activities, (c) increased transparency, and (d) increased significant business costs that sometimes position organizations in conflict with various stakeholders' objectives (Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming et al., 2017). Organizational leaders seeking to implement sustainability into their organizations should first consider the organization's foundational (a) vision, (b) values, (c) beliefs, and (d) ethics that drive the organizational (a) decisions, (b) norms, (c) culture, and (d) objectives (Fleming et al., 2017).

Another consideration is systemic, interdependencies of the (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic dimensions of sustainability that create constraints

within the organizational system, which require tradeoffs in decision making as well as transparency with stakeholders (Fleming et al., 2017). Sustainable development requires a stakeholder-inclusive approach to sustainable practices within organizations (Ferro et al., 2019). Leaders that practice sustainable development strategies must consider and respond positively to various stakeholders' (a) needs, (b) demands, and (c) expectations rather than only a few influential, key stakeholders (Ferro et al., 2019; Svensson et al., 2016).

Organizational leaders must also transparently communicate their sustainability initiatives and activities with all stakeholders to foster stakeholder trust and relationships (Ferro et al., 2019). Leaders that practice sustainable development in which a stakeholder-inclusive approach is intrinsic to the organizational strategy produce resulting outcomes of a positive-sum game rather than a zero-sum game, thereby reinforcing the notion of the win-win level assumption of business sustainability (Ferro et al., 2019).

Carson (1962) was a trailblazer of the sustainability movement by bringing to the American public's attention the dangers of synthetic pesticides produced by chemical companies and their adverse effects on the environment and people (Ferro et al., 2019). Carson's work that began with environmental research in the 1950s and continued into the 1970s became one of the all-time, top-selling science books entitled, *Silent Springs*, which engaged the American public into action (Ferro et al., 2019). Carson's work also countered opposition from the chemical industry with an effort to refute Carson's claims (Ferro et al., 2019). The reaction of the American public to Carson's work resulted in the

environmental movement and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created in 1970 (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2019b; Ferro et al., 2019). Carson noted Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) as a carcinogen and detrimental to humans as well as wildlife such as the nearly extinct bald eagle and peregrine falcon species, which resulted in an aggressive policy change related to the use of pesticides, including the ban of DDT (Ferro et al., 2019). Carson's published work contributed to setting a precedent for expectations of sustainable development in organizations, which only became widespread key priorities in the late 2000s after the 2007-2008 global financial crisis (Ferro et al., 2019).

The United Nations hosted The Sustainable Development World Summit of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (Ferro et al., 2019). The Sustainable Development World Summit of 1992, known as the 1992 Earth Summit, was the focus of the broadening influence of the sustainability concepts on a global basis (Ferro et al., 2019). The 1992 Earth Summit activities resulted in Agenda 21, which was an unprecedented proposal to employ a comprehensive sustainable development strategy on a concerted, global basis (Ferro et al., 2019). The focus of Agenda 21 was on CSR with sustainable development as the preeminent objective of achievement (Ferro et al., 2019). The 1992 Earth Summit leaders, representing 172 Governments, envisioned sustainable development as the apex of CSR activities, which an organization could achieve when sustainability is an intrinsic aspect of the organization's business model (Ferro et al., 2019; United Nations, 2019). The Earth Summit's international community of leaders convened again in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002 to present definite, quantifiable plans of action for implementing

specific aspects of Agenda 21 in their countries (Ferro et al., 2019; United Nations, 2019).

The Johannesburg Summit was the focus of implementing specific (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic targets globally (Ferro et al., 2019; United Nations, 2019). The United Nations' 19th Special Session of the General Assembly met in New York, 5 years later, in 1997 to review and assess the implementation of Agenda 21 targets (Ferro et al., 2019; United Nations, 2019). The General Assembly appraised (a) the global advancement of Agenda 21 since The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro; (b) highlighted sustainable development success stories to demonstrate the achievability of sustainable development; (c) noted challenges with sustainable development implementation and offered corrective strategies; (d) emphasized and prioritized special issues for next actions such as water scarcity, transfer of finance and technology, production and consumption patterns; as well as (e) energy and transportation usage; and (f) appealed to attending Governments, global organizations and international groups to recommit their focus and efforts to sustainable development (United Nations, 2019).

All United Nations' member states met in New York in 2015 to formally recognize and adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with objectives achieved by 2030 (Agenda 2030) (Ferro et al., 2019; United Nations, 2019). The Agenda 2030 (2016-2030) has 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, which rigorously surpasses the previous 8 international development goals collectively named the millennium development goals (MDGs) (2000-2015) (Brende & Hoie, 2015; Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming et al., 2017; United Nations, 2019). Some scholars suggested that the

SDGs are (a) too numerous, (b) politically motivated, and (c) unrealistic (Brende & Hoie, 2015). The SDGs for 2030 is necessary to expand the MDGs to comprehensively encompass new global issues while also remaining (a) simplistic, (b) ambitious, and (c) realistically attainable by 2030 (Fleming et al., 2017).

The primary difficulties with implementing the SDGs includes (a) coordination of international, domestic, and local feedback; (b) prevention of adverse ramifications in isolation in response to the objectives due to regional, national, or local political and election priorities; (c) accessibility to timely data and resources to interpret objectives and react; as well as (d) track, analyze, and evaluate progress at the (a) macro, (b) meso, and (c) micro levels including lateral evaluation in specific industries and sectors (Fleming et al., 2017). Scholars also argued that the consolidation of several of the 169 SDGs targets is feasible, based on quantifiable evidence (Brende & Hoie, 2015). One example is the numerous targets for global health, including (a) major infectious diseases, (b) noncommunicable diseases, (c) child health, (d) maternal health, (e) mental health, (f) injuries, and (g) universal health coverage that scholars argued are opportunities to converge into a single health indicator (Brende & Hoie, 2015). Consolidation of SDGs would defeat the purpose of expanding the targets to address specific global issues individually with set *targets* and *goals* of attainment by 2030. The consolidation of various targets into one major catch-all category leaves the individual targets at risk of marginalization and de-prioritization, which could result in catastrophic societal events such as the novel coronavirus and COVID-19 pandemic. Other scholars view the SDGs

for 2030 as ambitious but practical and achievable, although challenging (Fleming et al., 2017).

The purpose of the Agenda 2030 SDGs is to establish a more integrated, global approach to sustainability at the macrogovernance level, based on empirical evidence of the benefits associated with sustainable development than the MDGs (Ferro et al., 2019). The authors of Agenda 2030 sought to employ the SDGs as innovative instruments for global sustainable governance, which is governance through objectives (Ferro et al., 2019). The SDGs are achievable through a network of (a) interdependent actors, (b) goals, and (c) targets effectively implemented using an inclusive approach (Ferro et al., 2019). Leaders using interdependencies would compel efforts of (a) collaboration, (b) negotiation, and (c) integration of (a) interconnections, (b) complexities, and (c) trade-offs with a diligent focus on three aspects to achieve macrolevel sustainability: (a) traversing sectors; (b) traversing societal players; and (c) traversing economic levels of high, medium, and low-income countries (Ferro et al., 2019). The authors of the Agenda 2030 SDGs' global structure sought to address problems such as (a) economic stagnation and underdevelopment, (b) social exclusion, and (c) degradation of the environment (Ferro et al., 2019). The Agenda 2030 SDGs are an advancement of the former MDGs by connecting the (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic elements of the targets, including (a) the elimination of poverty, (b) development of emerging nations, and (c) reduction of the human footprint (Ferro et al., 2019). The authors of the Agenda 2030 SDGs inherently affirmed the TBL concept by seeking to balance the aspects of

sustainable development, which are (a) social (people), (b) environmental (planet), and (c) economic (profit) (Ferro et al., 2019).

The authors of the Agenda 2030 crafted the SDGs to address sustainable development at the governance level as well as nongovernance levels, such as business and nongovernmental organizations (Ferro et al., 2019). The enterprise-level of sustainable development is business sustainability, widely associated with the TBL concept, which is a three-dimensional focus on balance between (a) social equality, (b) environmental preservation, and (c) economic well-being (Ferro et al., 2019). Business sustainability literature has two prominent positions (Ferro et al., 2019). The first assumption is *win-win*, which pays particular attention to economic advancement without degradation of the environment, resulting in a positive-sum game (Ferro et al., 2019). The second assumption is enterprise-level sustainability, which assumes that each firm's activities, major or minute, focus on sustainable development, resulting in the collective activity of all firms contributing to the goal of global sustainable development (Ferro et al., 2019). The second assumption of enterprise-level sustainability so presumes that each firm has the necessary (a) knowledge, (b) tools, and (c) competencies to carry out business sustainability successfully, which the governance level might (a) foster, (b) provide, or (c) subsidize to enterprise-level firms (Ferro et al., 2019). The SDGs are a broader, more ambitious perspective of sustainable development and sustainability than the MDGs (Fleming et al., 2017).

Some scholars found that the SDGs at the enterprise-level is a significant challenge for the business sector because of the complicated systemic modifications

necessary to implement the SDGs comprehensively throughout the organization, in addition to differentiation of language usage at the macro and enterprise-levels as well as little legislative mechanisms to encourage their implementation (Fleming et al., 2017). Svensson et al. (2016) pointed out that a range of perspectives further complicates what sustainability or sustainable development precisely involves. The diverse ideologies ranging from (a) globalization and urbanization, (b) cultural and country-specific variances of technological allowances, as well as (c) sustainability approaches stemming from international agreements add to the varying approaches and complications to sustainability, especially at the enterprise-level of business sustainability (Svensson et al., 2016).

Enterprise-level organizations in studies strongly favored the SDGs in ideology, but the goals became constrained barriers when the organizations sought to adopt them in reality (Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming et al., 2017). Most of the available literature indicates that technical sustainability knowledge is beyond the scope of many small businesses' competencies (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Wiesner, Chadee, & Best, 2018). Business sustainability, employed as TBL practices, is a simplified framework suited to the enterprise-level for (a) implementing, (b) monitoring, (c) measuring, and (d) equating the sustainable level of an organization as a standalone measurement or in comparison to other organizations for benchmarking purposes (Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming et al., 2017). Empirical results from studies indicated that business sustainability practiced by firms compel other firms to adopt business sustainability practices as part of their competitive advantage, whether the other firms are (a) competitors, (b) affiliations, (c) partnerships,

or (d) upstream or downstream in the supply chain (Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming et al., 2017; Wiesner et al., 2018).

### **Small Business and Microenterprise Sustainability**

Various studies show the numerous benefits of sustainable development and successes that are achievable by businesses when employing the TBL concept (Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming et al., 2017; Wiesner et al., 2018; Willard, 2012). The reality is that business leaders confront competing business goals on a spectrum with financial targets on one end and sustainable development on the other end (Ferro et al., 2019; Fleming et al., 2017; Wiesner et al., 2018). Small businesses, microenterprises, and small nonprofits have a particularly difficult challenge understanding and navigating business sustainability concepts due to limited resources and knowledge base in comparison to large corporations (Depken & Zeman, 2018).

Small businesses are enterprise-level, for-profit organizations with between 250 and 1,500 employees depending on the industry designation in the United States (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2019a). Microenterprises are enterprise-level, for-profit organizations with between one and nine employees in the United States (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2019b). Nonprofits are organizations founded and operated solely for (a) charitable, (b) religious, (c) science, (d) public security and safety, (e) educational, (f) literary or (g) other designated purposes, regardless of the number of employees, which satisfy specific criteria are exempt from tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS (U.S. Internal Revenue Service, 2019). Small businesses total 30.2 million businesses in the United States, accounting for 99.9% of all U.S. businesses (U.S. Small

Business Administration, 2019c). Forty-seven and a half percent of U.S. employees work in small businesses, which translates to 58.9 million U.S. employees (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2019c). Microenterprises account for 3.8 million (or 12.5 %) of those 30.2 million small businesses and provided 10.3% of all U.S. jobs (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2019b). The nonprofit sector is the third-largest employer, following the retail and manufacturing industries, and account for 12.3 million (or 10.2 %) of all U.S. jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

Research and resources are rare for (a) small businesses, (b) microenterprises, and (c) nonprofits to (a) create; (b) pursue; and (c) implement viable, sustainability business strategies using the TBL concept in the United States (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Wiesner et al., 2018). Research that identifies small businesses' motivations for pursuing sustainability practices is also rare (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Wiesner et al., 2018). The majority of the literature available suggests that specialized knowledge of sustainable development is beyond the bounds of many (a) small businesses', (b) micro businesses', and (c) nonprofits' competencies (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Wiesner et al., 2018).

A major challenge is that most enterprise-level business and nonprofit leaders do not have the additional time and resources to invest in acquiring sustainability and TBL knowledge for successful implementation and practices (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Saunila, Rantala, Ukko, & Havukainen, 2019). Several scholars noted the scarcity of literature related to sustainability (a) issues, (b) practices, and (c) outcomes in small and micro businesses, especially in managing change when implementing sustainability (a) technology, (b) processes, and (c) practices as well as a scarcity of literature about

governmental policies that support and encourage behavioral modifications toward sustainable efforts (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Saunila et al., 2019; Wiesner et al., 2018). The obstacle for sustainability proponents at the enterprise level is identifying methods and defining techniques to expand the attractiveness and ease of implementation of sustainability and TBL practices (Depken & Zeman, 2018). A gateway for small businesses and nonprofits to engage in environmental sustainability is recycling efforts and green technology investments (Saunila et al., 2019; Wiesner et al., 2018). Small business owners and managers' interest in sustainability drives their investment in sustainability initiatives and green technology (Saunila et al., 2019).

Small business leaders and managers' reasons to invest in sustainable development and green technology extend beyond sustainability interests and enthusiasm alone (Saunila et al., 2019). Saunila et al. (2019) found that environmental sustainability is a pathway for small businesses to achieve social and financial value, including (a) social recognition, (b) reduction of costs, (c) creation of new businesses, and (d) acquisition of new customers. Saunila et al. (2019) also noted leaders and managers recognize customers' demand that organizations are environmentally and socially conscious, thereby prompting firms to produce environmentally friendly products and services using a sustainable supply chain and processes in addition to providing socially inclusive (a) workplaces, (b) partnerships, and (c) customer outlets. Firm size did not affect green investment intentions and decisions, which is contrary to popular notions about small and microenterprises' decision making based on limited resources (Saunila et al., 2019).

Wiesner et al. (2019) found that some small and medium enterprises (SMEs) achieved successful results by employing gradual change strategies at the (a) design, (b) internalization, (c) implementation, and (d) evaluation stages of sustainability initiatives, which are iterative rather than linear. Other SMEs in the study experienced (a) an absence of internal and external support, (b) underestimation of resource and material needs, (c) policy and regulation hindrances, as well as (d) additional demands on current staff members, which resulted in detrimental outcomes (Wiesner et al., 2018). These hurdles halted sustainability implementation most frequently during the initial stage (Wiesner et al., 2018). Another challenge is creating peer-to-peer collaborations to share small business and microenterprise-level sustainability (a) efficiencies, (b) progress, and (c) benchmarking for viable firm operations (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Saunila et al., 2019; Wiesner et al., 2018).

Small business success has significant, positive consequences on the local and national economies (Warren & Szostek, 2017). Sustainability practices are advantageous for small businesses to remain viable. Businesses are sustainable when they can survive unexpected external threats and internal shifts (Adoukonou, 2019). Warren & Szostek (2017) studied small business strategies that small business leaders used to remain in business for 10-plus years. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) approximated that 75% of all small businesses fail within the first 5 years (Warren & Szostek, 2017). Some of the leading causes for small business failure include (a) bankruptcy, (b) loss of credit access, (c) the owner's physical limitations or death, (d) voluntary or involuntary termination of the business, (e) partnership disagreements, or (f) litigation (Warren &

Szostek, 2017). Three prominent factors leading to economic sustainability in small businesses are (a) effective management of finances, (b) consulting with external business expertise, and (c) development of relationships (Warren & Szostek, 2017).

A well-known challenge for small businesses is a chronic lack of adequate funding, which also inhibits business growth (Adoukonou, 2019; Bruton, Khavul, Siegel, & Wright, 2015; Warren & Szostek, 2017). Small businesses' main ways to acquire funding including (a) bootstrapping and sweat equity, (b) funding from family and friends, (c) crowdfunding, (d) angel investors, (e) banking institutions, and (f) venture capitalists (Adoukonou, 2019; Belleflamme, Omrani, & Peitz, 2015; Brown, Boon, & Pitt, 2017; Rutherford, Pollack, Mazzei, & Sanchez-Ruiz, 2017; Warren & Szostek, 2017). Small business owners' ability to effectively differentiate and communicate the business's value proposition to financiers increase their chances of gaining adequate funding (Warren & Szostek, 2017).

Another widely known challenge is the limitation of small business owner's expertise to address all the internal and external factors affecting small business success regardless of (a) education, (b) training, and (c) competencies, which is resolvable with external expertise such as (a) attorneys, (b) accountants, (c) consultants, or (d) other specialized-knowledge professionals (Adoukonou, 2019; Reid, Matthias, & Bamford, 2019; Warren & Szostek, 2017). Networking is a valuable communication tool to develop business and community relationships as well as build a trustworthy business (Reid et al., 2019; Warren & Szostek, 2017). Networking is available in many ways, from personal, casual networks with family and friends to professional, official networks, including (a)

community, (b) religious, (c) business, and (d) government organizations (Warren & Szostek, 2017). Small business owners and managers must understand the essential importance of networking as a tool to build a solid customer base and value chain as a resource network, which also enhances small businesses' sustainability and competitive advantage (Reid et al., 2019; Warren & Szostek, 2017).

Entrepreneurs can also benefit from the application of TBL practices as innovative enterprise founders. Entrepreneurs create other unrealized economic and societal benefits in addition to small businesses and nonprofits. Entrepreneurs provide additional means for local and global economic growth through (a) innovation, (b) job creation, (c) shaping organizational and societal culture, and (d) advancement of knowledge capital for industries as well as countries (Gonzalez-Rodriguez, Diaz-Fernandez, & Simonetti, 2015; Rey-Marti, Ribeiro-Soriano, & Sanchez-Garcia, 2016). Entrepreneurs, particularly those spinning off from larger firms, have increased potential to (a) introduce innovations into the market, (b) hire employees, (c) bring recognition to a region as a business hub or think tank, and (d) create other unrealized economic and societal benefits (Frederiksen, Wennberg, & Balachandran, 2016). Entrepreneurs play a crucial role in local and global business development including (a) generation of small business revenue and profitability, (b) job creation, (c) unemployment reduction, (d) increased local economic flows and economic growth, (e) increase in disposable income, (f) standards of living, and (g) demands for goods and services, (h) increase in municipality (tax) revenue, all which leads to overall (i) community and regional self-sufficiency, (j) sustainability, and (k) well-being.

Entrepreneurs have the potential to effect positive social change using the TBL (Gonzalez-Rodriguez et al., 2015). Social entrepreneurs (SEs) identify and create effective solutions to pressing complex societal issues that the bricoleurs are passionate about through innovation and challenging the status quo (Cherrier, Goswami, & Ray, 2018). Passion is a primary influence of entrepreneurs' (a) creativity, (b) information gathering, (c) knowledge processing, and (d) decision making, which are all essential for solving complex societal problems in addition to (e) perseverance (Gielnik, Spitzmuller, Schmitt, Klemann, & Frese, 2015). SEs merge and effectively achieve their societal mission and financial margin through innovative, unorthodox solutions that positively affect (a) people (such as employees, community members, and supply chain alliances); (b) the planet (by refraining from harming animals, land, streams, air, and the ozone); and (c) firm profits (by generating sustainable, nongouging prices). Financial technology (FinTech) is a trend that has the potential to affect entrepreneurs, in addition to big data analytics and mobile marketing, either positively or negatively, depending on their response time to these new technologies. The intersection of (a) mobile technology, (b) big data analytics, and (c) FinTech is a gamechanger for the way consumers buy goods and services (Leng, Talib, & Gunardi, 2018). Mobile payments are a disruptive technological innovation that will replace (a) cash, (b) credit cards, (c) debit cards, and (c) checks inevitably (Leng et al., 2018). Entrepreneurs must change the way they sell their goods and services to incorporate both mobile technology such as FinTech to remain competitive in the quickly evolving digitally, global marketplace.

The business landscape is vast and complex when one considers the (a) online, (b) local, (c) global, and (d) mobile contexts in which entrepreneurs operate. The entrepreneurial landscape is separate and distinct from the traditional corporate landscape, although they (a) converge, (b) diverge, and (d) compete simultaneously for consumers because of technological advances that level the playing field with various technological innovations (Leng et al., 2018). Entrepreneurs have the potential through the digitally leveled playing field of the (a) Internet, (b) mobile, and (c) other technologies to contribute significantly to local and global business development by leveraging (a) social media platforms, (b) mobile technology, (c) FinTech, (d) big data analytics as well as (e) local and global networks in addition to (f) knowledge capital. Entrepreneurs have the potential to achieve their mission and margin simultaneously by incorporating the TBL as critical criteria into their strategic planning for sustainability for both their organization and society. Entrepreneurs have the potential to gain a strategic advantage while (a) generating jobs, (b) reducing unemployment, (c) increasing local economic flows and economic growth, (d) raising standards of living and demands for goods and services, (e) increasing municipality (tax) revenue, as well as (f) expanding overall community and regional self-sufficiency, (g) sustainability, and (h) well-being.

Small business, microenterprise, and small nonprofit leaders can learn to (a) understand, (b) navigate, and (c) implement business sustainability concepts, using the TBL concept, regardless of limited resources when presented as (a) organized and concise, (b) easily understandable, and (c) practical applications. Business sustainability, instituted as TBL practices, is advantageous possibilities for small businesses and

microenterprises, leading to (a) creativity and innovation, (b) altruism, (c) recruiting and retaining diverse talent, (d) capital access, (e) profitability, and (f) competitive leverage (Adoukonou, 2019; Warren & Szostek, 2017). Sustainability strategies are viable ways that small business leaders can align profits with interests of (a) various stakeholders, (b) environmental protection, and (c) regulatory compliance to prevent expensive fines and legal disputes (Adoukonou, 2019). Sustainable business leaders provide (a) local, (b) regional, and (c) global business development including (a) the generation of demands for goods and services, (b) small business revenue and profitability, (c) job creation, (d) unemployment reduction, (e) increase in municipality (tax) revenue, (f) increased local economic flows and economic growth, (g) increase in disposable income, (h) increase in standards of living, and (i) increase in contributions to local nonprofits, all which leads to overall (j) community and regional self-sufficiency, (k) sustainability, and (l) well-being.

### **Nonprofit Sustainability**

Nonprofit sustainability is (a) fiscal stability, (b) efficiency, and (c) effectiveness that has become increasingly critical due to decreasing steady revenue streams and increasing competitive, volatile business environments since the 2008 Great Recession (Ferro et al., 2019; Jensen, 2018; Kellner et al., 2017; Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015). Nonprofits are organizations founded and operated solely for (a) charitable, (b) religious, (c) science, (d) public security and safety, (e) educational, (f) literary, (g) recreation or (h) other designated purposes, regardless of the number of employees, which satisfy specific criteria are exempt from tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS (U.S. Internal Revenue Service, 2019). Society looks to nonprofits to swiftly generate (a)

innovative, (b) efficient, and (c) effective social and environmental interventions in the age of continuous crises to meet the needs of their constituents and communities (McDonald et al., 2015). Many nonprofits have missions to address global crises, national and local critical issues including (a) social injustice, (b) inequality, (c) poverty, (d) climate change, (e) environmental degradation, and (f) a lack of access to essential basics such as (a) clean water, (b) food, (c) housing, (d) healthcare, (e) education, (f) energy, and (g) employment opportunities (McDonald et al., 2015).

Stakeholders expect nonprofits to expand their services to meet the demands of increased social needs despite decreases in monetary contributions from (a) government, (b) corporate, and (c) individual donors (Kellner et al., 2017; Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald, 2015). Many nonprofit leaders must also adhere to strict regulatory requirements to obtain or continue receiving funding, while simultaneously demonstrating (a) fiscal accountability, (b) efficiency, and (c) effective management of funds and day-to-day operations (Kellner et al., 2017). Nonprofit leaders have additional considerations and competing pressures of satisfying supporter and community perceptions of organizational values, in addition to the (a) mission, (b) margin, and (c) activity alignment. A nonprofit context for (a) strategy formulation and clarification, (b) leadership focus, (c) planning scrutinization, (d) organizational and staff procedures, and (e) performance management are foundational in strategic considerations to meet the needs of service constituents as well as other stakeholders.

The plethora of (a) demands, (b) requirements, and (c) expectations on nonprofits means that focusing only on the mission of doing good is no longer adequate to keep

organizations operational (Kellner et al., 2017; Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015). A survey of 5,000 U.S. nonprofit organizations found that 55% of the nonprofits did not have enough cash reserves to sustain operations beyond 3 months, while 28% completed the fiscal year with a deficit (McDonald et al., 2015). Another survey of U.S. nonprofit organizations found that 50% of first-time donors only donate one time, and nonprofits have attrition rates annually of 30% for repeat donors (Ramanath, 2016). Many nonprofit leaders realize the need to reassess their organization's survivability; yet they remain challenged on how to transform their organizations from solely donor recipients to proactive social entrepreneurship for long-term sustainability (Kellner et al., 2017). Some nonprofit leaders balk at the idea of having to shift their nonprofits from a solely donor-based organization to market-oriented activities (Jensen, 2018). Nonprofit leaders' consistent reference to their mission and core values resolves the paradox of their commercial activities with their core service values (Lloyd & Woodside, 2015).

Some researchers studied nonprofit organizational processes that are critical to short-term survivability and long-term sustainability (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofit leaders' ability to align their (a) systems, (b) processes, and (c) services to respond to the changing needs of service recipients or service partners are key to remaining competitive (Westphal, 2018). Other researchers studied how various nonprofit leaders sought to implement sustainability-based strategies to remedy financial deficits and sustain the organizations ranging from charging fees for services to fundraising as well as endowments, which created double jeopardy for some of the organizations (Erwin & Landry, 2015; Kellner et al., 2017; McDonald et al., 2015). The nonprofit leaders'

selection of strategic choice affects the strategic alignment of all entrepreneurial (a) decisions, (b) activities, (c) products, and (d) services with the nonprofits' fundamental organizational values. The general business problem is that some nonprofit leaders do not fundamentally understand why generating new income streams are critical to sustaining their competitive advantage. The specific business problem is that some nonprofit leaders lack strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

Societal institutions emerge in reaction to unmet societal needs, such as (a) police (security), (b) schools (education), (c) hospitals (health), (d) places of worship (spirituality), and (e) the arts (enrichment) (McDonald et al., 2015). These organizations create value for society by satisfying the most basic needs and requirements for a civilized society (McDonald et al., 2015). The business sector has market opportunities such as products and services that are significant to allow people and organizations to exchange value, often currency, for such offerings, which is the foundation of marketing exchange theory (McDonald et al., 2015). For-profit leaders can improve their competitiveness while also promoting financial and social circumstances in the areas where the organization conducts business to create shared value (McDonald et al., 2015). Wicker et al. (2015) concluded that adapting Porter's (a) cost leadership, (b) differentiation, and (c) focus strategies reduce organizational problems in multiple areas. Cost leadership and focus strategies can increase membership or supporters by focusing on niche demographics (Wicker et al., 2015). Differentiation strategies can lead to the development of a unique product or service mix that reduces competition and increases

market share (Wicker et al., 2015). Governments offer services that citizens value to the extent that they willingly pay taxes and comply with statutes (McDonald et al., 2015).

Nonprofit organizations are a significant contributor to society based on the value they provide to citizens (McDonald et al., 2015). Westphal (2018) concluded that nonprofits have opportunities to fill the gaps left by (a) governmental, (b) commercial, or (c) other nonprofit organizations, but nonprofits also have challenges to overcome in recognizing and filling those gaps including (a) rethinking their strategy, (b) reinventing their services, (c) restructuring systems and processes, as well as (d) relearning new business development strategies and best practices in an evolving nonprofit environment. Nonprofits' survivability and sustainability have a direct impact on the most disadvantaged citizens in terms of services provided such as (a) food; (b) shelter; (c) physical, mental, and spiritual health; (d) education; (e) elderly well-being; (f) jobs training; (g) havens for the abused and neglected; (h) childcare; (i) community reentry of former prisoners; (j) transportation; and (k) advocacy; and (l) policy; as well as (m) access to the arts and (n) environmental stewardship.

Nonprofit organizations underpin society and meet the needs of citizens by filling the gaps that for-profits and governments are unable to fulfill (McDonald et al., 2015; Westphal, 2018). For-profit organizations deem some services unprofitable, and governmental organizations are unable to gain support from constituencies or lack statutory cause to allocate public dollars (McDonald et al., 2015). Nonprofits support (a) social justice, (b) environmental guardianship, and (c) financial growth to improve their constituents' and communities' quality of life (McDonald et al., 2015). Nonprofit

organizations carry out missions frequently that are not financially or politically feasible (McDonald et al., 2015). Nonprofit leadership must adapt rather than only adopt new strategic approaches to remain relevant in the changing nonprofit landscape. Nonprofit leaders must find new, innovative ways to support and prolong their existence, due to the intrinsic difficulties associated with the sector as well as the seriousness of their mission for society and the communities they serve (McDonald et al., 2015).

Nonprofit organizations encounter various difficulties and instability related to short-term survivability and long-term sustainability while providing mission-critical services to their constituents and communities, due to mainly a lack of financial resources (Ferro et al., 2019; Jensen, 2018; Kellner et al., 2017; Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015; Westphal, 2018). Nonprofits have growing competition because of increased rivalry within the nonprofit sector for (a) donors, (b) private grants, and (c) public contracts as well as for-profit and hybrid enterprises entering the sector (Bravo, 2016; Colley et al., 2017; Han and McKelvey, 2016; Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015). Nonprofit leadership must resolve the conflict of remaining dedicated to their organization's core values while innovating and evolving to satisfy changing societal and community needs. Nonprofit organizational boards play a critical role in setting the tone and direction for organizational strategy, which either remains stagnated in antiquated traditions or evolves by adopting new (a) policies, (b) systems, and (c) processes to survive in the short-term and thrive in the long-term.

The nonprofit sector continues to expand its sphere despite all the challenges and threats (McDonald et al., 2015). The nonprofit sector is the third-largest employer with

retail and manufacturing ranking as first and second, respectively (McDonald et al., 2015). The Urban Institute's National Centre for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) reported that in 2005 there were 1.41 million nonprofits registered with the IRS in the United States with \$1.63 trillion in annual revenues and \$3.5 trillion in managed assets (McDonald et al., 2015; Urban Institute, 2019). The NCCS reported that in 2010, 1.49 million nonprofits registered with the IRS in the United States with \$2.1 trillion in annual revenues and \$4.4 trillion in managed assets (McDonald et al., 2015; Urban Institute, 2019). The nonprofit sector had a 0.08 increase in registered nonprofits between 2005 and 2010, up from 1.41 to 1.49 million. The NCCS reported that in 2015, 1.56 million nonprofits registered with the IRS in the United States with \$2.54 trillion in annual revenues and \$5.79 trillion in managed assets (McDonald et al., 2015; Urban Institute, 2019). The nonprofit sector had a 0.07 increase in registered nonprofits between 2010 and 2015, up from 1.49 to 1.56 million. The total number of nonprofits registered with the IRS between 2005 and 2015 increased by 10.4% (Urban Institute, 2019). The nonprofit sector revenues between 2005 and 2015 increased by 28.4%, and managed assets increased by 36.2%, while expenses rose by 31.8% (Urban Institute, 2019). The nonprofit sector's revenues and managed assets expanded more rapidly than the national GDP, which grew by 13.6% (Urban Institute, 2019). One might find alarming the revenue and managed assets of the social services sector growing faster than the national GDP, or perhaps even an opportunity niche for social investment or enterprise building.

The NCCS also indicated that the total number of nonprofits operating in the United States is unknown because the IRS does not require nonprofits with gross receipts

of less than \$5,000 to register (Urban Institute, 2019). The NCCS's statistics evinces the growth in the nonprofit sector. The NCCS's report indicated that small organizations represent the majority (66.9%) of public charities with gross receipts greater than \$50,000 accounted for only 2% of all public charity expenditures, while 5.3% of all public charities with gross receipts greater than \$10 million accounted for 87.7% of all public charity expenditures, which leaves 27.8% of all public charities having gross receipts less than \$50,000 and accounting for 10.3% of all public charity expenditures (Urban Institute, 2019). These figures show an imbalance between nonprofit revenue and expenditures, especially for the 27.8% of public charities with gross receipts totaling less than \$50,000. This group has the second largest number of expenditures while having the least amount of revenue. One could suppose that this group is part of the 55% of nonprofits that did not have enough cash reserves to sustain operations beyond 3 months, based on the disparities between revenue (income) and expenditures (spending). The financial crisis was an excellent chance for those in the nonprofit sector who had independent financial structures, but not for those entities who relied primarily on (a) government, (b) corporate philanthropy, or (c) individual donor contributions (McDonald et al., 2015).

**Actors in the nonprofit sector.** Nonprofit sustainability is a consequence of effectively balancing the advancement of the mission while raising sufficient cash to sustain those activities, especially in a competitive setting where numerous other organizations are relentlessly battling for the hearts and monetary resources of society (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016; Jensen, 2018; Kellner et al., 2017; Matairea et al., 2014;

McDonald et al., 2015; Rusch, Lachmann, Wilkesmann, & Bastini, 2019). Various factors are influential on nonprofits' ability to remain viable. Innovative strategic (a) formulation, (b) planning, (c) development, and (d) implementation are critical for nonprofits' success. Researchers, policymakers, and sector leaders agree that the progressively competitive context in the nonprofit sector requires innovative approaches directed at attaining long-term sustainability (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Dobrai & Farkas, 2016; McDonald et al., 2015; Noya & Clarence, 2013; Rusch et al., 2019). The complexity of the nonprofit sector expanded with the entry of organizations with varying (a) form, (b) legal structure, and (c) capacity to service social needs of constituents and communities (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016; Hemphill & Cullari, 2014; Kurland, 2017; Kurland, 2018; McDonald et al., 2015; Rusch et al., 2019).

Various researchers noted that nonprofit leaders have put a growing emphasis on corporate social responsibility and corporate performance in addition to mission advancement in the nonprofit sector (Kellner et al., 2017; Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015). Nonprofit organizations are no longer exempt from the influence of for-profit market forces. Nonprofit leaders would do well to deepen their understanding of how different influences and factors affect nonprofits' success, such as Porter's five forces. Other researchers discussed the increase in entrepreneurial activities and the market-oriented mindset of nonprofit leaders (Jensen, 2018; McDonald et al., 2015; Rusch et al., 2019).

Another growing trend in the nonprofit sector is social entrepreneurship entities, which are distinct from organizations that implement some entrepreneurial activities into

their strategies or whose leaders have an entrepreneurial orientation (Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015; Rusch et al., 2019). The premise of entrepreneurial orientation is significant because the concept is the extent to which an organization creates new solutions and champions their implementation, thus achieving strategic advantages in advance of their competitors (Rusch et al., 2019). Social innovation, as a key factor of social entrepreneurship, has great potential for societal members to contribute new and innovative solutions (Senent-Bailach & Rey-Marti, 2017). The difference between a social entrepreneurship entity and entrepreneurial orientation is that the entrepreneurial oriented organizations adopt some entrepreneurial or market activities to achieve a competitive advantage, whereas social entrepreneurial entities fully embrace market and operation strategies to achieve competitive advantage.

Social entrepreneurship is a growing and exciting phenomenon for (a) practitioners, (b) scholars, and (c) policymakers. Social entrepreneurship is also an uncharted territory with complexities that beckon for additional empirical testing to achieve generalizability. SEs and their ventures aim to address pressing social problems unsolved by other sectors, including the (a) for-profit, (b) nonprofit, and (c) governmental sectors with the goals of achieving (a) social justice, (b) equality, and (c) dignity for all citizens globally as well as (d) preserving the natural environment, regardless of their form. The newest entity emerging in the nonprofit sector is a hybrid entity known as the benefit corporation (B Corp) (Hemphill & Cullari, 2014; Kurland, 2017; Kurland, 2018; McDonald et al., 2015). The history of the B Corp is a for-profit social enterprise established with the specific purpose of public benefit (Hemphill & Cullari, 2014). The B

Corp has a specific designation available in 35 U.S. states as well as the District of Columbia with a mandate in the organization's articles of incorporation and bylaws explicitly stating the organizational mission and benefits to serve society through the organization's operations and activities (McDonald et al., 2015). The B Corp designation has additional protection under U.S. law from stockholder repercussions due to organizational decisions and activities targeting positive social and environmental benefits (McDonald et al., 2015).

A growing trend driven by sustainability in the past 10 years is the nontraditional corporation's purpose and responsibilities, which considers the effects of the organization's (a) policies, (b) decisions, and (c) operations on (a) customers and employees; (b) local community; (c) creditors; (d) suppliers; (e) distributors; (f) local, national, and global economies; (g) the local, national, and global environment; (h) nongovernmental organizations; and (i) industry associations besides shareholder wealth creation (Hemphill & Cullari, 2014). The traditional corporation has a primary fiduciary shareholder responsibility of profit maximization, which the corporation explicitly expresses in the organization's (a) purpose, (b) intentions of accountability, and (c) transparency. The sustainability movement and stakeholders' expectations are key drivers of change in the marketplace, which also reshaped the nonprofit sector because of the creation of the hybrid corporation for good known as the B Corp. Hemphill and Cullari (2014) concluded that the legal distinction of the benefit corporation serves a critical purpose in perpetuating the goal of the social enterprise to achieve the TBL of (a) people, (b) planet, and (c) profit.

The model benefit corporation statute also is vulnerable to self-interested corporate leaders who might adopt the benefit corporation status to masquerade as a greenwashed sustainably responsible organization to promote themselves as the good guys in comparison to nonbenefit organizations as the bad guys. The dynamic landscape of the nonprofit sector since the 2008 Great Recession requires a vigilant watch by (a) stakeholders, (b) activists, and (c) other actors in the nonprofit sector to benchmark and hold these new hybrid as well as traditional organizations accountable for their organizational decisions and activities. Kurland (2017) identified a constant argument that B Corps are not accountable for their public benefit mission that asserts benefits focused on multiple stakeholders instead of shareholders only. Accountability in a B Corp is achievable for delivering public goods and services when evaluation mechanisms for internal organizational commitment and external accountability exist (Kurland, 2017). Internal commitment includes (a) professional engagement, (b) an adaptive organization and learning culture, (c) community support, and (d) philanthropy driven by leadership commitment (top-down) and frontline engagement (bottom-up), while external accountability mechanisms include (a) third-party standards, (b) evaluations, and (c) public reporting. An ideal activity would include an independent, third-party nonprofit advocacy group that (a) rates, (b) benchmarks, and (c) publicly reports KPIs and other significant performance measurements related to (a) sustainability, (b) ethical leadership, and (c) financial management of B Corps and other hybrid entities. The assessment could include specifically the three-fold dimensions related to the TBL framework of (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic activities and outcomes of the hybrid organizations.

The independent, third-party advocacy group would provide the public with a simplified assessment to understand these new, hybrid entities that straddle the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

Kurland (2018) also found that the employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) and B Corp complement each other to achieve the chief aim of stakeholder value maximization rather than solely shareholder maximization. Public benefit and stakeholder value maximization transpire when employees-owners have a vested interest in the corporation's outcomes underpinned by core sustainability (a) values, (b) mission, and (c) culture and driven by (a) decisions, (b) responsibility, (c) transparency, and (d) accountability mechanisms that influence sustainable (a) strategy, (b) processes, and (c) solutions (Kurland, 2018). These hybrid entities are increasingly attractive employment opportunities for sustainably minded talent that seek purpose and to make a difference in their (a) workplaces, (b) neighborhoods, (c) communities, and (d) the world while also receiving altruistic benefits beyond the traditional employment offerings.

Traditional nonprofit leaders must have an earnest soul searching to consider if their organizations can compete on multiple levels, including employee engagement created by these newly innovative, hybrid entities. The B Corp leader must also successfully (a) differentiate, (b) communicate, and (c) achieve the dual mission established by the organization's legal business form as a corporation of benefit, while achieving the TBL of social-environmentally financially sustainability, to (a) reduce scrutiny, (b) accusations of misrepresentation, and (c) exploitation of the advantages offered by the B Corp designation and the nonprofit sector. B Corps and other social

entrepreneurial leaders must aggressively promote their (a) vision, (b) mission, and (c) offerings because the public still lacks awareness of why these types of firms exist (Senent-Bailach & Rey-Marti, 2017). The various mentioned (a) social bricoleurs, (b) social builders, and (c) social engineers address a larger breadth and depth of social needs by straddling the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. These hybrid entities, operating in the nonprofit sectors in addition to diminishing governmental and philanthropic support, increase the pressure for traditional nonprofit leaders to rethink their strategies and reorganize operational activities for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

**Shifting paradigms in the nonprofit sector.** Many nonprofits find themselves unsheltered from the long-lasting effects of the 2007-2008 global financial crisis and endangered due to the depletion of income streams, which forced once generous philanthropic supporters to make tough financial decisions in the interest of self-preservation, which led to nonessential spending cuts to their budgets (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofit leaders have differing reactions to dwindling donor support. Some nonprofit leaders find the changes unsettling and unrealistic to generate untraditional revenues streams while other nonprofit leaders welcome the shift with innovative approaches as an appropriate and essential progression in the nonprofit sector (Jensen, 2018; Kellner et al., 2017; Mataira et al., 2014). Bigger, economically sounder nonprofits have a stronger opportunity for survival than smaller, localized nonprofits that primarily depend on donor support are at a higher risk because of governmental or philanthropic funding cuts (Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015).

Nonprofit leaders must consider alternative income sources for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. These shifts in the nonprofit landscape are driving changes in some nonprofit leaders' thinking and approaches to pervasive financial problems in the sector. Mataira et al. (2014) and Shier et al. (2019) noted nonprofit leaders' developing inquisitiveness in (a) social entrepreneurship, (b) social marketing, and (c) social technology as advantageous means to reduce costs as well as feasible ways to enhance their programs' effectiveness of (a) donor, (b) community, and (c) constituent engagement. Nonprofit sector's thought leaders increasingly realize an apparent need to create and promote sustainable economic growth as well as extra revenue streams through strategies that rely on asset development and social entrepreneurship principles rather than solely donor contributions (Jensen, 2018; Mataira et al., 2014; Shier et al., 2019).

The European Commission demonstrated innovativeness by taking preemptive courses of action to incentivize (a) social entrepreneurship, (b) CSR, and (c) reinvestment as a response to progressive shifts in social enterprise development and united systemic policies to encourage social, mission-driven organizations and programs as well as social responsibility and sustainability in the for-profit sector (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Mataira et al., 2014; Noya & Clarence, 2013). The concept of the nonprofit and for-profit sectors working together to resolve (a) social, (b) educational, (c) health, and (d) environmental problems is not new. The lingering effects of the global financial crisis, including decreasing financial support from governments and present economic uncertainty, have significant positive implications for nonprofit sustainability as well as for-profit social

investment and social responsibility through collaborations (Mataira et al., 2014). Some for-profit leaders seek to collaborate with nonprofits to generate sustainability-oriented innovations because of their intentional modifications to create (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic value in their (a) products, (b) procedures, (c) organizations, as well as (d) broader systems and networks (Watson, Wilson, & Macdonald, 2018).

The TBL concept expressed as (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic elements create an additional complexity with innovation for profit-generating organizations because of the need to consider a larger sphere of stakeholders affected by the design of the innovation (Watson et al., 2018). Open innovation theory indicates that the vital information for disruptive innovation lies outside the borders of the company and the organization's most influential actors (Watson et al., 2018). Nonprofit organizations can enhance for-profits' external understanding of sustainability-oriented innovations and development because nonprofits' missions are oriented toward social and environmental well-being. Market-driven organizations might have difficulty interacting with nonprofits because of the fundamental differences in systemic constitutions and thinking (Watson et al., 2018). Business-savvy partnerships between for-profits and nonprofits lead to increased innovative results in which mutual interest exists and partners leverage their social relationships (Watson et al., 2018). Nonprofit leaders could also proactively seek out for-profit enterprises for mutually beneficial collaborations that align with their nonprofit organizational values and goals. Watson et al. (2018) echoed the sentiments of Depken and Zeman (2018) by emphasizing that U.S. sustainability

advocates would find advantageous the adoption of (a) theoretical models, (b) definitions and language, (c) standardized tools and measurements, as well as (d) policy advancement established by European (a) researchers, (b) practitioners, and (c) policy makers to advance nonprofit and for-profit sustainable efforts in the United States because of their advanced research and work in sustainability. Momentous shifts in the nonprofit sector present significant challenges as well as opportunities for nonprofit organizations for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

**Nonprofit sector struggles.** The struggle to eradicate (a) poverty, (b) social marginalization, and (c) environmental deterioration is a significant objective for (a) nonprofits, (b) SEs, and (c) community advocates as well as giving all people a seat at the table of decision making through inclusive involvement about (a) economic growth, (b) social access, (c) environmental preservation, (d) community and neighborhood development, and (e) jobs creation. An invitation for additional voices into the decision-making arena does not stifle (a) business innovation, (b) economic growth, and (c) community development, but to the contrary, the diversity of (a) ideas, (b) mindsets, and (c) experiences stimulates (a) discussion, (b) debate, and (c) ultimately builds up a synergistic pool of creative thinking and strategies from which to draw from for (a) economic restoration, (b) social advancement, and (c) environmental longevity (Mataira et al., 2014). Social entrepreneurship is a significant area for developing viable plans of (a) action, (b) products, and (c) services to boost financial recovery in areas with elevated rates of unemployment as well as other social and environmental disparities (Mataira et al., 2014; Rey-Marti, 2016). Nonprofit leaders and funders seek fresh social (a)

approaches, (b) instruments, and (c) technologies for positive social effects that contribute to the (a) interests, (b) welfare, and (c) well-being of the broader society beyond their immediate constituent base (Mataira et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2015).

The global economy remains volatile, resulting in governmental and private funders reviewing their fiscal choices and priorities, as well as requiring an increase in cost-benefit assessment research (Mataira et al., 2014; Matteini, 2018; Moore et al., 2015). Nonprofit donors, larger private funders, and governmental agencies insist on increased accountability from nonprofits with proof of service outcomes and successes as well as the cost of administering their services (Mataira et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2015). Prevention programs historically lacked a focus on producing revenue streams or emphasized cost-savings to society by reducing the rates of social problems that society must bear (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofit leaders' aim should consist of effectively reducing the expenditures needed for program execution as well as increasing and conveying the positive social effects to and on society to the public (Mataira et al., 2014). Social impact bonds are an example in which the key premise relies on social investors receiving returns as a result of governmental or other entities' cost-savings (Cordes, 2017; Mataira et al., 2014).

There has been increasing appeal since the early 2000s in using Social Return on Investment (SROI) as a metric to determine the (a) quality, (b) efficiency, (c) effectiveness, and (c) value of nonprofits' and social enterprises' services (Cordes, 2017). An example of SROI assessment might encompass calculating the reduced social costs in comparison to operational costs of running a rehabilitation center for persons addicted to

drugs or a halfway house for individuals formerly incarcerated (Cordes, 2017). The SROI assessors would pay considerable attention to the number of successfully rehabilitated former drug users and the number of successfully reintegrated formerly incarcerated individuals into the community. An afterschool program could increase the SROI by providing a (a) safe haven, (b) healthy snacks, and (c) tutoring in core subjects such as (a) English, (b) math, and (c) science for children, which leads to a stronger, competitive workforce in the future. Each of these examples has a significant opportunity to reduce the societal costs (or negative effects) as well as increase the societal returns (or positive outcomes) on communities and society as a whole.

Cost-benefit analysis linked to service outcomes and cost control mechanisms connected to program results is an increasing necessity as communities-in-crisis experience (a) escalating disenfranchisement, (b) increasing inflationary expenses, and (c) dissipating governmental and private donor funding (Cordes, 2017; Mataira et al., 2014). Larger funders not only insist on increased accountability and proof from nonprofits' cost-benefit spending, but the private funder sector targets nonprofits with positive result-oriented interventions for future funding and impact giving (Cordes, 2017; Moore et al., 2015). Whether nonprofit organizations are at the (a) donor-dependency stage, (b) self-sufficient stage, or (c) sustainable stage, cost-benefit analysis and assessment matters for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability to triumph in the struggle to eradicate the ills of society.

**Organizational processes in the nonprofit sector.** Mataira et al. (2014) studied nonprofit organizational processes that are critical to short-term survivability and long-

term sustainability. There is much discussion about systems thinking and sustainability, but some people do not understand the foundational premises of sustainability, including (a) ecology, (b) biodiversity, and (c) ecosystems. Some people might not understand fully how to transfer the foundational principles of ecological systems into organizational sustainability and what consequences that organizations' actions have on the whole society. Systems thinking and sustainability education, as well as training, are necessary at all levels, such as (a) the primary educational level for younger students; (b) at the higher educational level for student teachers; and (c) at the organizational level for leaders, engineers, and other organizational members.

Assessment frameworks are an increasing protocol in the nonprofit sector, because of the shifted thinking towards the use of evaluative measurements for cost-benefit analysis and social return on investment that encompass (a) performance measurements, (b) program results, (c) economic outcomes, and (d) social benefits (Cordes, 2017; Mataira et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2015). Mataira et al. (2014) identified three interconnected organizational processes that affect the larger societal ecosystem as well as determined nonprofits' organizational success including (a) leadership development and succession; (b) social communication, social innovation, and technology transfer; and (c) organizational development, evaluation, and sustainability. The deep connections between various systems and organizational sustainability show how the relationships between a sustainable organizational (a) mission, (b) transparency, and (c) communication with stakeholders help organizations survive in the short-term and thrive in the long-term (Walker & Earnhardt, 2015). Sustainable development as a

societal benefit needs sustainable systemic thinkers equipped with a deep understanding of (a) ecological systems, (b) creative thinking, as well as (c) sustainable development focused on social-environmental-economic and organizational sustainability simultaneously. Only then will sustainability demonstrated as (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic responsibility evolve from a buzzword and become an integrated practice in daily life and business.

***Leadership development and succession.*** Many leaders in successful nonprofits that built their organizations throughout their professional careers find themselves nearing retirement without a recognized, internal successor or plans to hire an external, skilled candidate (Mataira et al., 2014). The successful nonprofit leader developed the organization with central decision-making authority around the individual rather than the organizational leadership function, including (a) organizational governance, (b) operational processes, (c) resource expansion, and (d) external relations (Mataira et al., 2014). The leader's retirement, usually the executive director, required restructuring and reorganization of the nonprofit's governance system (Mataira et al., 2014).

Mataira et al. (2014) also identified that another challenge faced by nonprofit leaders, which is the need to evolve themselves into entrepreneurial, transformational leaders, whether their leadership credentials are innate attributes or acquired skills from education and training (Northouse, 2016). Successful nonprofit leaders also employed servant leadership styles and character during their tenures to enhance their leadership and governance activities (Mataira et al., 2014). The leadership development and succession dimension should include actions to (a) evaluate succession gaps, (b) identify

principles and characteristics for servant leadership and social entrepreneurship, (c) design and develop culturally appropriate educational and training programs, and (d) identify, select, and develop the next generational leaders (Mataira et al., 2014). Leaders need (a) empathy, (b) authentic involvement, and (c) focus on peak performance, which are essential components of social entrepreneurship in nonprofits (Mataira et al., 2014).

***Social communication and social branding.*** Nonprofit leaders can lead efficiently and effectively in the modern digital era with various communication and literacy competencies as well as social media self-efficacy (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofit leaders' noble servant leadership and self-effacement are not enough alone to sustain their organizations in the new economy (Mataira et al., 2014). Social branding and advertising to attract and secure future financing needs is a valuable and critical strategic component as a counter-response to fiscally stringent realities in the nonprofit sector (Mataira et al., 2014).

Zhang and Lin (2015) studied business-customer social media communication interactivity to understand interactivity levels between the two actors. Zhang and Lin (2015) identified that organizations have a significant problem with engaging customers effectively using social media communication interactivity features to cultivate genuine relationships. Businesses adopt functional interactivity practices, such as (a) sharing; (b) commenting; (c) clicking; (d) emailing; or (e) offering quizzes, polls, contests, or invitations, as a consumer-focused approach while customers seek to secure and optimize control for advantageous outcomes by employing contingent interactivity maneuvers (Zhang & Lin, 2015). Traditional communication paradigms by businesses of one-way

command and control marketing are no longer viable because consumers on social media forcibly compelled the business-customer relationship to evolve into two-way communication interactivity relationships (Zhang & Lin, 2015).

Customer engagement is paramount in digital and mobile marketing, which is two-way interactivity rather than one-way communication (Berman, 2016; Grewal et al., 2016; Heraghty, 2014; Tiago & Verissimo, 2014; Zhang and Lin, 2015). Hegner, Fenko, and Teravest (2017) examined the primary factors that facilitate brand love. Hegner et al. (2017) identified that some marketing managers lack the necessary knowledge to achieve brand love with their customers, which is key to brand sustainability. Hegner et al. (2017) used the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to quantify brand-consumer relationship variances. Hegner et al. (2017) found that the ability to anthropomorphize a brand rather than brand affordability is the determining factor that facilitates brand love among frequent as well as infrequent brand users. Hegner et al. (2017) concluded that brand love establishment is of the greatest importance for brand sustainability because brand lovers are sympathetic to and often forgiving of brands when brand adversity or disappointment occurs.

Organizational leaders must also understand the intricacies of mobile marketing, including critical touchpoints throughout the customer journey (Grewal et al., 2016). Mobile marketing push-pull ads and engagements during the (a) trial, (b) repurchase, and (c) loyalty stages move the customer from awareness to brand loyalty (Grewal et al., 2016). Organizational leaders must understand how to integrate their (a) online, (b) social, (c) mobile, and (d) conventional data to gain a 360-degree customer view (Grewal

et al., 2016). Organizational leaders need a clear understanding of the significant differences between online and mobile marketing in comparison to traditional offline marketing. Mobile marketing is a viable method for nonprofits to engage and reach potential donors. Mobile marketing reduces the time and effort for donors to support their favorite causes, thereby eliminating all donating barriers. A potential donor can use an instant text message (SMS) to send a keyword to a designated code, which allows them to give a small donation such as (a) \$1, (b) \$3, (c) \$5, or (d) \$10 to their favorite charity as well as encourage friends and family to do the same (Fames, 2012). A nonprofit could receive numerous donations in an instant on the strength of social giving, ignited by one collaborative supporter that engages other individuals in their social network, which creates a distinct competitive advantage from other organizations that still rely on traditional, costlier methods of donor fundraising and marketing.

Some nonprofit leaders have begun using mobile marketing as a creative solution to engage their organizations' (a) valued donors, (b) supporters, and (c) other stakeholders (Heraghty, 2014). Smartphones have a wide variety of ways to interact via (a) social media links, (b) interactive applications, and (c) text messaging (SMS), which constitute collectively a virtual ecosystem that is ideal for mobile marketing (Heraghty, 2014). Mobile applications and marketing are essentially the new platforms for communications between businesses and (a) customers, (b) donors, or (c) supporters, which is replacing the website platform. Nonprofits have many specific benefits when using mobile marketing including downloadable applications (apps) to foster engagement beyond social media "Likes" such as using (a) the person's name and sending greetings,

(b) birthday wishes, (c) special offers, (d) confirming appointments, (e) updating supporters on a specific campaign or social justice issue, (f) quick response (QR) codes for donors to access special information and promotions, as well as (g) preset offer capabilities to send offers at preselected times (Heraghty, 2014). Mobile marketing strategies are effective primarily because mobile communication has urgency and a way of connecting through time-sensitive offers resulting in immediate and personal communication of a nature that captivates people (Heraghty, 2014). Nonprofit leaders must also understand how to evaluate the effectiveness of social media and mobile engagement concerning the financial bottom line.

Yang, Lin, Carlson, and Ross Jr. (2016) studied how brand engagement, such as (a) conversation, (b) affiliation, and (c) responsiveness, influences other online and customer activities such as (a) click-through rate, (b) conversion rate, (c) search engine ranking, and (d) effectiveness. Yang et al. (2016) found that some marketing executives struggle with demonstrating how social media activity positively affects the financial performance of their firms. Yang et al.'s (2016) findings indicated that a positive association exists between a firm's brand engagement activity on social media platforms and search engine advertising results. Consumers' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral attachment to a brand have a direct influence on (a) conversations, (b) affiliations, and (c) responsiveness, which in turn have a direct effect on search engine advertising effectiveness because brand equity derives from consumers' social and emotional capital related to the brand. Yang et al. (2016) concluded that a cohesive, comprehensive online marketing strategy involving social media business–customer interactivity and search

engine advertising is a more viable, measurable approach to brand engagement and conversions than standalone or fragmented online marketing activities. Yang et al. (2016) emphasized that engagement metrics for tracking and measuring social media return on investment (ROI) are significant strategies to integrate into the firm's organizational (a) strategy, (b) key metrics, and (c) KPIs.

Leaders' use of social media promotes, at minimum, the enhancement of an extensive network that enables higher interaction and community between an organization and the organization's corresponding (a) consumers, (b) governmental leaders, (c) fellow community advocates, and (d) supporter community (Mataira et al., 2014). Social branding and advertising at best are essential components for generating fresh income sources in an age of decreasing resources and depleting donor support (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofit leaders must organize and communicate the work their organizations do with (a) brevity, (b) clarity, and (c) measurable statistics to engage supporters in these busily distracted and economically stagnant times (Mataira et al., 2014). The creation of media presentations as a public announcement with a tagline is a valuable strategy to enhance fundraising efforts, such as campaigns for (a) food security, (b) poverty eradication, (c) safe drinking water, (d) social justice and inclusion, (e) job creation, (f) personal and professional development, or (g) ending the devastation of addiction to individuals and families (Mataira et al., 2014).

Nonprofit leaders who master social branding and marketing of their causes will fare better at securing resources than those who do not learn to wield this powerful tool effectively (Mataira et al., 2014). The effective use of social media with (a) business-

customer interactivity, (b) brand engagement, and (c) brand love cultivation maximizes the potential results for increased (a) revenue, (b) profits, and (c) brand sustainability for organizations. Each facet of (a) business-customer interactivity, (b) brand engagement, and (c) brand love is important because each one contributes to moving the consumer from brand awareness closer to brand sustainability. Nonprofit leaders can use these strategies of (a) social branding, (b) business-customer interactivity, (c) brand engagement, and (d) brand love to efficiently and effectively engage as well as influence organizational stakeholders from (a) donors, (b) supporters, (c) advocates, and (d) other community stakeholders with digital competencies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

***Social entrepreneurship.*** Social entrepreneurship is an emerging trend in (a) Southeast Asia, (b) Europe, and (c) the United States (Mataira et al., 2014). The social enterprise is an organization or program that promotes social change using traditional enterprise and market forces (Bravo, 2016; Colley et al., 2017; Han & McKelvey, 2016; Horisch, 2015; Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015; Youssef, Boubaker, & Omri, 2018). Social firms are distinct from traditional businesses in that their focus is on positive social outcomes, which inform and direct the services they provide rather than chiefly profit generation as in traditional enterprises (Mataira et al., 2014). The social firm might have a for-profit or nonprofit legal structure, but the social mission is the primary focus and profits secondary (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016; Hemphill & Cullari, 2014; Kurland, 2017; Kurland, 2018; McDonald et al., 2015; Rusch et al., 2019). SEs reinvest

all earnings into the organization to facilitate increased positive social effects (Mataira et al., 2014).

There are various schools of thought regarding the degree of the margin's importance. Social entrepreneurship firms (SEFs) operate differently and place varying levels of importance on the margin based on geographical-cultural contexts, including the (a) Asian, (b) West, and (c) varying approaches, in addition to addressing targeted social needs. Bravo (2016) found that three specific schools of thought emerged based on social entrepreneurial factors related to (a) venture revenue, (b) replicability, and (c) scalability. The innovation school of thought (varying) defines SEs as individuals who tackle pressing societal problems with innovation as a key characteristic; with (a) revenue, (b) replicability, and (c) scalability being desirable, but not mandatory (Bravo, 2016). The social enterprise school of thought (Asian) defines SEFs as social ventures generating income while solving pressing societal problems with (a) revenue as a mandatory characteristic; with (b) replicability; and (c) scalability being desirable, but not mandatory (Bravo, 2016). The social enterprise school of thought (West) defines SEFs as social ventures generating income while solving pressing societal problems with (a) revenue, (b) replicability, and (c) scalability as mandatory characteristics (Bravo, 2016).

Social entrepreneurship firms (SEFs) operate differently and place varying levels of importance on the margin based on geographical-cultural contexts in addition to addressing targeted social needs, although the margin does not need sacrificing in the name of the mission. SEs that understand specific underlying strategic performance mechanisms can achieve the double bottom line of both the mission and margin. Social

enterprises can not only achieve the mission and the margin, but also scale from self-sufficiency to sustainability by (a) developing the organization, (b) improving the value chain, and (c) extending the organization's marketing. Nonprofit organizations must scale across institutional and spatial boundaries to extend their systemic effects as well as achieve increased positive influence and change (Moore et al., 2015). An in-depth discussion about the extent of scalability occurs in a later section in this study entitled *Organizational Development and Sustainability*.

Colley et al. (2017) studied how an organization evolved from social entrepreneurship into sustainable entrepreneurship by enhancing the organization's value chain. Colley et al. (2017) conceptualized the boundaries of financial ineptness and acumen that (a) nonprofits, (b) SEs, and (c) entrepreneurs operate within, ranging from dependency and self-sufficiency to sustainability. The study findings indicated that social enterprise was an advantageous setting to foster opportunities for (a) visionary leadership and thinking, (b) labor and economic activities, (c) goal setting practices, (d) the acquisition of marketing skills and operational competencies, as well as (e) other resources that the founders later transferred to the Haitian community through coownership (Colley et al., 2017).

Another way that SEFs contribute to society is through the creation of opportunities including jobs for marginalized groups such as (a) fellow citizens suffering from housing loss, (b) ageism, (c) persons recovering from addictions, (d) individuals formerly incarcerated, (e) people with disabilities, (f) uneducated or undereducated individuals, (g) women, and (h) the youth, thereby strengthening the local community.

Contingent factors that determine the creation of jobs in SEFs include (a) the social entrepreneur's experience, (b) financial support, (c) educational attainment, (d) training, and (e) family history of entrepreneurship (Rey-Marti et al., 2016). Social entrepreneurial ventures have other potential effects of positive change through economic empowerment, which alters (a) social, (b) cultural, and (c) political attitudes.

Haugh and Talwar (2016) explored theories of (a) entrepreneurship, (b) social entrepreneurship, (c) inequality, and (d) empowerment to inform how an innovative business model, Mahaul, empowered women through making traditional hand-made crafts in the context of cultural and social limitations. Haugh and Talwar (2016) explored these theories in the context of Mahaul members who had high levels of female illiteracy in India (Haugh & Talwar, 2016). The intersection of these four theories resulted in positive social effects in interesting ways. Haugh and Talwar (2016) found that through Mahaul membership, in addition to increased economic earnings for their households, the participants experienced empowerment through increased levels of (a) confidence (65%), (b) freedom (42.8%), (c) dignity and contentment (18.6%), and (d) independence (12.2%). Haugh and Talwar (2016) concluded that positive social change could occur indirectly through the economic empowerment of marginalized groups via social entrepreneurial ventures. Colley et al. (2017) concluded that the nuances of social entrepreneurship lead to building sustainable public wealth rather than solely private wealth as in entrepreneurship. This evidence is not to negate that significant deficiencies do exist in social entrepreneurial firms.

There are underlying mechanisms that affect SEFs success or failure that are not evident to SEs seeking to affect change or impact while achieving a positive financial margin. Han and McKelvey (2016) examined how SEFs (a) emerge, (b) perform, and (c) grow as well as explained real issues faced by SEs rather than idealizing the phenomenon. Han and McKelvey (2016) employed complexity theory (tension and chaos logic) and social entrepreneurship to offer guidelines for accomplishing SEF performance while achieving the social goals of the organization and thereby mitigating financial crisis associated with poor financial performance in social enterprises. Han and McKelvey (2016) found that strategies such as (a) effective networking, (b) building trust and legitimacy, (c) responsible governance and accountability, (d) performance measurement, and (e) coevolutionary networking are vital to achieving sustainability. Han and McKelvey (2016) concluded that social entrepreneurship is a social system (or ecosystem) that has tensions related to the double bottom line of achieving the mission and margin, which can be managed successfully using the strategies mentioned above identified in the SE complexity framework.

Various mindsets in (a) social entrepreneurship, (b) sustainable entrepreneurship, and (c) ecopreneurship exist that could act as catalysts for environmental preservation as well as hindrances to economic growth. These mindsets stem from the intersection of (a) entrepreneurship, (b) innovation, and (c) institutional quality for promoting solutions as well as curtailing negative effects on the environment and society as a result of formal and informal entrepreneurship (Youssef et al., 2018). These same principles of curtailing negative environmental and social effects exist in the TBL concept, which takes into

consideration the effects of the (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) profit dimensions of organizational practices.

The effects that individual (a) SEs, (b) sustainability entrepreneurs, and (c) ecopreneurs have on the competitive marketplace, environment, and economic growth (Horisch, 2015; Youssef et al., 2018). Horisch (2015) identified that degrowth philosophies impede economic growth in high potential industries. One must also consider to what extent are the people and planet aspects of the TBL sacrificed to exploit economic growth to the fullest extent in high potential industries. Horisch (2015) found that various factors affect sustainable entrepreneurship, including degrowth mindsets by many entrepreneurs, which limits the size of their firms. Horisch (2015) concluded that degrowth mindsets have their merits regarding the lesser impact on the environment and society but also reduce firm scalability and economic earning potential. Other scholars took a different approach to understand the effects of sustainable entrepreneurship.

Youssef et al. (2018) provided an understanding of the intersection of (a) entrepreneurship, (b) innovation, and (c) institutional quality for promoting environmental and social solutions in addition to curtailing negative environmental impact as a result of formal and informal entrepreneurship. Youssef et al. (2018) found that formal entrepreneurship has a less negative impact on the environment in comparison to informal entrepreneurship. Formal enterprises have stringent business (a) guidelines, (b) laws, and (c) regulations that they must adhere to in order to remain licensed and operational. The informal enterprises do not adhere to the same stringent business (a) guidelines, (b) laws, and (c) regulations, including inspections and audits, because they

operate in the unofficial market with clandestine activities. The study also shows how international trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) can improve institutional quality. Innovation and free trade policies foster innovation and efficiency by improving technology and sustainability. Youssef et al. (2018) concluded that formal governmental institutions could have a favorable influence on reducing the negative effects on environmental quality through policy and law enforcement initiatives.

Policy and legislative controls have the potential to boost fair trade and efficiency in competitive markets such as (a) Southeast Asia, (b) Europe, and (c) the United States by assisting social firms' potential for (a) development, (b) employment, as well as (c) enhancing long-term social advantages for society (Mataira et al., 2014). Noya and Clarence (2013) explained that policy and legislative controls that foster social entrepreneurship are vital for the long-term sustainability of communities and nations, which also influences the global economy. Social enterprises played a significant role during and after the 2007-2008 global financial crisis in addressing (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic problems by (a) promoting inclusive development, (b) improving social unity, (c) fostering community social capital, (d) encouraging democratic participation, and (e) providing excellent quality of services. The fundamental characteristics and activities of social enterprises tie directly into the (a) people, (b) planet, and (c) profit dimensions of the TBL framework (Noya & Clarence, 2013). Laws and regulatory provisions to encourage social entrepreneurship in competitive market economies such as the United States could (a) boost fair trade and market efficiencies, (b)

assist social enterprises to realize their growth potential for development, (c) create employment, and (d) deliver long-term social benefits for all (Mataira et al., 2014).

Some nonprofit leaders welcome the concept of creating innovative, socially value-enhancing entrepreneurial operations that consider market forces and opportunities with great attraction and interest in response to deepening worries about declining resources and the fiscal health of their organizations (Mataira et al., 2014). Social entrepreneurship is an established phenomenon to fund social programs in countries such as (a) the Philippines, (b) Great Britain, and (c) France (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofit leaders must train and equip their organizations with agile, adaptive capabilities due to altered environmental conditions (Mataira et al., 2014). The entire organization must embrace the transformation including a fresh cultural mindset that evolves at the most fundamental level of how the organization (a) thinks, (b) learns, (c) communicates, and (d) interacts in its (a) shared vision, (b) mission, (c) systems thinking, (d) mental models, (e) team learning, and (f) personal mastery as well as (g) technology and processes with (a) innovative thinking, (b) entrepreneurial risk-taking, (c) stakeholder inclusion, and (d) inventive resourcefulness in addition to (e) sustainable development practices for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Ferro et al., 2019; Mataira et al., 2014; Saunila et al., 2019; Senge, 1990; Shier et al., 2019).

Nonprofit leaders that have (a) a deep understanding of the mission and the margin's double bottom line; (b) specific underlying strategic performance mechanisms; as well as (c) the fundamental characteristics, opportunities, and activities of social entrepreneurship could achieve not only the double bottom line (the mission and margin),

but also the TBL dimensions ([a] people, [b] planet, and [c] profit). Nonprofit leaders could also achieve the scaling of social innovations. In this way, nonprofit leaders with social entrepreneurial mindfulness transform their organizations from efficient and effective actors or competitors (self-sufficient stage) to social innovators (sustainable stage) in the nonprofit sector.

***Social innovation and technology transfer.*** Social innovation is necessary to assist nonprofits in achieving short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. Social innovation is a form of technology that relates to individuals' and organizations' efforts to create changes that have a wider and deeper significant effect on social systems as well as the disadvantaged social groups' experiences and perspectives as a whole (Shier, Handy, & Jennings, 2019). Moore, Riddell, and Vocisano (2015) defined social innovation as any (a) project, (b) service, (c) process, (d) framework, or (e) model in which the social innovator questions the existing (a) patterns, (b) asset and power flows, and (c) assumptions in a social system where the development happens, resulting in disruptive changes that transpire over time. Social technologies are fresh concepts and practices intended to improve the overall macroquality of life in which a range of valuable choices are available to the identified groups (Shier et al., 2019). The identified groups usually refer to the social group identified by the nonprofit human services provided, such as persons suffering in society from (a) domestic violence; (b) lack of employment; (c) food insecurity; (d) homelessness; (e) substance addiction; or (f) physical, emotional, or mental illness (Shier et al., 2019). Large scale changes occur through social innovations (Moore et al., 2015).

Social service nonprofits determine and implement social innovations in three ways, as (a) socially disruptive social technologies, (b) product- or service-based social technologies, and (c) process-based social technologies (Shier et al., 2019). The social service nonprofits use socially disruptive social technologies to transform society at a macrolevel through political activism and social awareness campaigns (Shier et al., 2019). The human service nonprofits use the product- or service-based social technologies to create alternative products at a macrolevel by developing unique programs and initiatives (Shier et al., 2019). The human service nonprofits use process-based social technologies to change society at a macrolevel through institutional practices and structures that enhance the service results for the identified groups (Shier et al., 2019). The threefold approach of affecting social change assists human service nonprofits with achieving increased significant positive social effects than if the nonprofits used only one or two methods.

Human service nonprofits leaders need to create programs that transform social circumstances on a (a) regular, (b) incremental, and (c) continual basis using quantifiable results. Social programs administered by nonprofits to (a) marginalized, (b) indigenous, or (c) ethnic minority communities traditionally have been challenging to quantify because of the cultural intricacies associated with the (a) philosophical values, (b) cultural knowledge and traditions, and (c) practices of the communities (Mataira et al., 2014). Some nonprofits in Hawaii and New Zealand that address disparities resulting from historical land-based (a) dispossession, (b) displacement, and (c) other environmental-related factors use land-based therapies to reconnect service recipients to

ancestral lineages for (a) emotional, mental, and spiritual strength; (b) rehabilitation; and (c) recovery (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofits often spearhead new social innovations in communities with distinctive needs outside of the typical offerings of available services (Mataira et al., 2014; Shier et al., 2019). The nonprofits that administered the nonconventional therapies were effective while finding viable methods to assess the processes and outcomes for the program recipients utilizing the theory of change (Mataira et al., 2014).

Nonprofit leaders must create programs that alter social circumstances (a) systematically, (b) incrementally, and (c) gradually, but (d) disruptively, with quantifiable outcomes (Mataira et al., 2014; Shier et al., 2019). Social innovative thinking is essential to achieve this feat, which requires a measure of risk-taking that accelerates to an extent the pace of change, thereby transforming the trajectory of the program development (Mataira et al., 2014). An in-depth understanding of change methods helps to translate unconventional processes and individual elements in social innovation programs at different systemic levels into quantifiable empirical data for evaluation and reporting as cost-benefit analyses (Mataira et al., 2014). Cost-benefit analysis ensures transparency and excellent data quality resulting in higher levels of reliability and validity as well as credibility (Rusch et al., 2019). The documentation of new and innovative social approaches in nonprofits is essential for reporting as well as replication in other (a) nonprofits, (b) regions, and (c) longitudinal periods, thereby positively influencing intergenerational problems (Mataira et al., 2014). Rusch et al. (2019) found that a specific combination of factors, such as (a) organizational procedures, (b) staff engagement, and

(c) organizational cohesion, were positively associated with social innovation in human service nonprofits. The success of social innovations along with demonstrative cost-benefits is advantageous to present to supporters as a social investment with social returns on their investment in the form of (a) positive social change, (b) positive social benefits, and (c) long-term sustainability outcomes (Mataira et al., 2014).

Nonprofit leaders could adapt and design internal and external organizational structures to promote social innovations by recognizing the factors that enable human services to develop and implement social change (Rusch et al., 2019). Previous studies have shown (a) executive leadership, (b) centralized staff structures, and (c) overall organizational commitment as a key catalyst to social innovation as well as developing inclusive organizational culture and environment towards social change. The social innovation and technology transfer dimension should include actions to (a) develop and pilot social innovations, (b) employ empirical data as a cost-benefit analysis to verify and demonstrate program successes, (c) invest in training the trainees, and (d) replicate the program's successful social innovations in other regions (Mataira et al., 2014).

Organizational leaders that incorporate these elements into their organizational strategies and processes have an enhanced viable opportunity to survive in the short-term and thrive in the long-term, even with depleting funds, increasing service demands and competition, as well as distracted audiences.

***Organizational development and sustainability.*** Organizations require stability to continue the operation and delivery of quality programs to their constituents in the short- and long-term. Organizations require solid operational processes at the micro level to

effect large scale positive social change at the macrolevel. The probability of survival is higher for the organizations that invest in (a) organizational development, (b) human resources development, (c) social communication, (d) information technology, (e) social entrepreneurship, (f) fiscal management, (g) organizational capacity building, and (h) quantifiable evaluative measures even during difficult times when financial support is scarce (Mataira et al., 2014).

Nonprofit leaders might neglect organizational development and capacity building when there are other competing priorities such as (a) the mission and the margin, (b) organizational crises, or (c) if donors earmark their donations for precise purposes. Several points presented in previous sections indicate various activities needed to survive in the short-term, including mobile marketing to connect with (a) donors, (b) supporters, and (c) funders with immediacy. Nonprofit leaders can demonstrate program efficiency and effectiveness by giving a voice to societal-sustaining services through recipients' life-transforming stories of (a) development, (b) restoration, (c) recuperation, (d) rebuilding, (e) rehabilitation, or (f) recovery using social media to engage wide-reaching audiences imperative to gaining social and monetary support as well as sustainable partnerships, which is essential for (a) program success, (b) self-sufficiency, and (c) organizational sustainability (Mataira et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2015).

Organizational capacity building and social capital investments are intrinsic parts of organizational development and sustainability for the long-term (Mataira et al., 2014). Dobrai and Farkas (2016) emphasized the importance that organizational development has in the long-term sustainability of an organization. The advancement of organizational

professionalism occurs through organizational development and the expansion of organizational learning, which in turn positively influences organizational members' development in terms of skills and competencies (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016). Nonprofit leaders need a shift in their nonprofit paradigms to address the changing challenges in the nonprofit sector.

Nonprofit leaders must change their (a) governance, (b) framework, (c) management, (d) operational, and (e) administrative processes internally as well as their (a) collaborations, (b) networking, and (c) cooperation externally to compete and triumph in the evolved nonprofit sector (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016). The new, evolved landscape in the nonprofit sector requires (a) new thinking, (b) new decision making, (c) new strategies, (d) new processes, (e) new performance measurements, (f) new communication, and (g) new interactivity by nonprofit leaders as well as the entire organization. Nonprofit leaders must recognize and understand that the nonprofit sector is no longer purely nonprofit, but instead, the sector has become a hybrid sector occupied by both nonprofit purists as well as hybrid entities using both nonprofit and for-profit market-oriented strategies to achieve successful outcomes by any positive means necessary. Dobrai and Farkas (2016) denoted this new way of (a) thinking, (b) interacting, and (c) being as professionalization. Professionalization is the implementation of market-oriented strategies and business methods or tools for gaining a competitive advantage in the nonprofit sector (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016). Professionalization is the process of evolving into a highly developed (a) professional, (b) expert, or (c) leader organization in the sector. Professionalization is a skilled

organization that demonstrates (a) superior industry-acumen and agility, (b) expert knowledge, (c) astute financial management, and (d) operational processes, as well as (e) stellar services to internal and external customers (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016).

Professionalization is the dynamic and resilient response of the nonprofit sector to the depleting support from outside sources such as governmental and private funding as well as individual donations (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016; McDonald et al., 2015).

Some nonprofit leaders are using the changing landscape as an opportunity to implement new ideas to arrive at new solutions through organizational development (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016; Moore et al., 2015). Dobrai and Farkas (2016) defined organizational development as the systemic implementation and transference of behavioral science expertise for the (a) strategic development; (b) enhancement; and (c) strengthening of policies, systems, and processes contributing to organizational efficiency and effectiveness with a focus on (a) innovation, (b) change management, and (c) organizational learning, which ultimately leads to a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The individual members of the organization benefit from the organizational development with learning opportunities in which new knowledge acquisition and skills development are evident, although the individual is not the main focus of organizational development (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016). Scholars and practitioners consider organizational development as a form of organizational capacity building focused on the organization as a whole rather than solely the individual members, because large system changes at the macrolevel occur as a result of social innovation fundamentally initiated at the organizational level (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016; Moore et al., 2015).

Large nonprofit funders are seeking viable ways to extend the positive social effects that their social investments have on society through scaling initiatives (Moore et al., 2015). Grants and donor funding tend to have specific designations related directly to recipients' benefit rather than indirect costs such as (a) organizational capacity building, (b) organizational overhead, (c) new program innovations and developments, or (d) social technologies (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofits historically lacked a focus on producing revenue streams or emphasized prevention programs' cost-savings to society by reducing the rates of social problems that society must bear (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofit leaders' goals should consist of efficiently (a) producing revenue streams, (b) reducing the program expenditures, as well as (c) seeking viable ways to scale successful approaches for increased social reach, and then effectively conveying those positive social returns of their initiatives to the public.

Social bricoleurs, social constructionists, and social engineers must understand that there are levels to scaling social innovations successfully. Moore et al. (2015) noted that social innovators should first consider strategic niche management (SNM), which is a concept focused on niche development as organizational innovations. The second notation in scaling that Moore et al. (2015) noted as significant is that scaling of social innovations require the use of a multilevel perspective (MLP), in which innovation takes place at three levels, (a) the niche level, (b) the government level, and (c) an exogenous level, for a broad systemic transformation. Social innovation scaling is not as simple as disseminating the same (a) program, (b) initiative, or (c) message to a larger audience. Vast-scale implementation of social innovations requires a transformation of cultural (a)

values, (b) beliefs, and (c) norms as well as (d) a reshaping of rules, (e) an alteration to the flows of resources, and (f) a refining of relationships at multiple spatial levels, in which the present social system occupies (Moore et al., 2015). Nonprofits and large private funders seeking to effect large scale positive social change with successful initiatives must (a) scale deep, (b) scale broad, and (c) scale up, thereby linking their efforts across all three spatial levels to ensure the change is permanent or frozen (Moore et al., 2015). Scaling deep involves learning about cultural values and norms (Moore et al., 2015). Scaling broad necessitates expanding the social innovation over various contexts and different niches for generalizability (Moore et al., 2015). Scaling up entails broadcasting a social innovation into the prominent thinking of a system or society (Moore et al., 2015). A network of organizations might determine ongoing benchmarking and training as evaluative measures as well as system-wide software solutions for the collaboration and coordination of evaluative (a) measures, (b) processes, and (c) outcomes (Mataira et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2015).

Some nonprofit leaders might find (a) organizational development, (b) change, and (c) capacity building beyond their leadership capabilities. Professional consultants can partner with social change organizations and their supporters to (a) foster systemic transformations, (b) facilitate social entrepreneurship, and (c) scale social innovations. Professional consultants serve as facilitators or collaborators with (a) nonprofit leaders, (b) project managers, (c) staff, as well as (d) funders and donors when organizational development specialization is essential to achieve a (a) strategic advantage, (b) organizational changes, (c) capacity building, (d) interventions, and (e) campaigns

(Dobrai & Farkas, 2016; Moore et al., 2015; Reid et al., 2019). Professional consultants also can assist nonprofits with design strategies to convey and tackle societal issues using innovative communication techniques to amass social capital and monetary support in a holistic, comprehensive manner (Mataira et al., 2014).

The organizational development and sustainability dimension should include actions to (a) support capacity development of partners; (b) develop system-wide evaluation process; (c) create a network of local and global supporters; and (d) encourage partner self-sufficiency and sustainability; and (e) implement a social innovations' strategy to scale deep, scale broad, and scale up, which creates a unique competitive advantage from other sector (a) actors, (b) competitors, and (c) innovators (Mataira et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2015). Nonprofit leaders that have (a) a deep understanding of the mission and the margin's double bottom line; (b) specific underlying strategic performance mechanisms; (c) the fundamental characteristics, opportunities, and activities of social entrepreneurship; as well as (d) the multilevel perspective of scaling can achieve not only (a) the double bottom line (the mission and margin); (b) the TBL (people, planet, and profit); but also (c) the scaling of social innovations. In this way, nonprofit leaders with scaling adeptness can transcend from social innovators in the nonprofit sector to sustainable leaders, as a bridge over the troubled waters of society for positive social change.

### **Sustainability Matters**

Sustainability is the new competitive advantage and thereby behooves both for-profit and nonprofit organizations to acquire the (a) knowledge, (b) tools, and (c)

competencies to achieve a competitive advantage in the local and global marketplaces (Ferro et al., 2019). Organizational leaders must commit to a transformation in their organizations to engage in sustainable development and achieve sustainability (Ferro et al., 2019). For-profit and nonprofit leaders should recognize the TBL practices as advantageous possibilities to enhance their strategic position, in turn, strengthening their competitive stance (Ferro et al., 2019). The transformation must permeate the entire organization including a new cultural mindset that changes at a fundamental level of how the organization (a) thinks, (b) learns, (c) communicates, and (d) interacts in its (a) shared vision, (b) mission, (c) systems thinking, (d) mental models, (e) team learning, and (f) personal mastery as well as (g) technology and processes with (a) innovative thinking, (b) entrepreneurial risk-taking, (c) stakeholder inclusion, and (d) inventive resourcefulness in addition to (e) sustainable development practices for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability (Depken & Zeman, 2018; Ferro et al., 2019; Mataira et al., 2014; Saunila et al., 2019; Senge, 1990; Shier et al., 2019).

Leaders and managers' commitment to information dissemination and staff training are critical drivers for sustainable development in small businesses and nonprofits (Saunila et al., 2019). Organizational team members were highly likely to cooperate and engage in sustainability efforts on a longer-term basis when leaders embedded sustainability language into their internal communications with organizational members (Saunila et al., 2019). Small business and nonprofit leaders and managers who provided sustainability training for their staff members also fostered higher levels of sustainability engagement within the organization (Saunila et al., 2019). Several

researchers in Europe employed an organized, collaborative effort to develop a push-pull model, which included the TBL approach, to educate and engage businesses as well as communities in sustainability practices in addition to providing technical assistance with highly successful results (Depken & Zeman, 2018). The European researchers used the three-part, push-pull model of research-education-outreach (REO), to address the sustainability disparity faced by small and micro for-profit as well as nonprofit organizations (Depken & Zeman, 2018). The first part of the REO model has the applied research gaps related to emerging, less costly sustainability technology that would benefit small businesses and nonprofits (Depken & Zeman, 2018). The second part of the REO model has an all-encompassing sustainability education for upcoming sustainability professionals at various levels that thoroughly prepare future business owners and leaders to build and execute sustainable business models as part of the fundamental elements of the businesses' practices successfully. The third part of the REO model has extending the sustainability knowledge to society through community engagement educational activities and outreach events (Depken & Zeman, 2018). Sustainability proponents in the United States would benefit from adopting (a) theoretical models, (b) definitions and language, as well as (c) standardized tools and measurements established by European researchers, such as the REO model, to advance sustainable business efforts in the United States because of their advanced research and work in sustainability (Depken & Zeman, 2018).

Several sustainability studies showed organizations' ability to grow and make a profit despite macrolevel hindrances when the organizations employed sustainability

practices successfully (Adoukonou, 2019; Ferro et al., 2019; Warren & Szostek, 2017).

The reality is that most for-profit and nonprofit leaders, even those willing to adopt sustainable development, lack the knowledge to understand what activities constitute sustainable development in their business practices ([a] strategies, [b] operations, and [c] processes) (Ferro et al., 2019). The lack of knowledge regarding sustainable development leads to a deficit in sustainable development strategies and activities that influence successful sustainable development for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

Nonprofit leaders should move away from a donor-recipient mindset and shift toward the interactive-supporter mindset. The interactive-supporter mindset is one that understands individuals (a) engage, (b) interact, and (c) monetarily support an organization's cause or program because the organization's values and mission align with the supporter's values and vision of (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic justice for society. No longer do people give as donors because of charitable obligation, but rather individuals as responsible societal members collaborate monetarily with - organizations who communicate and prove through cost-benefit analysis an ability to efficiently and effectively address as well as solve society's most pressing problems.

### **Transition**

In Section 1, I discussed the (a) background of the problem; (b) problem statement; (c) purpose statement; (d) nature of the study; (e) research question and interview questions; (f) conceptual framework; (g) operational definitions; and (h) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations; in addition to the (i) significance of the study.

I also presented a review of the professional and academic literature. In Section 2, I review the purpose statement and discuss (a) the role of the researcher, (b) participants, (c) research method and design, (d) population and sampling, as well as (e) the importance of ethical research. I also present my arguments for selection of (a) data collection instruments, (b) data collection technique, (c) data organization techniques, and (d) data analysis in addition to reliability and validity. In Section 3, I focus on key factors specifically related to the Baldrige Excellence Framework and the organization's profile.

## Section 2: The Project

Section 2 includes a discussion about (a) the purpose statement, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) participant characteristics, (d) population and sampling decisions, (e) data saturation strategies, (f) research methods and design, (g) ethical research applications, (h) data collection instruments and techniques, (i) data organization and analysis, and (j) descriptions of approaches to establishing reliability and validity. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate my purposeful thought in research planning and strategy to ensure a quality research product as a qualitative research study. The discussion in this section begins with a review of the purpose of the research.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. The targeted population comprised three senior leaders in a nonprofit organization located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States who used successful strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. The implications of this study for positive social change include providing nonprofit leaders viable strategies and action plans for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability through (a) transformational leadership, (b) social entrepreneurship, (c) innovation, and (d) organizational development to ensure the vulnerable and potentially marginalized populations of society continue to receive the (a) assistance, (b) care, and (c) advocacy they need.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Researcher bias includes any inhibiting influence that a researcher imparts on accurately and fairly (a) collecting, (b) analyzing, and (c) reporting interviewee responses (Saunders et al., 2016). Risk of bias exists as “unconscious distortions” even when researchers are researching in good faith without premeditated intentions or agendas to persuade the process or outcomes (Sonuga-Barke, 2017, p. 1). The researcher is both the inquirer and subject of inquiry as a research instrument with the potential for scientists’ (a) personal values, (b) experiences, and (c) private beliefs to spread into their professional and public lives (Chenail, 2011). The interviewer becomes the research instrument when conducting qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 1995, cited by Chenail, 2011). According to Chenail (2011), interviewers serve as three primary conduits of research. First, interviewers construct research-specific questions for interviews (Chenail, 2011). Second, the interviewer is the primary collector and interpreter of data from research participants (Chenail, 2011). Third, the interviewer controls the communication flow between interviewer and interviewee with verbal and nonverbal cues, such as (a) tone of voice, (b) the pace of speech, (c) body language, (d) question structure, (e) types of questions asked, and (f) length of time allotted for responses (Chenail, 2011). The combination of the types of questions asked and the verbal and nonverbal cues facilitates a therapeutic or stressful effect for research participants, which influences their responses during the interview (Chenail, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016). Researchers have a responsibility to conduct research in an ethical manner that does not cause participants harm in any manner.

The Belmont Report established in 1978 comprised the guiding principles for conducting ethical research and the humane treatment of participants in the United States (Office for Human Research Protections, 1979). The Belmont Report's three guiding principles of ethical research are (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (Office for Human Research Protections, 1979). Respect for persons means individuals as autonomous agents receive respect; and individuals with diminished autonomy, such as (a) children, (b) pregnant women, (c) persons with disabilities, (d) incarcerated persons, (e) economically challenged persons, and (f) educationally challenged persons, receive additional protection and safeguards in research experiments (Office for Human Research Protections, 1979). Beneficence means respecting and protecting the decisions of research participants and securing participants' well-being by minimizing possible harm while maximizing possible benefits to their person (Office for Human Research Protections, 1979). Justice means research benefits and burdens should be fairly distributed throughout society (Office for Human Research Protections, 1979).

The IRB is the research oversight board to ensure compliance with The Belmont Report and federal law at (a) academic, (b) medical, (c) brain trust, and (d) other institutions that conduct research involving human subjects (Blee & Currier, 2011). Researchers must have their research approved by the IRB before conducting any research (Blee & Currier, 2011). The IRB members are responsible for scrutinizing the researcher's proposed research protocols for ethical and federal compliance before approving the proposed research (Blee & Currier, 2011). The Walden University IRB's compliance requirements for ethical research in the Consulting Capstone Program include

a signed consent form and a service order agreement form before conducting any research (Walden University, 2018, 2019). These IRB requirements are in accordance with The Belmont Report for ethical research involving human participants, which requires researchers to fully inform potential participants of the research process by disclosing all information necessary for the potential participants to make an informed decision about whether to participate in the research study (Office for Human Research Protections, 1979).

I reviewed the IRB's compliance requirements for the Consulting Capstone Program to identify and adhere to all specific requirements necessary to meet the standards for ethical research. I applied for and received IRB approval under approval number 03-14-18-0409555 via the IRB Preapproved Data Sources for the DBA Consulting Capstone form, in which I stated that I would use the Manual for the DBA Consulting Capstone to ensure that my project remained within the IRB's preapproved guidelines (Walden University, 2019). I obtained three signed consent forms and one service order agreement form in accordance with the IRB's compliance requirements for ethical research in the Consulting Capstone Program. I treated the participants with ethical communication and respect per The Belmont Report's guiding principles and IRB compliance requirements. I provide additional details in the Appendix: DBA Interview Protocol.

My role as the researcher was as a researcher and scholar-consultant. My primary identifiable bias regarding the nonprofit sector was suspicions of the unethical use and distribution of funds collected by nonprofits. I am aware of and acknowledge the

previously mentioned bias, but this awareness does not mean that I did not encounter other unconscious biases as challenges during the research process. The interviewer as the research instrument has the potential of becoming the most significant threat to the trustworthiness of qualitative research in the absence of (a) field preparation, (b) researcher reflexivity, (c) collaborative triangulation teams, and (d) peer evaluation (Chenail, 2011). My strategy for mitigating researcher bias included strict adherence to the research questions and protocols provided in the Baldrige Framework and the Manual for the DBA Consulting Capstone in addition to the IRB guidelines (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2017; Walden University, 2019). Second, I saved all (a) voice recordings of responses, (b) written notes, and (c) email responses to interview questions as back up documentation of interviews. Third, I provided the interviewees a draft of all interviews and final case study, such as the organizational profile, as a confirmation method for data-reporting accuracy. Fourth, I relied on my doctoral committee chair's and committee's feedback and applied triangulation methods and peer evaluation as additional safeguards for bias assessment and management. My goal was awareness and proper planning so that I could be an instrument to further research rather than an instrument that misconstrues research because of bias.

### **Participants**

Qualitative research has a distinct group of characteristics and assumptions such as direct sampling selection (Abrams, 2015) to demonstrate rigor and trustworthiness in the four reporting criteria (Ali & Yusof, 2011). The four reporting criteria for qualitative research are (a) dependability, (b) credibility, (c) transferability, and (d) authenticity

(Saunders et al., 2016). These criteria are different from quantitative research criteria, which are (a) reliability, (b) validity, and (c) generalizability (Saunders et al., 2016). A researcher might seek generalizability to a larger population in quantitative research, whereas a researcher in qualitative research might seek to test an existing theory while also offering transferability using a small nonprobability sample (Ishak & Yazid, 2014). The targeted population comprised three senior leaders in a nonprofit organization located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The research question was a consideration of the strategies that nonprofit leaders use for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. The participants satisfied the criteria of the study population as a nonprofit leader. For example, the participants were an executive director and two board members of a small nonprofit organization in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, which promotes awareness and advocacy for children.

The strategy for gaining access to participants and maintaining engagement during qualitative research is an endeavor (Okumus, Altinay, & Roper, 2007) that can be challenging. Sometimes this access process consists of unexpected obstacles that require (a) tact, (b) planning, (c) adaptability, (d) perseverance, and (e) dedicated work (Yin, 2018) because leaders and managers place high value on their time (Widding, 2012). The primary method used to gain access to the nonprofit client leader was an invitation to participate in the Walden University Consulting Capstone Program, in which nonprofit leaders could receive valuable consulting services at no cost. Participant empowerment is essential for building rapport and trust by informing participants of the research process in detail, including (a) research goals, (b) human subject rights and IRB requirements, (c)

purpose of the consent form, (d) privacy and ethics, (e) an estimated research timeline, and (f) answering participants' questions using layperson language and transparency (Alcadipani, 2009; Chenail, 2011; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013).

I developed a rapport and working relationship with the client leader using an introductory e-mail message followed by an hour-long phone conversation to explain the DBA consulting engagement and the potential benefit to the client organization and to answer the client leader's questions and understand the client leader's expectations for the consulting engagement. In addition to the introductory e-mail message, the client leader received an informed consent form via e-mail message for review and signature. The client leader returned the consent form to me with an electronic signature prior to the first phone conversation. The initial conversation between myself and the client leader was also an opportunity to assess further participant alignment with the research question. I later obtained two additional consent forms with electronic signatures from two board members who were two additional participants in the research study.

### **Research Method and Design**

This section is an extended discussion of the Nature of the Study section. The first paragraph is an in-depth discussion of the chosen research method. The second paragraph is a detailed discussion of the selected research design.

#### **Research Method**

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. A qualitative research methodology is advantageous when a researcher seeks to make sense and meaning of a

phenomenon shared by the ones who have the experience (Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). A researcher collects qualitative data with the fullness and richness conveyed by the study participants (Adams, Broom, & Jennaway, 2012; Yin, 2018). A researcher communicates qualitative data results primarily through words and descriptions rather than numbers and statistics, which is indicative of quantitative data (Adams et al., 2012; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). A researcher approaches a qualitative research from a different paradigm that links the study to a conceptual framework to guide the research rather than theory for guiding quantitative research (Adams et al., 2012). I chose a collection and analysis of qualitative data as suitable for this study to capture the rich data and experiences of the participants to make sense and meaning of the phenomenon. I did not choose a collection and analysis of quantitative data as suitable for this study because numbers and statistics did not fit the purpose of my study.

### **Research Design**

I used a single-case study design. A case study is a viable design when a researcher seeks to answer questions regarding how or why of a phenomenon's workings (Yin, 2018). A researcher uses a case study to explore and understand a real-world setting associated with a phenomenon, which is distinct and different from other designs such as solely using surveys or a controlled-experimental setting (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Additionally, a case study allows opportunities for semistructured or in-depth interviews as well as holistic or embedded observations, which again gives the researcher opportunities for collecting data characterized by fullness and richness of real-world experiences rather than numbers for statistical interpretation (Breslin & Buchanan, 2011;

Cronin, 2014). I chose a case study design with open-ended questions to understand a social construct and gain a rich understanding of data through participant interpretations and realities. I did not select (a) surveys, (b) closed-ended questions, and (c) other quantifiable designs because my goal is not to test a hypothesis by collecting precise empirical data to analyze and arrive at one universalism reality by examining variables' relationships or differences, which is a characteristic of quantitative and mixed methods. I also did not select sequential exploratory or sequential explanatory research designs, which are characteristic of mixed methods that involve several phases of data collection and analysis to explore and examine complex phenomena.

### **Population and Sampling**

The targeted population comprised a purposive sampling of three senior leaders in a nonprofit organization located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. A purposive sampling is viable for qualitative studies when the researcher seeks to study individuals who have similar characteristics and common experiences with the goal of identifying intricate patterns and meaningful relationships related to the studied phenomenon (Abrams, 2010). Another reason that a researcher chooses a purposive sampling is to access specific (a) knowledge, (b) competencies, and (c) experiences held by a small purposive sampling group that provides specific information related to the research question (Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016). Saunders et al. (2016) noted that purposive sampling is useful to gain rich, informative answers to allow the researcher to satisfy the research inquiries.

The sampling method chosen in this single-case study is purposive sampling because the selected population of nonprofit leaders had specific (a) knowledge, (b) competencies, and (c) experiences to provide quality answers about nonprofit strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. Data saturation is the stage in research inquiry when the researcher is obtaining no new (a) information, (b) themes, or (c) patterns from the research participants (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). A researcher with a small sample size must guard against failure to reach data saturation, which may negatively affect the quality and validity of the research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The strategy to ensure data saturation in this study was to use two different stages of data collection. First, I used the organizational profile questions to gain an overview of the organization in the study. Second, I used the leadership triad questions, initial results triad questions, and measurements triad questions to conduct in-depth research into the various organizational areas using a 40-week timeline (Walden University, 2019).

### **Ethical Research**

Ethical considerations for research and the IRB resulted from the grievous violations and atrocities committed in inhumane research and experiments by Nazi doctors later discovered at the end of World War II. These discoveries led to the Nuremberg Trials in 1947 and the establishment of the Nuremberg Code in 1947, which is a set of ethical research principles for guiding human research experimentation. Later in 1964, the World Health Organization-World Medical Association adopted the Declaration of Helsinki, which is a set of ethical research principles to guide doctors in medical research conduct and interactions with research participants. Unethical and

inhumane practices by researchers in American research experiments, such as (a) the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment (1932-1972), (b) the Willowbrook Experiments (1956-1970), and (c) the Immortal Case of Henrietta Lacks and HeLa cell line (1951-present), led to the passage of the National Research Act that established the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research in 1974. Consequently, the National Commission submitted The Belmont Report in 1979, which established the ethical guiding principles for conducting ethical research and the humane treatment of participants in the United States (Office for Human Research Protections, 1979). The Belmont Report was later codified into federal law as Title 45, Part 46 (Subpart A, “Common Rule”) of the Code of Federal Regulations (Basic HHS Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects) (Office for Human Research Protections, 1979). The following discussion outlines the procedures taken to comply with the ethical requirements for IRB compliance in conducting research in accordance with The Belmont Report and federal law.

First, I reviewed the IRB’s compliance requirements for the consulting capstone to identify and adhere to all specific requirements necessary to meet the standards for ethical research. Next, I applied for and received IRB approval under approval number 03-14-18-0409555 via the IRB Preapproved Data Sources for the DBA Consulting Capstone form, in which I stated that I would use the Manual for the DBA Consulting Capstone to ensure that my project remained within the IRB’s preapproved guidelines (Walden University, 2019). The IRB’s compliance requirements for ethical research in the consulting capstone permit the collection of only interview data and archival data

(Walden University, 2019). The IRB's compliance requirements for ethical research in the consulting capstone prohibit the collection of data by video recordings, in-person observations, as well as surveying individuals or facilitating focus groups (Walden University, 2019). Additionally, the IRB's compliance requirements for ethical research in the consulting capstone include redacting any information that would identify a client organization including (a) changing the name of any client organization, (b) generalizing the organization's location, and (c) removing key elements of data or evidence that would identify the client organization (Walden University, 2019).

The IRB's compliance requirements for ethical research in the consulting capstone include responsibility by doctoral students to maintain in a secure location all documents and files related to the project for 5 years to ensure that no disclosure of sensitive, confidential, or proprietary client information occurs during or after the project (Walden University, 2019). The IRB's compliance requirements for ethical research in the consulting capstone require compliance with all client organization's policies about the use of organizational resources for educational purposes including, but not limited to, e-mail addresses, and printed materials (Walden University, 2019). The IRB's compliance requirements for ethical research in the consulting capstone allow the sharing of interview audio recordings and a full transcript only with the individual interviewed.

The IRB's compliance requirements for ethical research in the consulting capstone require a signed consent form and service order agreement before conducting any research (Walden University, 2019). These IRB requirements are in accordance with The Belmont Report for ethical research involving human participants, which requires

researchers to fully inform potential participants of the research process by disclosing all information necessary for the potential participants to make an informed decision about whether to participate in the research study (Office for Human Research Protections, 1979). I met these requirements with the use of three consent forms and one service order agreement form by detailing the research process including (a) interview procedures, (b) voluntary nature of the study, (c) risks and benefits of being in the study, (d) privacy, (e) the scope of the consulting work, and (f) the contact information for the Walden University IRB representative to discuss privately any questions or concerns regarding participant rights (Walden University, 2019).

The IRB's compliance requirements for ethical research in the consulting capstone require a signed agreement between Walden University and the client organization before conducting any research (Walden University, 2019). This document outlined specific responsibilities of each institution including mutual responsibilities in accordance with (a) the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, (b) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability, as well as (c) Equal Employment Opportunity (Walden University, 2019). The DBA Research Agreement outlines terms and conditions about the research, student responsibilities, submission of the study draft to client organization's representative, publication of the study, as well as other terms and conditions governing the relationship of Walden University and the client organization for the purpose of student research (Walden University, 2019).

### **Data Collection Instruments**

As the researcher, I was the primary data collection instrument for this study. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument conducting interviews as guided, purposeful conversations that occur between the interviewer and interviewee in which the interviewer is the dominant actor in the conversation with the intention of respectfully and skillfully collecting information to understand and interpret a particular phenomenon as a lived experience of the interviewee (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013; Jong & Jung, 2015). The secondary data instruments were semistructured interviews and the organization's archival documents. Semistructured interviews are key secondary sources to attaining data in qualitative research studies as an interview process that begins with a specific theme and set of questions but allows enough flexibility in the process to vary the order of questions as well as follow up with additional probing questions for further clarification of the topic discussed or understanding of the phenomenon experienced by the interviewee (Chenail, 2011; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Rabionet, 2011). Additionally, archival documents are a viable secondary source of data collection in qualitative research studies because private documents or public records act as documented proof of day-to-day practices or real-world activities (Ali & Yusof, 2011; Amerson, 2011; Yin, 2018). The primary sources of reliability and validity in this study are the follow-up interviews and member checking strategies to ensure that recorded answers accurately reflect the interviewee's responses (Ali & Yusof, 2011; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Rabionet, 2012). Please refer to the Appendix for the DBA Interview Protocol used in this study.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. In qualitative data collection, researchers seek to extract breadth and depth of phenomenological understanding as well as to conduct quality research by prioritizing data collection techniques, which enable researchers to go beyond mere descriptions of a phenomenon but instead realize phenomenological nuances and complexities based on participants' activities and insights (Anyan, 2013). Quality data collection is important because the quality of collected data in business research directly affects evidence for policy and practice (Gibbs et al., 2007). Qualitative data collection techniques to produce quality research could include one or more of the four major data collection techniques, such as (a) interviews, (b) observations, (c) focus groups, or (d) archival documents (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010).

I chose semistructured interviews and archival documentation to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. Please refer to the Appendix for the DBA Interview Protocol used in this study. I began my data collection process by reviewing the organization's website to acquire general information about the organization's purpose and familiarize myself with the organization's mission once all IRB and federal guidelines were in place, including consent forms. I began scheduling telephonic interviews with the client leader (executive director). I also sent an e-mail message 2 days before each telephonic interview as a courtesy reminder of our upcoming conversation. I later conducted interviews with two

board members via e-mail messages. I used my research question as well as questions from the Baldrige Excellence Framework and criteria during each interview to obtain real-world experiences from nonprofit leaders on strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. Semistructured interviews are advantageous primary sources for obtaining data in qualitative research studies because the researcher can understand and interpret the fullness and richness of a phenomenon as a lived experience of the interviewee using initial and follow-up questions in real-time (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Chenail, 2011; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Jong & Jung, 2015; Rabionet, 2011). The disadvantage of using semistructured interviews is that the interviewees' responses are subject to the inherent researcher bias or misinterpretation of interviewees' responses (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018).

I also reviewed archival documents such as (a) organizational bylaws, (b) budgets, and (c) financial reports as additional sources of data collection to gain insight into the organization's (a) governance, (b) strategies, and (c) operational functions. The review of archival documents also was useful for understanding the interviewees' explanations from a different perspective as well as achieving data saturation and methodological triangulation. Archival documents are advantageous secondary sources of data collection in qualitative research studies because private documents and public records act as documented proof of day-to-day practices and real-world activities (Ali & Yusof, 2011; Amerson, 2011; Yin, 2018). The disadvantage of using archival documents is that the documents' original purpose was not for research data (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). The researcher must consider the quality and

accuracy of the archival data, which could become a threat to the study's reliability and validity (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). To ensure reliability and validity of the client organization's archival data, I used 3 consecutive years of archival data as data points. Each yearly document such as annual budget documentation had a reference to the previous year's ending balance. The consistent carry-over of documentation increased the reliability and validity of archival data because the client organization has an independent third-party accounting firm to audit their records each year. The combination of consistent carry-over of documentation and an independent third-party audit each year increased the (a) trustworthiness, (b) reliability, and (c) validity of archival data.

I also used member checking and methodological triangulation to enhance the study's reliability and validity and to minimize researcher bias as well as error in the interpretation of the nonprofit leader's responses. The use of member checking minimizes subjectivity and researcher bias as well as optimize the validity of the research study and findings (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Methodological triangulation is useful for researchers to obtain data from various sources using various methods to check for (a) thoroughness, (b) accuracy, and (c) credibility of collected data, in turn strengthening the case study's findings and conclusions drawn (Moon, 2019; Walsh, 2013; Yin, 2018). I used a combination of (a) procedural and interview protocols, (b) methodological triangulation, and (c) member checking to establish and demonstrate (a) quality, (b) rigor, and (c) trustworthiness in my qualitative case study research

(Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Yildirim, 2010).

### **Data Organization Techniques**

The overarching goal when considering data organization techniques is ensuring ethical research practices including protection of privacy and confidentiality of participants (Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). My strategy for data organization techniques was three-fold. The first decision was to store all data, including (a) written notes, (b) digital voice recordings, and (c) e-mail messages in a secure manner in accordance with IRB guidelines (Walden University, 2019). Secure storage of data includes electronic files stored in a secured cloud-based storage as well as (a) printed files, (b) digital voice recordings, and (c) universal serial bus (USB) flash drives stored in a locked file cabinet with access only by me. The second decision to manage data organization techniques was to retain the secured files for 5 years and then destroy printed files using a paper shredder as well as digital voice recordings and USB flash drives by burning them in a fire pit. The third decision to manage electronic files stored was to retain the secured files for 5 years and then manually delete each file using the (a) delete, (b) delete forever, and (c) empty trash options.

### **Data Analysis**

There are four types of triangulation including (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation. I chose methodological triangulation as the data analysis process for this case study. Methodological triangulation is useful for researchers to obtain data from various sources

using various methods to check for (a) thoroughness, (b) accuracy, and (c) credibility of collected data, in turn strengthening the case study's findings and conclusions drawn (Moon, 2019; Walsh, 2013; Yin, 2018).

For the data analysis process, I began by conducting a series of weekly interviews with the client leader of the participating organization, in which I used voice recordings and manual note taking to collect data. Next, I collected organizational documents and archival data for reviews such as (a) fiscal budgets, (b) organizational bylaws, and (c) other supporting organizational information. I used (a) interviews, (b) documents, and (c) archival data to employ different methods for data collection to encompass an enhanced holistic view of the phenomenon in comparison to using any one of the previously mentioned methods in isolation (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009; Moon, 2019; Yin, 2013). Once I collected the various (a) interviews, (b) documents, and (c) archival data, I used the manual data analysis method to analyze and evaluate the collected data as well as identify themes because I am primarily a visual learner. I used a large wall in my home office to hang separate pieces of colored paper with different (a) ideas, (b) concepts, and (c) notes extracted from the (a) interviews, (b) documents, and (c) archival data collected. Additionally, I used the opposite wall to hang a large blank sheet of white paper on the wall of my home office to (a) list, (b) organize, and (c) group emerging (a) themes, (b) patterns, and (c) reoccurrences from the data collected. The use of (a) concept mapping, (b) tree graphs, and (c) member checking minimizes subjectivity and researcher bias as well as optimize the validity of the research study and findings (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009;

Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). In the next paragraph, I discuss how I evaluated and analyzed the mapped codes and themes.

I focused on and correlated key themes with current literature including the conceptual framework in my study using a 6-step process: (a) reread and study the data, (b) produce initial set of codes, (c) look for themes, (d) examine themes, (e) explain themes, and (f) write analysis connecting key themes in data to key themes in the conceptual framework (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The thematic analysis goes beyond summarizing collected data such as study interviews but instead seeks to (a) interpret, (b) understand, and (c) explain the underlying themes through deep critical thinking and analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). One can employ four additional strategies to analyze collected data including “[a] pattern matching, [b] explanation building, [c] time-series analysis, [d] logic models, and [e] cross-case synthesis” (Yin, 2018, pg. 132). Rigorous research that adds to the body of knowledge requires attention to thematic analysis, which in turn substantiates and validates the chosen research process (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Yin, 2018).

### **Reliability and Validity**

Researchers can employ reliability and validity in quantitative research, which has positivist assumptions (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Qualitative research has interpretivism assumptions (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Due to the lack of measurable statistical data, qualitative research does not have reliability and validity characteristics (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Alternative criteria for qualitative

research are necessary to ensure that research quality is reliable and valid (Anney, 2014; Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen, & Kyngas, 2014; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability are important elements of qualitative research. Dependability replaces reliability, credibility replaces internal validity, transferability replaces external validity, and confirmability is an overall demonstration of a study's authenticity and trustworthiness, thereby creating a distinct language to indicate the quality of qualitative research.

### **Reliability**

Reliability and validity are the cornerstones of producing quality research. Reliability pertains to the methodological consistency of the research, which lays a reliable foundation for other researchers to follow and duplicate with consistent results (Ali & Yusof, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Internal reliability pertains to the rigorous research process that ensures the researcher avoids errors and bias, whether on the part of the researcher or the research participants (Azham & Hamidah, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Additionally, external reliability is adhering to strict research protocols for data collection and analysis to ensure the integrity of procedures (Azham & Hamidah, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Dependability replaces reliability in qualitative research because qualitative research has interpretivist assumptions and immeasurable rich data, whereas quantitative research has positivist assumptions and measurable statistical data.

To ensure the dependability of my findings, I followed strict procedural and interview protocols (Appendix) to ensure research integrity and increase external

reliability. I adhered to (a) The Belmont Report's guiding principles, (b) IRB compliance requirements, (c) the DBA Consulting Capstone Manual guidelines and protocols, as well as (d) my interview protocols (Office for Human Research Protections, 1979; Walden University, 2018; Walden University, 2019). I reached data saturation by asking the participants various follow-up questions during interviews of the 40-week DBA Consulting Capstone project until I received no new information. I also employed methodological triangulation and member checking to avoid bias and errors and to ensure internal reliability. Additionally, I developed a separate case study database, including all my original documentation from the study, such as handwritten notes and e-mail messages.

### **Validity**

Validity pertains to the integrity of the research measurements, in which the researcher demonstrates (a) accurate statistical measurements, (b) analytical relationships, as well as (c) results and conclusions based on factual, logical data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Noble & Smith, 2015; Steckler & McLeroy, 2008). Internal validity involves the researcher evincing correct causal relationships in the research analysis (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Noble & Smith, 2015; Steckler & McLeroy, 2008). Additionally, external validity concerns the generalizability of the findings to other groups and settings (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Noble & Smith, 2015; Steckler & McLeroy, 2008). Credibility, transferability, and confirmability replaces validity in qualitative research because qualitative research has interpretivist assumptions and immeasurable data, whereas quantitative research has positivist assumptions and

measurable data. Credibility replaces internal validity, transferability replaces external validity, and confirmability replaces objectivity in which the researcher demonstrates an overall authenticity and trustworthiness of the study.

To ensure the credibility, confirmability, and transferability of my findings, I followed strict procedural and interview protocols (Appendix) to increase internal validity. I employed probing follow-up questions during various interviews over the course of the 40-week DBA Consulting Capstone project as well as data triangulation to confirm participant responses, thereby increasing the study's authenticity and trustworthiness. I used participant member checking to ensure the interpretation of data was accurate. The responsibility of transferability does not lie with the originator of the study, but with future researchers (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, & Blackman, 2016). The researcher of the original study does have the responsibility of providing substantial and precise details of their research (a) design, (b) method, and (c) analysis to ensure that other researchers can determine transferability of the study's findings to their research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Moon et al., 2016). I ensured that other researchers could determine transferability of my findings by disclosing thorough details of my research process throughout this study. I used strict (a) procedural and interview protocols, (b) methodological triangulation, (c) data saturation techniques, (d) participant member checking, (e) doctoral committee chair and committee's feedback, and (f) reflexivity to establish and demonstrate (a) quality, (b) rigor, and (c) trustworthiness in my qualitative case study research.

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 2, I reviewed (a) the purpose statement and discussed the role of the researcher, (b) participants, (c) research method and design, (d) population and sampling, as well as (e) the importance of ethical research. I also presented my arguments for selection of (a) data collection instruments, (b) data collection technique, (c) data organization techniques, and (d) data analysis in addition to (e) reliability and validity. In Section 3, I focus on key factors specifically related to the organization's profile and response to questions in the Baldrige Excellence Framework and criteria.

### Section 3: Organizational Profile

In Section 2, I reviewed (a) the purpose statement and discussed the role of the researcher, (b) participants, (c) research method and design, (d) population and sampling, as well as (e) the importance of ethical research. I also presented my arguments for selection of (a) data collection instruments, (b) data collection technique, (c) data organization techniques, and (d) data analysis in addition to (e) reliability and validity. In Section 3, I focus on key factors specifically related to the Baldrige Framework and the organization's profile.

#### **Key Factors Worksheet**

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. I used the TBL concept and the Baldrige Excellence Framework Program (2019) as the conceptual framework and tool, respectively, to assess the nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

The Baldrige Excellence Framework Program (2019) is a tool that has a holistic, systems-based evaluation of the strengths and opportunities for improvement evident in the processes and performance outcomes of the client organization. The Baldrige Excellence Framework (2019) comprises seven interconnected processes and categories of (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) customers, (d) measurements, (e) workforce, (f) operations, and (g) results for assessment of an organization by researchers and organizational leaders. The Baldrige Excellence Framework (2019) also has a set of core values and concepts that are foundational for high performance in organizations (Baldrige

Excellence Framework, 2019). The foundational values and concepts include (a) visionary leadership, (b) systems perspective, (c) customer-focused excellence, (d) valuing people, (e) organizational learning and agility, (f) focus on success, (g) managing for innovation, (h) management by fact, (i) societal contributions, (j) ethics and transparency, and (k) delivering value and results (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

### **Organizational Description and Key Characteristics**

The organizational profile is an overview of the organization's (a) environment, (b) cultural climate, and (c) strategic priorities (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Researchers use the key characteristics outlined in the organizational profile to set the context for understanding the client organization and how it operates in the organization's competitive environment. Researchers use the organizational profile to assist in identifying gaps in (a) key information, (b) performance requirements, and (c) results. The organizational profile was instrumental to me, as the researcher, to assess and understand the idiosyncratic aspects of the client organization and criteria performance requirements and to guide follow-up questions and evidence gathering. The following sections and subsections reflect an overview of key characteristics of strategic importance to the client organization.

### **Organizational Environment**

The client organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The client organization advocates for the benefit of abused and neglected children. The nonprofit organization was incorporated in the 1990s

in response to legislation passed by the state assembly supporting the larger, state-funded program in which the organization operates.

### **Vision, Mission, and Values**

The reason for the (a) mission, (b) vision, and (c) values section is to identify what motivates and directs the organization's leadership in setting the organization's core values (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client organization's mission, according to the client leader, the client organization's website, and Guidestar (2020), is to provide "trained volunteers to abused and neglected children, who advocate in court to ensure each child a safe and permanent home." The client organization does not currently have a formal vision or fundamental values statement.

### **Product and Service Offerings**

The product and service offerings are the direct or indirect goods and services an organization must sell in the local or global marketplace (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Nonprofit and governmental leaders could refer to their product and service offerings as (a) projects, (b) initiatives, (c) programs, or (d) services offered in the local or global marketplace (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client organization's main product and service offering is advocacy services for abused and neglected children in the organization's county. The client leader and other organizational members work with the county's court system and department of social services (DSS) as liaisons in and out of court for the children's well-being. The client organization is the voice for the abused and neglected children assigned to the organization.

## Processes

Processes are the methods and activities that an organizational leader uses to achieve the organization's work and performance goals (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client leader and staff serve children from birth to 21 years of age that the county's DSS or court authorities identify as abused and neglected. Many of the child abuse and neglect cases involve drugs due to the financial access to purchase drugs. The client leader noted during an interview that "Affluence does not mean people have good parenting skills." The client leader also clarified that "DSS services are not preventive to abuse and neglect," but they investigate potential abuse and neglect situations that are brought to their attention. The process for a child entering (a) protective services, (b) foster care, and (c) advocacy is, as follows:

1. Child–family dynamic: A DSS authority identifies the child as abused or neglected in their home setting.
2. Department of social services: A DSS social worker removes the child from the home.
3. County court system: The county court has an emergency court hearing the next day. The judge grants DSS guardianship of the child for 30 days, during which time the court's judge charges DSS with placing the child in a foster home with the "least restrictive placement possible." The court's judge also requires DSS to meet with the child monthly to assess the child's well-being. The judge orders the advocacy client organization during the same court

hearing to work with the child as their advocate. The advocacy client organization receives a profile on the child's case at the court hearing.

4. Foster care: A DSS official places the child in foster care, which might be an individual home or a group home depending on the child's needs. The goal of DSS is to select the least restrictive foster home placement available for the child, ranging from (a) another family member's home, (b) a trained foster parent home, or (c) a group home. DSS is also responsible for finding the child a safe, permanent home.
5. Child advocacy organization: The client organizational staff functions as the child's advocate and a trained advocacy volunteer works with the child on a one-on-one, weekly basis. The child receives an advocacy volunteer within 2 weeks of the child's case referral to the advocacy client organization.
6. Therapy: The nonprofit's executive director encourages therapy for the child to process the abuse or neglect and the trauma of being removed from their home. "Therapy is not always possible," the client leader noted. The client leader also gave the following reasons as challenges for the child receiving therapy. The main reason is that the government has insurance for the child, and many counselors do not accept the state medical insurance known as Medicare. Most counselors who accept Medicare are at health maintenance organizations or larger group practices. The counselors at health maintenance organizations or larger group practices usually do not remain there for long for various reasons. The children, especially teenagers, become tired of having to

start from the beginning with a new counselor (a) building trust, (b) knowing they are in a safe space to process their story, (c) retelling their story to a new person, and (d) reliving the abuse or neglect.

The client leader explained that many of the children, especially the teenagers, give up on counseling because they feel that the counselor is just another person who has let them down, or they feel unimportant. The staff and volunteers of the advocacy nonprofit organization strive diligently to let them know that “their voices are heard, and they are important.”

7. Life skills: The client organization has partnership with DSS to teach children, ages 14 to 21 years old, who are in their care life skills to prepare them for a successful independent living after leaving foster care. The client leader noted, “We co-facilitate with DSS—and specifically with the independent living coordinator. This is a partnership.” Some of the life skills courses include (a) banking, (b) grocery shopping, (c) physical health, (d) mental health, (e) education, (f) stress and anger management, (g) emotional intelligence and coping skills, (h) decision making, (i) confidence and assertiveness, (j) goal setting, (k) preparing for college, and (l) job search and employment skills such as professionalism and office etiquette. The client organization and DSS representatives cofacilitate these courses monthly for 2 hours at a community center location. The course sessions regularly include speakers related to the subject matter to optimize learning and relevancy.

8. Additional notes and summary of agency responsibility:

- DSS has charge of the child's day-to-day care and welfare, as well as meets with the child at least once a month. DSS is responsible for finding the child a safe, permanent home.
- The client organization has charge of weekly visits to ensure the child has a voice and advocates on the child's behalf in and out of court.
- The court has responsibility of reviewing the child's case every 6 months.

Figure 1 is an illustration of the step-by-step process for a child entering protective services, foster care, and advocacy.



*Figure 1.* Process for a child entering protective services, foster care, and advocacy.

## Workforce

The workforce represents all individuals deliberately engaged in achieving an organization's work, including full-time and part-time personnel who are (a) permanent, (b) temporary, (c) paid, or unpaid volunteers, as well as (d) all contractual employees directly supervised by an organizational employee (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The workforce category also encompasses all levels of an organization's echelons, including the (a) executive board, (b) senior leadership, (c) managers, (d) supervisors, (e) team leaders, (f) front line staff, and (g) volunteers (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client organization's workforce consists of both paid employees and unpaid volunteers. There are 12 members of the board of directors (BoD),

who are unpaid, part-time volunteers. Each BoD member serves a 3-year term, which is renewable. A review of the client organization's job description for board members does not indicate any specific (a) educational level, (b) certifications, or (c) experience requirements. The nonprofit organization has one executive director who is a full-time paid employee. The client organization's job description for the executive director has an educational requirement of (a) a master's degree in public administration, business, social work, psychology, or a related field; (b) an experience requirement of 3 years or more in administration of volunteers, nonprofit, human social services, or public service agency; and (c) a certification requirement of licensed social worker—clinical (LCSW-C). There are three other paid personnel including an office manager who is responsible for managing the office and data entry and two volunteer supervisors who are responsible for supervising the volunteer advocates. The client organization's job description for volunteer supervisors has an educational requirement of (a) a bachelor's degree in social work, psychology, criminal justice, or a related field; (b) an experience requirement of 2 years minimum recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers and working with foster youth and the child welfare system and advocating for victims in the criminal justice system; and (c) a certification requirement of certification as a CASA volunteer and domestic violence and sexual assault counselor (or will complete training as soon as possible).

There are also 75 advocates for children, who are unpaid, part-time volunteers who interact directly with the children on a weekly basis. A review of the client

organization's job description for advocate volunteers does not indicate any specific (a) educational level, (b) certifications, or (c) experience requirements.

### **Assets**

Assets are an organization's facilities, equipment, innovations, technologies, knowledge, data, and intellectual property (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The nonprofit leader did not indicate during the interview process that the nonprofit organization has any significant assets.

### **Regulatory Requirements**

Regulatory requirements entail all (a) legal, (b) ethical, and (c) moral responsibilities required by the organization to operate depending on the organizational designation (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Regulatory requirements refer to (a) mandatory registration requirements, (b) accreditations, (c) certifications, (d) occupational health and safety regulations, (e) industry standards, as well as (f) environmental, (g) product, and (h) financial regulations (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client organization operates under various regulatory requirements, as follows:

- Federal: The nonprofit leader ensures that the organization adheres to all federal laws, including, but not limited to, (a) Equal Employment Opportunity, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability, (b) Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, and (c) Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

- State: The state assembly passed legislation supporting the program in which the nonprofit organization operates, which is the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).
- Parent organization: The advocacy nonprofit is a member of its national- and state-level associations.
- Accreditations: The nonprofit leader did not indicate during the interview process any significant accreditations needed to operate beyond the legislation passed by the state assembly.
- Certifications: The nonprofit leader did not indicate during the interview process any significant certifications needed to operate beyond the legislation passed by the state assembly. The staff certification requirements are 40 CEUs every 2 years for the executive director and the volunteer supervisors.

The client organization has additional regulatory requirements and a strategic goal to ensure a thorough vetting process of all advocacy volunteers through background checks from the FBI, the state, and the DSS Child Protection Services Registry in addition to three personal references and a personal interview.

### **Organizational Relationships**

#### **Organizational Leadership Structure**

The governance structure of (a) for-profit, (b) nonprofit, and (c) government organizations might take the form of (a) an advisory board, (b) regional and local leaders, or (c) a family council who convene to provide oversight and guidance (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Some nonprofit and government organizations

might have additional governance and reporting relationships that include major funders, such as (a) legislatures, (b) granting agencies, or (c) foundations (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client organization has an organizational leadership structure, which includes a (a) governance board, (b) senior leader, and (c) a parent association organization. The governance board (known as the BoD) consists of 12 board members, who each serve a 3-year term, which is renewable. Board members must live or work in the county, in which the advocacy nonprofit operates and advocates. The nonprofit organization's governance board consists of diverse volunteers from various professions including an (a) attorney, (b) social worker, (c) physician, (d) financial planner, and (e) other volunteers. The governance board also spans various generations.

The governance board is responsible for making all major decisions regarding the organization, such as budget approvals as well as hiring decisions specifically related to the executive director position. The governance board ensures a succession plan and contingency plan are in place for key leadership positions, such as the executive director position. The senior leader is a full-time executive director, who is responsible for leadership of the organization's day-to-day operations and all hiring decisions. The senior leader reports directly to the BoD. The nonprofit organization's management is a part-time office manager, who is responsible for office management and administrative duties, including all data entry of the organization. The office manager reports directly to the executive director. The organization's management also consists of two part-time volunteer supervisors, who are responsible for the supervision of the volunteer advocates. The supervisors report directly to the executive director. Another part of the

organizational leadership structure is that the organization is a member of the national- and state-level associations, which are responsible for setting the industry's codes of conduct as well as providing (a) best practices, (b) continuing education, (c) industry trends and news, and (d) conferences. The client leader noted that "networking opportunities are jurisdiction specific" because of the confidential nature of the work.

### **Senior Leader**

An organization's senior leadership guides and sustains the organization (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). A thorough understanding of the senior leader's (a) vision, (b) values, (c) leadership style, (d) education, and (e) experience is important to gain insights of how the leader leads the organization. The nonprofit organization's senior leadership is the executive director. The executive director earned a master's in social work from a preeminent public research university and completed internship fieldwork in a teenage ward outpatient clinic at a hospital. The executive director subsequently worked at a pregnancy clinic for illegal immigrants, performing social work duties as well as working as a translator. The executive director thereafter worked as a social worker at a group home for girls in foster care, who were either pregnant, parenting, or nonparenting. The executive director later worked as a clinical coordinator at a residential treatment center, which was a locked unit and considered the most restrictive placement of foster care. There were 35 boys and girls at the residential treatment center, most of whom had (a) behavioral, (b) mental, or (c) emotional needs. The executive director noted that the work was very demanding with an average workweek of 70 hours. The executive director had a young family including two small

children at home. The executive director experienced burn out as a result of (a) the intensity of the work, (b) a lack of supervisory support, and (c) the long 70-hour work weeks in addition to (d) having two young children at home. The executive director decided to step back and reassess work-life balance as well as regain work-life harmony. In the meantime, the executive director reviewed volunteering at the advocacy nonprofit organization and discovered an opening for a supervisory position. The former executive director, who retired in 2016, hired and trained the current executive director for the supervisory position. The current executive director later applied and then interviewed with the BoD for the senior leadership position when the former executive director decided to retire.

The client leader has 12 years' experience as a social work supervisor at the advocacy nonprofit organization in the field and 4 years' experience in the current executive director position. Of particular interest, the executive director has a passion for children and particularly teenagers. The executive director explained their leadership style as “[a] informal, [b] very relaxed, and [c] team-oriented, but holds the team accountable for work and responsibilities.” The client leader indicated a use of varying approaches when leading based on individual situational needs. The executive director's leadership style is classifiable within the situational leadership style as Style 3 (S3) a *supporting* approach, when the leader's behavior reflects a *high-supportive and low directive* style (Northouse, 2016). A full list of the various situational leadership styles are, as follows (Northouse, 2016):

- Directing (S1) – High directive and low supportive behavior *with employee's development as* Low competence and high commitment
- Coaching (S2) – High directive and high supportive behavior *with employee's development as* Low/some competence and low commitment
- Supporting (S3) – High supportive and low directive behavior *with employee's development as* Moderate/high competence and variable commitment
- Delegating (S4) – Low supportive and low directive behavior *with employee's development as* High competence and high commitment

A list of the most commonly known leadership styles includes (a) autocratic, (b) bureaucratic, (c) democratic, (d) authoritarian, (e) coercive, (f) transactional, (g) laissez-faire, (h) transformational, (i) servant leader, (j) authentic, (k) adaptive, and (l) situational (Northouse, 2016). A detailed explanation of each leadership style is beyond the scope of this study. There are many leadership style assessments to identify and evaluate one's natural and learned leadership styles. A simple Internet search yields a plethora of companies offering assessments; some backed by empirical research while others are not. The senior leader has not taken a formal leadership assessment to gain detailed insights about their leadership style and profile.

### **Volunteers**

The nonprofit's advocate volunteers are from a wide variety of backgrounds including (a) homemakers, (b) business executives, (c) students, (d) teachers, (e) attorneys, and (f) retirees. The volunteers must be 21 years of age with a willingness to

serve consistently with energy and compassion the children in need. The volunteers go through a three-stage vetting application process, as follows:

- Stage 1 – Background checks from the FBI, the state, and the DSS Child Protection Services Registry
- Stage 2 – One-on-One Interview
- Stage 3 – Extensive 30-hour Preservice Training

### **Customers and Stakeholders**

Nonprofit organizations have several customers and key stakeholders to which the organization is responsible for meeting and exceeding their key requirements and expectations with an organization's services (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client organization does not have any products, only services. The primary customers are the abused and neglected children for whom the nonprofit staff serves as an advocate. The parents and families are not customers of the advocacy nonprofit, only the abused or neglected children. The key stakeholders include the (a) county court system, (b) county DSS, (c) grant providers, and (d) the community at large, as well as (e) the affiliated national-association organizations and members. The key requirements and expectations of the county court system and county DSS are that the advocacy organization has advocacy services for the children with the highest standards of (a) confidentiality, (b) conduct, (c) efficiency, (d) professionalism, (e) safety, and (f) compassion when working with and on behalf of each child while also fulfilling all federal and state laws governing the industry. The grant providers' key requirements and

expectations are an appropriate and efficient use of granted funds as well as administrative cost reductions.

### **Suppliers and Partners**

Organizational suppliers and partners, in addition to customers and stakeholders, have the potential to affect an organization's risk-level of (a) product-service, (b) support, and (c) supply-chain interruptions, due to (a) expectations and requirements, (b) regulatory changes, (c) political upheavals, (d) new product-service offerings, (e) environmental emergencies, or (f) other unforeseen disruptions (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client organization has several suppliers and community partners that are influential to the nonprofit's operational success. The primary suppliers are the (a) AOC, (b) county GIA/CSP, and (c) Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA) that have government financial funding to support the nonprofit's work for assisting abused and neglected children as well as other community outreach services in response to issues such as (a) sex trafficking, (b) substance abuse, and (c) mental illness. Other suppliers are (a) community organizations, (b) government agency employees, (c) private businesses, and (d) foundations that have financial support to sustain the nonprofit's work, such as (a) the United Way, (b) CFC/LIC, and (c) various community foundations. The county court system and county DSS, as mentioned previously, are the two main stakeholders. Other community partners include the (a) department of juvenile services [DJS], (b) a children's advocacy board, (c) courts, and (d) various community organizations including places of worship. Those agencies also work in partnership with the advocacy organization for the abused and neglected children in the organization's county. Other

partners are businesses of the community that support the nonprofit's mission of advocating for the abused and neglected children. Please refer to the events section for further detail on how business leaders and community members support the nonprofit organization.

### **Key Performance Indicators**

Organizational leaders can use KPIs and other measurements to ascertain performance measurements effectively. Organizational leaders use KPIs as determinants for how the organization (a) selects, (b) gathers, (c) analyzes, and (d) manages data to improve performance based on specific (a) internal data, (b) information, and (c) knowledge assets (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). KPIs are also useful for leaders to (a) track organizational progress, (b) adjust action plans, and (c) achieve strategic objectives (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The nonprofit organization employs the following KPIs to measure and assess the client organization's product-service and performance outcomes:

- Number of children served
- Number of volunteers
- Number of court reports
- How many volunteer hours
- How many months a child is in foster care
- What services the nonprofit advocates recommend to the court
- How many recommendations the court actual orders

There are various additional benchmarks that the client leader uses to determine success levels for KPIs including the county benchmarks and the AOC benchmarks. The county benchmarks are the submission of court reports and the number of recommendations ordered by the court. AOC also has standards and goals, which serve as benchmarks.

### **Technology and Communication**

Information technology includes any hardware systems, software platforms, software applications, or external information systems that enable the organization to (a) carry out processes, (b) communication, or (c) store data (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client organization's staff communicates with various stakeholders in the following ways:

- Employees – use e-mail only; no social media due to *confidentiality guidelines*
- Volunteers – use e-mail only; no social media due to *confidentiality guidelines*  
use website log in; access certain information via a secure intranet
- Donors – receive targeted e-mails and postcards, on an as-needed basis
- General Public – access to organization's website; social media; blog for promotion of upcoming events or sharing relevant stories

### **Fundraising Events**

The nonprofit has two major fundraisers each year in addition to applying for various grants to support the work of advocating for abused and neglected children. The first event is the organization's oldest and most popular annual event, which the nonprofit has hosted for the past 26-27 years (1993-2020). The first event is a higher-end event

held in the spring, which features (a) wine tasting and food, (b) a silent auction, as well as (c) jazz music hosted at a historic house. One note of interest is that one of the board members is a musician, who arranges for the jazz trio to perform at the event. The board member also plays with the jazz trio on some years. The client organizational staff sold 200 tickets for the 2018 event. The nonprofit has two tiers of tickets, as such: (a) \$100 a month before the event, and (b) \$125 less than a month before the event.

The second event is the organization's newest annual event, which the nonprofit initially hosted in the fall of 2017. The second event is a family-focused festival, which features (a) food trucks, (b) animal petting and feeding activities, (c) face painting, (d) hayrides, and (e) a soccer clinic hosted at an animal sanctuary. The client organizational staff sold 100 tickets for first year's event. The nonprofit sells two tiers of tickets, as such: (a) \$10 per individuals, and (b) \$2 per family.

There is a third fundraising event, in which a local business owner hosts a summer movie night on Saturdays during the summer. The local business owner hosts the event in the parking lot of the local business and offers popcorn in exchange for a donation to the nonprofit organization. The client organization's staff and advocate volunteers help with popping and bagging popcorn and collecting donations. The summer movie night is a public relations opportunity to connect with the community and answer questions about the nonprofit's advocacy work.

### **Financial Structure**

For-profits' aggregate measures of financial viability might include (a) liquidity, (b) debt-to-equity ratio, (c) days cash on hand, (d) asset utilization, and (e) cash flow

(Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Nonprofit and government organizations' budgetary performance metrics might include (a) reserve funds credits or debits, (b) cost savings or avoidance, or (c) contingencies for budget reductions (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Other metrics for nonprofit and government organizations' might also include cost decreases for customers or return of funds resulting from (a) increased efficiency, (b) administrative expenses as budget percentages, and (c) fundraising cost as a proportion of funds raised (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The financial snapshot of the client organization was based on the organization's board-approved budget for the fiscal year 2018. The client organization's total income was \$210,632.00 while total expenses were \$208,886.00, which means the organization's net ordinary income totaled \$1,746.00. Please refer to Table 7 in the Results category for an itemization and analysis of the client organization's 3-year budgetary performance.

### **Income**

The itemization of income is, as follows:

- Contributions - \$2,500 (1%)
- Corporate Income - \$4,000 (2%)
- Funds Raised - \$56,500 (27%)
- Government Aid - \$109,132 (52%)
- Other Income - \$5,500 (2%)
- Private Grants - \$33,000 (16%)

## Expenses

The itemization of expenses is, as follows:

- Accounting Services - \$5,000 (2%)
- Association Dues - \$1,000 (1%)
- Fundraising Event - \$11,000 (5%)
- Insurance - \$4,000 (2%)
- Office Supplies - \$1,500 (1%)
- Program Service Expenses - \$1,000 (1%)
- Background checks
- Rent - \$12,999 (6%)
- Salaries & Related Expenses - \$169,787 (81%)
- Telephone - \$2,600 (1%)

## Organizational Situation

**Competitive environment.** The purpose of the organizational situation was an exploration of the competitive environment in which the organization operates, including the key strategic advantages and challenges of the organization (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Another aim was to understand how the client leader addresses performance improvement and organizational learning (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The intention was also to highlight the client organization's (a) key challenges, (b) risks, as well as (c) organizational systems for establishing and preserving the organization's competitive advantage (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019).

***Competitive position.*** Organizational leaders must know (a) who their rivals are; (b) the total number; and (c) understand their main attributes, strengths, and weaknesses to assess their organization's industry and marketplace advantages (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Industry leaders possess an in-depth knowledge of their competitors and competitive environment, including leading trends and emerging environmental shifts occurring (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Nonprofit organizations also must compete with various organizations and providers with comparable programs and services to acquire (a) funding, (b) volunteers, (c) members, (d) exposure in media coverage, and (e) the support from local communities (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019).

The client leader stated that the client organization does not have any direct competitors because of the state assembly legislation passed in the 1990s, supporting the organization's designated program and services in relation to the AOC. The confidential and designated nature of the client organization's services eliminates any direct competitors. A review of a search with the keywords indicative of the organization's mission category, also known as Cause Area (NTEE Code) by the IRS, yields search results of many similar organizations. There was a total of 80 similar nonprofit organizations in the mid-Atlantic region (GuideStar, 2020). None of the other nonprofit organizations are in the same county or court jurisdiction as the client organization, so competition is low to nonexistent on a local level. Critics could argue that although the client organization does not have any direct jurisdictional competitors, the client

organization might still vie for (a) philanthropic support, (b) media exposure, or (c) other resources on a regional basis due to the similarities of the other nonprofit organizations.

***Competitiveness changes.*** Senior leaders must not only know who their competitors are but also what critical competitive changes influence their competitive position (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Competitive changes might create disruptions and threats, but those changes also are opportunities for organizational leaders to collaborate and innovate (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The barriers to entry are high for the client organization's nonprofit industry and highly regulated by federal and state laws, so the client organization had few competitive changes since the organization's establishment in the 1990s. The client leader expressed a goal of "looking for new and innovative ways to serve better the children and community," which was part of the reason why the senior leadership chose to participate in this research study and DBA Consulting Capstone program. The client leader also serves on various boards and task forces throughout the county in which interorganizational partnerships and collaboration is a primary focus to understand the various organizations' and agencies' missions and processes to create (a) improved, (b) streamlined, (c) simultaneous interactions to serve their clients, the children.

***Comparative data.*** Comparative data and facts are vital for organizational leaders to gather to inform their strategic and operational decisions (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Benchmarking is a way that organizational leaders can collect comparative data and information to evaluate their competitive position in comparison to their competitors (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019).

Organizational leaders use benchmarking, as competitive comparisons, to pinpoint processes and outcomes that are best practices and results for similar operational (a) activities, (b) products, and (c) services, within and outside of the same industry (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client organization does not have any direct jurisdictional competitors. The senior leadership uses other benchmarks established by granting requirements and the AOC to assess the organization's service quality and outcomes on a local level. The client leader uses comparative data and information from the organization's national-level and state-level associations to compare the organization's best practices and performance standards. Additionally, interorganizational partnerships and collaboration are sources of comparative data and information for the client leader for best practices and results.

**Strategic context.** Every organization has key strategic challenges and advantages. Organizational leaders might encounter strategic challenges and opportunities critical to survival and sustainability in areas such as (a) the local or global marketplace, (b) operations, (c) workforce, (d) stakeholder interactions, or (e) contributions to society (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Organizational leaders might identify those significant challenges and advantages in (a) organizational structure, (b) corporate culture, (c) finances, (d) stakeholder relations, (e) products, (f) supply chain, (g) information management and data security, (h) innovation and technology, (i) digital integration, and (j) environmental and climate matters (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). Nonprofit and governmental leaders might find

that these business issues are in direct connection with their mission or revenue-generating endeavors (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019).

The client organization has strategic challenges and advantages in staffing the organization's volunteers such as the advocates that meet with the children each week. The organizational leader's challenges are to (a) attract, (b) recruit, (c) qualify, and (d) train an adequate number of advocates to stay abreast of the increasing number of cases received from the court regularly. The advantages for the organizational leader are to leverage the dedicated staff of volunteers who live and work in the county and are valuable public relations representatives. The volunteers' daily interactions become opportunities to convey the mission and needs of the organization through formal public speaking engagements and casual conversations. Each member of the BoD of the client organization rotates the responsibility of community outreach activities every month through speaking engagements at various community and civic outlets, including places of worship. The BoD member uses the speaking opportunity to inform the public of the client organization's mission to provide a voice for abused and neglected children and encourage volunteer recruitment. The client organization also encourages their volunteer advocates during and after training to share the ongoing need of volunteer advocates because one advocate interacts only with one child. Another key advantage is the collaborative relationship that the client organization has with other county organizations. This extended network of collaborators is another opportunity for the client organization's leaders to convey the organization's need for volunteer advocates and

other resources who could then convey the client organizational needs to their extended networks.

Another strategic challenge is business continuity and identifying partners who could help the organization recover quickly from recurring floods. There were two floods within 2 years in 2016 and 2018 that disrupted the client organization's normal operation for extended periods resulting in the office staff working remotely from their homes. The COVID-19 pandemic also threatened business continuity by disrupting the client organization's normal operation in 2020, resulting in the office staff working remotely for an extended period. The client leader could foster a collaborative thinktank with (a) the city in which the nonprofit operates, (b) other local organizations, and (c) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss potential solutions to the challenges of sustainability faced by local area organizations because of recurring floods.

**Performance improvement system.** The Baldrige Excellence Framework is useful for assessing performance improvement and the maturity of an organization's execution based on the organization's learning and integration methods (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The performance improvement system includes the assessment and improvement of the organization's key processes and projects as well as any auxiliary projects (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client organization does not have a formal performance improvement system. The client leader uses the court's guidelines for processing and closing cases as a KPI of performance and opportunities for improvement.

### **Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers**

The organizational profile is a background context of the client organization (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The Leadership Triad is an emphasis on the link between senior leadership's focus and priorities related to the organization's strategy and customers (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The Leadership Triad was instrumental to me, as the researcher, to assess and understand how the senior leadership leads the client organization. A senior leader's actions steer the organization with agility in the short term and sustain the organization in the long term by using strategic planning and implementation (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). I used the Leadership Triad to understand how the client organization's senior leadership uses strategy to (a) develop, (b) implement, and (c) execute strategic targets. I also used the Leadership Triad to understand the client organization's governance system. The Leadership Triad was useful additionally in understanding how the client organization's leadership satisfies the organization's legal and ethical responsibilities as well as contributions to society.

#### **Leadership**

**Senior leadership.** The senior leadership of the client organization consists of the BoD who govern and the executive director leading the client organization. Senior leadership has the key role in (a) establishing the organization's values and course, (b) shaping and fortifying organizational culture, (c) creating and communicating equitable value to all stakeholders, and (d) designing actionable priorities for organizational performance (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit senior leaders have the additional burden of satisfying the mission and the margin.

**Vision, mission, and values.** The client leader leads the organization with a primary focus of advocating for the benefit of abused and neglected children in the county as well as placing the children in a safe, permanent home in which the children can thrive. The senior leader's affinity and compassion for children makes this a top leadership priority. The client organization has a formal mission statement but does not have a formal vision or values statement. The organization's vision and values are understood informally by the (a) BoD, (b) executive director, (c) staff, and (d) volunteers as (a) child advocacy, (b) integrity, and (c) confidentiality. The client leader employs "social work values" and a "therapeutic model" of "do no harm" as a basis of the client organization's fundamental values. The client leader based these values on the National Social Worker Association's (NSWA) code of ethics.

**Legal and ethical behavior.** Senior leaders demonstrate legal and ethical behavior through their personal actions and require the same as part of the organization's culture (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The client leader demonstrates legal behavior through their actionable commitment to confidentiality laws, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations and following all issued court orders for children in their care. The client leader models ethical behavior by (a) modeling commitment of "do no harm," (b) "not discriminating," and (c) providing "equity and equitable access opportunities" in the organization.

**Communication.** Senior leaders, in industry-leading organizations, (a) foster frank and open two-way communication with all stakeholders, (b) convey critical decisions and needed changes, as well as (c) directly motivate their workforce to peak

performance with a customer-centered business focus (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The senior leader communicates directly with the (a) BoD, (b) office manager, (c) supervisors, (d) social workers, (e) the court, and (f) other partner organizations. The supervisors communicate with social workers and volunteers on a regular basis. “There must be a lot of one-on-one communication with the Social Services and the volunteers,” according to the client leader. The social workers e-mail and phone updates and concerns to the (a) client leader, (b) office manager, and (c) supervisors to serve the children in the most efficient method possible. Also, communication and engagement of the key customers, the children, occur primarily through the weekly relationship with the volunteers to maintain (a) continuity, (b) trust, and (c) stability for the children. The client leader explained that the volunteer advocate spends 7 to 10 hours a month in direct contact with their assigned child in addition to any meetings with the child’s school or counselor on the child’s behalf.

**Mission and organizational performance.** Senior leadership fosters an environment for success in the present and future by understanding the internal and external factors that affect short- and long-term success (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Senior leaders, in industry-leading organizations, openly convey the challenges and areas for improvement that need solutions, and then build an accountable, welcoming atmosphere, as well as a transparent process conducive to facilitate strategic risk taking and innovation (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Senior leadership has a key role in (a) establishing the organization’s values and course, (b) shaping and fortifying organizational culture, (c) designing actionable priorities for the organization including

organizational learning and developing future leaders as part of succession planning, as well as (d) creating and communicating equitable value to all stakeholders (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

The client leader of the advocacy organization creates an environment for achieving the organizational mission and reinforces organizational culture by modeling (a) a relaxed, accessible environment; (b) free of micromanagement with clear expectations of individual responsibility, confidentiality, and high performance; and (c) adherence to all industry legal and ethical standards. The client leader cultivates individual and group learning to stay abreast of industry trends and best practices. The client leader, office staff, and volunteers attend conferences together including state association conferences or other local partner events whenever availability permits. The client leader seeks innovative approaches to best serve the children including participation in this DBA Consulting Capstone program to assess the organization's strengths and areas of improvement. The client leader explained that there are annual formal personnel evaluations and as-needed informal feedback although there are no formal plans for ongoing development of the paid staff or volunteer workforce. The client leader believes that (a) "providing a supportive environment;" (b) using a "high-supportive, low-directive [leadership] style;" and (c) fostering "teamwork" create an environment for success.

The client leader cultivates agility by having informal crisis and mitigation plans in place for responsibilities and response plans for the (a) BoD, (b) office staff, (c) volunteers, and (d) children for emergency situations such as natural disasters and crises

as the COVID-19 pandemic. The client organization had natural disasters in the area of the office location for 2 years including 2016 and 2018. The client leader responded to the natural disasters by having the office staff work from home. The office staff used various means of communication to maintain confidentiality including (a) e-mail messages, (b) telephonic communication, and (c) telephonic conference calls amongst the (a) office staff, (b) volunteers, and (c) partnering agencies when necessary. The client leader has all organizational documents including cases stored in a secured cloud database for remote access by authorized personnel. The board president held the monthly board meetings at their home for the 5-month duration in which the organization's office was inaccessible due to damage from the natural disaster in 2018. The client leader instituted the same work-remotely action plan during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other areas of key organizational performance for long-term sustainability include succession planning. The BoD is responsible for the succession planning and development of future senior leaders such as the client leader's position of executive director, which the organizational bylaws have details outlining the organization's succession and contingency plans.

**Focus on action.** Senior leaders' central focus, in successful organizations, is on actionable performance (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Senior leaders who develop an actionable focus achieve the organizational mission by concentrating on (a) strategic objectives, (b) customers, (c) workforce, (d) operational systems, and (e) assets (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The client leader demonstrates a focus on action to achieve the organizational mission by ensuring that (a) each child has a dedicated

volunteer advocate, (b) all related parties adhere to the court's orders, and (c) abide by all legal and ethical standards related to the organization's mission.

The client leader sets expectations for organizational performance by communicating the court's guidelines outlined in the orders regarding Permanency Planning. The client leader emphasized that permanency planning is a systematic process devised with specific goal-oriented activities and implemented during a short period in which the organizational members assist the children "live in families that offer continuity of relationships with nurturing parents or caretakers, and the opportunity to establish lifetime relationships." The permanency process is central to the mission and advocacy of the client organization. "Part of permanency planning is creating and maintaining a support system for the child that will exist for him or her long after the foster care system is gone," noted the client leader. The process of permanency planning begins as soon as the child enters foster care. The priority for placements from least restrictive to most restrictive are (a) remain in the biological home, (b) relative placement, (c) placement with family friends, (d) foster home placement, (e) group home, (f) residential treatment center (RTC), and (g) institution or hospital. A child must be placed in the least restrictive environment by law that will meet his or her needs. The client leader conveyed that avoiding (a) "micromanagement," (b) "learning and growing," and (c) "continuing to move forward but not reinventing the wheel" are important, because "either or can cause [organizational] stagnation or frustration." The client leader demonstrates personal accountability of the organization's actions and performance by reporting (a) case statuses, (b) performance updates, and (c) any other

related concerns to the BoD at the monthly BoD meeting. Figure 2 is an illustration of the order of permanency planning from least restrictive to most restrictive, as required by the state law in which the client organization operates.

PERMANENCY PLANNING Priority of Placement						
Biological Home (least restrictive)	Relative Placement	Placement with Family Friends	Foster Home Placement	Group Home Placement	Residential Treatment Center	Institution/Hospital (most restrictive)

*Figure 2.* Permanency planning: Priority of placement.

The order of permanency planning from least restrictive to most restrictive. The law requires that a child's placement is in the least restrictive setting that meets the child's needs.

**Governance and societal responsibilities.** The purpose of an organizational governance system is important to protect the interest of all stakeholders by ensuring a (a) responsible, (b) transparent, (c) informed, and (d) accountable advisory group. The governance body ensures leadership accountability and continuous improvement (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The governance system is also key to understanding how senior leadership fulfills the organizational responsibility to society

and supports key communities in which the organization operates (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

**Governance system.** The client organization's governance body is the BoD that ensures responsible governance based on the organization's bylaws and job description for board members. The organizational bylaws indicate in Article II, Section 2 that there "shall not be less than twelve and shall not be more than 20" [BoD]. There are currently 12 BoD members serving in 2020. The organizational bylaws set forth policy disclosures for board members elections and responsibilities. The organizational job description for board members has the following (a) responsibilities, (b) duties, and (c) powers for the BoD, as listed in the client organization's policy manual:

Responsibilities and Powers of the Board of Directors:

1. Establish policies for administering child advocacy services, which are consistent with the mission of the organization.
2. Assist in securing funds required for accomplishing the organization's goals. Specifically, responsibilities include selling tickets and sponsorships to our two main fundraising events.
3. Ensure that the organization and its services appropriately address community needs and are properly represented in the community.

Specific Duties:

1. Attend Board meetings. The Board meets eleven times per year.
2. Serve on at least one standing committee and any special ad hoc committees to which appointed.

3. Be a financial supporter of the agency and secure the on-going financial support from others. This includes selling tickets to events or purchasing them yourself.

The BoD reviews and achieves accountability for the client leader by requiring monthly reporting of (a) case statuses, (b) performance updates, and (c) any other organizational-related matters. The BoD also requires quarterly and annual case reports from the client leader. The BoD also has several subcommittees to address specific governance matters such as strategy and finances as well as ad hoc subcommittees. The strategic planning subcommittee of directors oversees all matters related to organizational strategy and setting the direction for the organization. The finance subcommittee of directors oversees all matters related to organizational annual and monthly budgets as well as overall fiscal accountability of the organization.

The BoD ensures transparency of the organizational operations by contracting with a third-party CPA firm to prepare the organization's IRS Form 990 (nonprofit financial disclosure-tax form) each year and conduct an annual independent audit of the organization. The BoD members use the guidelines set forth in the bylaws to (a) select, (b) elect, and (c) reelect board members including the same vetting processed used for volunteers such as (a) background checks from the FBI, the state, and the DSS Child Protection Services Registry; (b) review of résumé; (c) curriculum vitae (CV); (d) references; and (e) a one-on-one interview with the president of the BoD and the executive director resulting in recommendations to the BoD. The BoD achieves independent, effective external audits through an independent third-party CPA firm. The

BoD requires internal audits for “every single [case] file” every 6 months based on a case audit checklist in which the client leader and office staff “do corrective actions” to ensure adherence to all legal and ethical obligations. The BoD protects stakeholders’ interests by complying with all (a) confidentiality, (b) legal, and (c) code of ethics requirements. The BoD mandates that all organizational workforce members from the client leader to the workforce follow the same (a) confidentiality, (b) legal, and (c) ethical practices. The BoD requires that all organizational members uphold the highest (a) legal, (b) ethical, and (c) moral standards in their professional and personal lives. The BoD members are responsible for the succession planning of the client leader’s position of executive director only, which the organizational bylaws have details outlining the succession and contingency plans. The client leader is responsible for all other organizational staff planning and training.

**Performance evaluation.** The performance evaluation of leaders and the governance board is vital for development and continuous improvement as leaders (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Leadership assessments might include (a) cohort reviews, (b) formal performance management evaluations, as well as (c) workforce, (d) customers, and (e) other stakeholder surveys (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit and governmental organizations might have external oversight boards that conduct performance evaluations for the governance boards and senior leaders (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The client organization does not have a formal external oversight board that conducts performance evaluations. The client organization does receive feedback from various stakeholders with operational

transparency reporting that the BoD and the client leader use as performance evaluations. Formal and informal feedback from (a) the court (external), (b) DSS (external), (c) funding partners (external), and (d) other affiliations (external) have viable information that the governance board and senior leader use for informal, ongoing evaluation and improvement. The BoD uses the formal performance evaluations to determine executive and office staff compensation when enough funding is available.

**Legal compliance and ethical behavior.** Promotion and assurance of legal compliance and ethical behavior might have several different forms in the governance construct and throughout the organization (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Legal compliance indicators or measures might include (a) internal self-checks results, (b) third-party independent audits results, (c) going concern audit opinions, or (d) the number of adverse regulatory reports or compliance violations. Ethical behavior indicators or measures might include the number of (a) autonomous board members, (b) various stakeholder perceptions of organizational ethics, (c) ethical audit results, and (d) the number of misconduct cases (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

The BoD addresses stakeholders' concerns of the organization's services and operations by complying with all (a) confidentiality, (b) legal, and (c) code of ethics requirements. The BoD requires that all organizational members adhere to the same (a) confidentiality, (b) legal, and (c) ethical practices and uphold the highest (a) legal, (b) ethical, and (c) moral standards in their professional and personal lives. The governance board promotes and ensures ethical behavior in all interactions using the NASW's Code of Ethics. The BoD members and client leader use the organizational bylaws and court

orders as the primary processes for promoting and ensuring legal and ethical behavior. The client leader stated that the BoD members and client leader also maintain “good contact with community partners” for “ongoing dialogue” to gauge perceptions of the client organization’s ethical behavior. The client organizational leadership values communication with community partners and agencies, such as a regional children’s advocacy board, to gain best practices for ethics and ethical behavior. The ongoing dialogue is in addition to the internal organizational self-checks for legal and ethical conduct.

The client leadership proactively monitors the workforce’s ethical behavior by ensuring that all new staff and advocacy volunteers sign confidentiality and commitment statements with legal and ethical behavior and guidance. The client leader and supervisors review ethical behavior information regularly during weekly supervision and in-service trainings. The client leadership responds to staff breaches of ethical behavior with disciplinary action, which is a “write up in [their] personnel file, after counseling.” The client leadership responds to volunteer breaches of ethical behavior with “write up after verbal counseling; termination if needed.”

**Societal contributions.** Societal contributions by organizations entail contributions that extend beyond legal requirements and regulatory compliance (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Senior leaders, in industry-leading organizations, consider societal contributions as a necessity rather than an obligation as a responsible community citizen (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Senior leaders who incorporate societal contributions into their strategic planning create a driver for (a) customer, (b) workforce,

and (c) other stakeholder engagement that also results in market differentiation (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Organizations of all sizes and types, from the sole proprietor to the multinational corporation as well as nonprofits and governmental agencies, can find ways to contribute to the (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic well-being of society (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The extent of organizational contributions to society depend on the (a) size, (b) resources, and (c) capabilities of the individual organization (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit contributions usually have a direct link to the organization's mission-driven activities, but those activities extend beyond the normal scope of efforts including collaborating with (a) other nonprofits, (b) for-profits, or (c) governmental agencies to deliver increased efficiency and effectiveness of services to organizational customers, resulting in increased positive outcomes for the service recipients and community (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

The client organization's mission of advocating for abused and neglected children, a vulnerable population, is the paramount function of the organization that is an embedded strategy and daily operational effort. The client organization has collaborations with various community nonprofits and governmental agencies to increase streamlined processes for serving the children in their care. The client leader also explained that "95% [of the parents in the abuse and neglect cases] are struggling with substance abuse." The client leader noted that "increasing educational knowledge on the opioids climate/epidemic and ways to address it" in partnership with other agencies is how the client organization actively supports and strengthens the key communities served.

## Strategy

Senior leaders use strategy to (a) develop, (b) execute, and (c) change strategic objectives (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Developing a strategy refers to the approach organizational leaders take to plan for the organization's successful future (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). An organization's core values are foundational to aligning strategic planning and objectives with the organization's mission and vision. Nonprofit leaders have the paradox of balancing the mission and margin, which they must consider as part of strategic planning and objectives. Organizational leaders can interpret strategy broadly to encompass any aspect of the organization such as (a) product development, (b) identifying market and customer segments, (c) clarifying supply ecosystem role and responsibilities, (d) brand differentiation, (e) core competencies development, (f) revenue and growth targets, (g) mergers and acquisitions (M&A), (h) diversification, (i) divestitures, (j) new alliances, (k) talent and volunteer development, and (l) community-relationship cultivation and initiatives (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit leaders might focus on (a) donor engagement, (b) volunteer development, and (c) community-relationship cultivation to maximize their strategic planning efforts.

Many organizational leaders develop strategic planning skills, although some lack adeptness in strategic implementation and execution (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Leadership competencies for strategy implementation and execution are equally crucial for organizational success. Organizational leaders should concentrate on strategies for (a) addressing challenges, (b) enhancing advantages, and (c) seizing opportunities

(Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Unpredictable world circumstances, whether (a) social, (b) environmental, or (c) economic, can negatively affect an organization's ability to survive in the short term and thrive in the long term. Agility is a key competitive advantage in the (a) post-2008 Great Recession era, (b) COVID-19 economy, and (c) Global Social Justice movement. Swift strategic planning skills and execution capabilities are necessary for agility in response to (a) unpredictable market shifts, (b) technology disruptions, or (c) any other unexpected crises (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

Industry-leading organizations have three fundamental facets of strategic planning that lead to organizational excellence, including (a) customer-centered excellence, (b) operational-focused improvement and innovation, and (c) organizational learning (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Many nonprofit organizational leaders seek strategies to (a) increase donor contributions, (b) increase revenues, and (c) retain volunteers (Kellner et al., 2017; McDonald et al., 2015; Ramanath, 2016). Strategic planning adeptness aligned to the organization's (a) mission, (b) vision, and (c) values is the first step to achieving competitive sustainability.

**Strategy development.** The client organization's BoD has a strategic planning subcommittee that sets short- and long-term goals for the organization in accordance with the AOC's guidelines. Board member A stated that "We [a] review the Strategic Plan on a quarterly basis, [b] update as needed annually, and [c] create a new plan every other year. This is completed by a sub-committee of the BOD, and then approved by the full Board."

The client leader indicated that strategy is a key area that the senior leadership seeks to expand.

The client organization has five essential strategies to accomplish the organization's mission of advocating for abused and neglected children. The first goal is to meet the court's needs by (a) assigning advocacy volunteers to children; (b) visiting the children regularly; (c) appearing at all court hearings; (d) submitting written court reports to the court and Magistrate; and (e) attend all mediations, family-involvement, and educational meetings to advocate on behalf of the child. Board member A stated that "Goal I: Improve all aspects of the programs to better serve the needs of the children and the Court."

The second organizational strategy is to recruit and train 25 new volunteers per year through community-connections by BoD members' appearances once a month at local events and community meetings including (a) places of worship, (b) advertising in local newspapers, (c) community newsletters and bulletins, (d) social media platforms, (e) advocacy volunteer referrals, and (f) the client organization's website. Board member A explained that "We review statistics on a quarterly basis – including race, gender, age – for volunteers assigned and clients served. We also review the Strategic Plan to see if we are meeting our goals." This strategic goal also includes screening potential advocacy volunteers using an interview assessment tool to evaluate volunteers' applications and their interview tool responses.

The third organizational strategy is thorough training of advocacy volunteers, including a preservice training of 30 hours and in-service (on-going) training ranging

from (a) in-house training, (b) conferences, (c) educational courses, (d) webinars, (e) discussions, and (f) other volunteer resources. The fourth organizational strategy is to supervise and evaluate advocacy volunteers according to the guidelines and mandates set forth by the AOC.

The fifth organizational strategy is to develop and host life skills training for youth, ages 14-21, who are in the care of the client organization. The client leader and DSS representative design life skills training to prepare the children for healthy, independent living after leaving foster care and the care of the advocacy organization. The collaborators provide classes about (a) locating housing; (b) money management; (c) banking options; (d) grocery shopping; (e) writing a résumé; (f) filling out a job application; (g) interviewing skills; (h) maintaining employment; (i) filing income taxes; (j) maintaining a substance-free, healthy lifestyle; and (k) seeking treatment if needed.

**Strategy implementation.** The client organization's leadership has short- and long-term action plans that relate directly to the organization's strategic objectives. The client leader explained that "We ensure that we follow the goals outlined in each grant, which are measurable. We refer to and update the strategic plan as often as needed." The client leadership refers to the strategic plan quarterly and updates the strategic plan on an annual basis. The client leader indicated that key organizational short- and longer-term action plans include "[a] recruiting and training new volunteers; [b] diversifying our volunteer pool; [c] maintaining relationships with community partners (DSS, DJS, a children's advocacy board, courts, and other community organizations such as places of worship); and [d] developing new relationships with local providers." Board member B's

responses had a focus on strategic agility during the COVID-19 pandemic. “One key indicator is ensuring financial stability. With the current pandemic, and the need to cancel all of our in-person fundraisers over the past 8 months, we have had to shift to virtual fundraising.” Board member B discussed how the BoD and client leader manage various aspects of the organization’s operations during the COVID-19 pandemic to observe mandated health and safety guidelines. “We moved our volunteer recruitment and training to a virtual environment for the safety of the community. Board meetings are also held virtually.”

The senior leadership deploys the organizational action plans using a three-step process. The client leader (a) reviews the action plan set by the BoD’s strategic planning subcommittee; then (b) divides the action plans into “smaller, measurable steps;” and finally (c) assigns the responsibility of actionable tasks to various organizational members. Board member A noted that “The focus of the Strategic Plan is to continue and expand operations, both financially and in terms of daily operations. Due to the pandemic, there has been a need for flexibility in meeting these goals.” The BoD and client leader search for additional funding sources. The executive director (client leader) manages community relationships. The staff supervises the volunteers. The volunteers visit and maintain contact with the children weekly as well as advocate on the children’s behalf. The client organization’s leadership ensures that financial and other resources are available to support the organization’s mission and action plans while satisfying the margin. The client leader explained that “We have an incredibly tight budget, and we follow it carefully.” Board member B echoed scholars’ findings on nonprofits’ financial

stability in the highly volatile post-2008 Great Recession era and during the COVID-19 pandemic. “It is challenging to predict what the future holds in terms of public health and the ability to plan and fundraise.”

The client organization’s leadership is open to additional funding sources, whether those sources are large or small, short- or long-term. The client organization’s annual net ordinary income for 2018 totaled \$1,746.00. The client leader shared that “We are always seeking new partnerships/funding sources – even for a smaller amount.” The client leadership uses several key performance measures and KPIs to track the achievement and effectiveness of the organizational action plans. A monthly budget review is imperative for the organization’s fiscal health as well as delaying major purchases until the end of the fiscal year, if possible. Another key performance measure is a review of all grant goals and in-progress reports to funders every quarter. The client organization’s leadership aligns the performance projections for their short- and longer-term planning horizons with the current and anticipated operating budget (of income and expenses), including training for the (a) BoD, (b) staff, and (c) volunteers as well as (d) fundraising events.

The client organization’s leadership has established and modified action plans if circumstances require a shift in plans and rapid execution of new plans. An example is when the client organization had natural disasters in the area of the office location for 2 years, including 2018. The major flooding disrupted the organizational planning and implementation to some extent due to the displacement of office staff and additional consideration and care needed for the children’s well-being. The client leader discussed

their dealing with disruptions and using modified action plans in 2018 as such, “For example, right now! Post-flood, we are looking to [a] develop new partnerships, [b] find ways to supplement our budget as needed (this year and next), and [c] to defer some expenses to the next fiscal year (when we are hopefully back in our offices).” The client organization’s leadership and staff grapple with modified plans again in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including working remotely and additional considerations needed for the children’s well-being in their care.

### **Customers**

Senior leaders understand that customer engagement is critical for the organization’s long-term success (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). An organization of any size or type cannot survive without a solid customer base. Organizational leaders recognize that (a) engaging customers to understand existing, former, and potential customers’ needs, wants, and expectations; (b) cultivating trust and building customer relationships; and (c) delivering world-class customer service is paramount to organizational success and sustainability. Senior leaders, in industry-leading organizations, (a) listen to customers’ feedback, (b) surpass customers’ expectations, and (c) build strong customer relationships (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Successful organizational leaders listen to the customers’ voices to determine products and services that surpass customers’ needs including using (a) focus groups, (b) interviews, (c) customer embeddedness, (d) customer comments and complaints on social platforms, as well as (e) win and loss data of customers to competitors (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

In the (a) post-2008 Great Recession era, (b) COVID-19 economy, and (c) Global Social Justice movement, organizational leaders have an opportunity and obligation to listen to their customers' nuanced voices and respond to those individual voices and needs rather than using a one-size-fits-all customer segmentation approach. Effective senior leaders build strong, meaningful relationships with customers that foster trust and brand loyalty by various methods to understand customers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the organization's products and services using (a) customer support, (b) stakeholder complaint management, and (c) brand management (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The engagement of customers' voices and cultivation of strong customer relationships is a business strategy priority for customer-focused organizational leaders including developing action plans for (a) listening, (b) engagement, and (c) relationship-building strategies (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

Many people spend a considerable amount of time on social media via their smartphones. Organizational leaders can use this knowledge to create innovative ways for social media and mobile interactivity and engagement with customers. Senior leaders, in industry-leading organizations, understand that customers' who have a strong brand loyalty are brand advocates in addition to forgiving brand faux pas (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit leaders can build the same brand loyalty with their supporters and donors. Nonprofit and governmental customers might include (a) clients of services, (b) members, (c) constituents, (d) citizens, (e) taxpayers, (f) recipients, (g) market segments, and (h) the legislature (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit and governmental leaders can further identify customers by (a) common

services, (b) expectations, (c) preferences, (d) behaviors, and (e) profiles (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit and governmental leaders must also go beyond customer segmentation to better understand their customers' and supporters' (a) needs, (b) wants, and (c) expectations while delivering world-class customer service because of the emerging hybrid enterprises entering their traditional sectors.

**Voice of the customer.** The client leader (a) listens to, (b) interacts with, and (c) observes the organization's clients (the children) to obtain actionable information. The advocate volunteers interact directly with the children weekly to (a) ask questions, (b) observe their behaviors and interactions, as well as (c) make recommendations to the court regarding the children's well-being. The client leader strives to maintain contact with their clients after service interventions. The client leader explained that "When a case closes, we do our best to maintain contact with the youth, to determine what we did well and what we could do better in terms of providing services." The client leader listens to potential and current customers to obtain actionable information. The client leader emphasized that "We ask directly what services are needed (e.g., [a] therapy, [b] drivers ed[ucation], [c] housing, and [d] more) and do our best to locate the needed services (first choice) or find/provide funding for the service." The client leader, as executive director, serves on numerous committees throughout the county "with the goal of streamlining access to various services or adding needed services in an equitable manner." The state legislature and AOC determined the organization's (a) customer group, (b) market segment, as well as (c) product-service offerings based on the county location of the nonprofit organization.

**Customer engagement.** The client leader builds and manages customer relationships through the advocate volunteers who receive 30 hours of preservice training and in-service training. “We encourage our volunteers to be patient and deliberate as they create the relationship because it takes time and is not always easy. We discuss much of this during training, and then in an ongoing manner during regular supervision.” The key means for clients (the children) to seek information and support is through the volunteers. The client leader explained that “It is important that the youth have a community connection – and at least one adult they can call – and oftentimes it is their volunteer.” The client leader and supervisors employ various strategies to determine (a) customer satisfaction, (b) dissatisfaction, and (c) engagement, including addressing client complaints. The client leader explained,

We want our clients (youth) to be engaged with their volunteer and tell us that they trust and can share information with their volunteer. There are times when the match is not a good one, and we make every effort to reassign the youth to a new volunteer if it is in the child’s best interest to do so. We also look at the satisfaction of our volunteers – in terms of their level of engagement and willingness to take a new case when their case closes.

If the client complaints or dissatisfaction are more serious than compatibility issues in which case the client leader responds to volunteer breaches of ethical behavior with “write up after verbal counseling; termination if needed.” The client leader obtains benchmark information on customers’ satisfaction relative to other organizations. The confidentiality of the organization’s industry prohibits a direct comparison of client

satisfaction. The client leader uses industry data to “roughly compare satisfaction between other programs (in other jurisdictions).” The client leader listens to their clients as well as market data and information to increase responsiveness and streamlined services to serve their clients (the children) with the most advantageous processes and best outcomes for the youth in their care.

### **Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results**

The organizational profile is a background context of the client organization (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The Leadership Triad is an emphasis on the link between senior leadership’s focus and priorities related to the organization’s strategy and customers (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The Results Triad is the central control center for the senior leader to align their operational actions with their strategic goals (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The Results Triad was instrumental to me, as the researcher, to assess and understand how the senior leadership (a) selects; (b) gathers; and (c) analyzes data, information, and knowledge assets as well as (d) manages and improves the organizational learning and performance based on the analysis of the organizational results. A senior leader manages organizational (a) data, (b) information, and (c) knowledge to drive (a) learning, (b) innovation, (c) improvement, and (d) competitiveness in the marketplace (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). I used the Results Triad to understand how the client organization’s senior leadership analyzes (a) data, (b) information, and (c) knowledge assets as knowledge management to improve (a) productivity, (b) growth, and (c) competitive advantage. I also used the Results Triad to understand the client organization’s availability and quality of data and information

related to the client organization's (a) workforce-focused processes, (b) key operational processes, and (c) the process-related performance results.

### **Workforce**

Senior leaders, in industry-leading organizations, evaluate the ability and capability needs of the workforce and create a workplace climate suited to high performance (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The new global and digital business landscape are favorable for a diverse workforce and inclusive organizational culture, regardless of the (a) type, (b) size, (c) industry, or (d) sector of the organization, to maintain employee commitment and customer loyalty as antecedents to (a) compete, (b) survive, and (c) thrive. Effective leaders involve, mentor, and coach organizational members to leverage their full potential according to the organization's strategic business needs (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Workforce planning and development include capability and capacity needs for short- and longer-term needs based on strategic projections and goals (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

Senior leaders recognize that diverse workforce planning and diverse workforce management are important factors as part of the strategic planning stage to achieve strategic objectives. Optimal diversity and human resource rolls in an organization do not achieve inclusivity and a cohesive workforce (Cho et al., 2017; McCuiston et al., 2004; Radulescu et al., 2018). A diverse workforce extends beyond the conventional recognition of diversity such as (a) gender, (b) race-ethnicity, (c) sexual orientation, (d) age, (e) education, and (f) religious diversity (Cho et al., 2017; McCuiston et al., 2004). Senior leaders understand that workforce diversity is also a consideration of the

workforce's diversity of (a) capabilities, (b) skills, and (c) competencies that enhance organizational (a) performance, (b) excellence, and (c) competitive advantage. Strategic workforce planning includes (a) recruitment, (b) aptitude assessments, (c) training, (d) mentoring and coaching, (e) education, (f) career counseling, (g) employability considerations, (h) outplacement, and (i) other workforce services (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

Senior leaders, in high-performing organizations, realize that diversity management is necessary to keep a diverse workforce engaged and positioned for peak performance in a complex and unpredictable global era. Workforce management also involves change management to prepare the workforce for expected changes or new industry developments such as new (a) policies, (b) regulations, (c) technology, (d) generational shifts, (e) social changes, or (f) emerging markets (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Successful organizational leaders use key practices for the workplace to build and sustain a high-performance culture and climate as well as empower the workforce and, in turn, the organization adjust to rapid changes and thereby succeed (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit organizations traditionally have low levels of diversity, while social enterprises have high levels of diversity (Cho et al., 2017). Social enterprises are the leading sector in diverse workforce employment of the (a) poor, (b) elderly, (c) disabled, (d) formerly incarcerated, and (e) homeless in addition to traditionally recognized diversity identifications such as (a) gender, (b) race-ethnicity, (c) sexual orientation, and (d) religion (Cho et al., 2017). Nonprofit leaders could gain competitive advantages from making concerted efforts to diversify their workforces.

**Workforce environment.** The client leader assesses the workforce capability and capacity needs, including (a) assessing skills, (b) competencies, (c) certifications, and (d) staffing levels. The client organization is small, with minimal staffing changes. The volunteer supervisors must maintain clinical social work licensure as an employment requirement. The client leader evaluates staff on an annual basis and throughout the year, including weekly supervision. The client organization has strategies for (a) recruitment, (b) placement, and (c) retention of new workforce members, including (a) board members, (b) office staff, and (c) volunteers. Senior leadership recruits new board members through nominations from current board members and word of mouth. The client leader recruits new volunteers through (a) word of mouth, (b) BoD's community outreach and personal appearances, (c) local events, (d) social media, (e) online volunteer match, and (f) (free) advertising such as in local newspapers. Senior leadership recruits office staff through (a) word of mouth, (b) online job listings, and (c) local businesses. The client leader ensures that the workforce represents the diverse (a) ideas, (b) cultures, and (c) thinking of the hiring and customer community through (a) preemployment assessments, (b) educational opportunities, and (c) in-service training.

The client leader ensures the fit of new workforce members with the organizational culture through (a) staff meetings, (b) team building, (c) educational opportunities, and (d) in-service training. The client leader does not prepare the workforce for significant changes in capacity needs. The client leader explained, "Because we serve all youth in foster care [in a specific county], we do not anticipate change in workforce capacity." The client leader does prepare the workforce for

significant changes in capability needs. The client leader, staff, and volunteers have educational opportunities and in-service training for emerging issues such as the opioid epidemic. Senior leadership does not anticipate workforce reductions or periods of workforce growth. The client organization has a legislative mandate to serve every youth in foster care within a designated county. The client leader uses the legislative mandate and DSS data to forecast the anticipated need of office staff and advocate volunteers. The client leader does not anticipate any significant organizational structure and work systems changes because the client organization has structural and work systems guidelines established by the state legislature and AOC.

The senior leader organizes and manages the workforce to accomplish the client organization's work with weekly staff meetings and additional supervision as needed to manage concerns. The client leader organizes and manages the workforce to capitalize on the organization's core competencies by assigning cases or supervision based on staff strengths. The client leader explained, "For example, the supervisor who co-leads the Independent Living class, also supervises more of the cases which involve older youth." The senior leader manages and reinforces the workforce to remain customer-centered and business-focused by (a) following the court's orders for each case, (b) adhering to grant and funders' guidelines, and (c) employing NASW best practices. The client leader encourages and manages the workforce to exceed performance expectations through grants applications and awards, as well as community involvement and engagement.

The senior leader ensures workplace (a) health, (b) security, and (c) accessibility for the workforce. The client leader takes the (a) health, (b) security, and (c) accessibility

of the office staff and volunteers seriously. The client leader explained that “we discuss safety with volunteers, in great detail, but do not have specific policies in place in terms of [office] staff.” The client leader always maintains a secured front door to the building and the organization’s offices. The client leader also maintains a strict policy to secure all files and computer access. “All of our files are stored in locked file cabinets. All computers are password protected. When visitors come to the office, they ring a doorbell, and we unlock the door to let them into the building.” The client leader purchased standing desks for office staff who wanted them and chairs that meet the needs of each staff member. The client leader also fosters a “family first” supportive, relaxed atmosphere to ensure staff members do not neglect their well-being or families to prevent compassion fatigue and burnout. The client organization has one location only, so there are no additional considerations for location differences. The client leader also intends to put formal emergency preparedness plans in place after displacement of two floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. The client leader supports the workforce through various (a) services, (b) benefits, and (c) policies, although the workforce is small and does not require a significant diversification of (a) services, (b) benefits, and (c) policies to meet their needs. The key benefits for the client organization’s workforce include (a) free parking, (b) simple individual retirement account (IRA), (c) flexible workplace, (d) teleworking, and (e) a family-first philosophy.

**Workforce engagement.** The client leader cultivates an organizational culture characterized by (a) open communication, (b) high performance, and (c) an engaged workforce. The office space is relatively small, and the office staff works near one

another, which fosters idea sharing and open communication. The closeness is also beneficial for clients and staff because the staff on duty can fill in for each other when a staff member is out of the office for (a) court, (b) vacation, or (c) illness. The client leader ensures that the organizational culture benefits from the diverse (a) ideas, (b) cultures, and (c) thinking of the workforce by acknowledging and respecting all ideas. The client leader empowers the workforce with (a) regular staff meetings; (b) collaboration; and (c) positive, supportive feedback. The client leader expressed that “collaboration” and “all ideas matter” to achieve high performance. The client organization does not have key drivers for different workforce groups and segments due to the organization’s small size.

The client organization has formal and informal assessment methods and measures that the client leader uses to determine workforce engagement, including employee satisfaction. The client leader uses assessment methods, including (a) informal daily and weekly support, (b) staff meetings, and (c) informational conversations as needed to formal supervision and crisis management. The client leader also uses other indicators, such as (a) workforce retention, (b) absenteeism, (c) grievances, (d) safety, and (e) productivity, to assess and improve workforce engagement. The client leader explained that “Because we are so small, all of these assessments are done by [me] the executive director. Retention is very high, because of the atmosphere that we have created – [a] family first, [b] relaxed, [c] supportive, [and] [d] casual.” The senior leadership considers workforce (a) compensation, (b) reward, (c) recognition, and (d) incentive practices by giving the staff members a bonus when there is extra money in the budget at the fiscal year’s end and frequent verbal recognition. The senior leadership

proactively seeks new ways to reinforce intelligent risk-taking to achieve (a) innovation, (b) a customer and business focus, and (c) achievement of organizational action plans, including participation in this DBA Consulting Capstone program.

The senior leadership has a learning and development system to support the organization's needs and the workforce's personal development, including (a) volunteers, (b) office staff, (c) managers, and (d) leaders. The client organization's learning and development system has built-in mechanisms related to the organization's (a) core competencies, (b) strategic challenges, and (c) achievement of short- and long-term action plans including (a) preservice training; (b) in-service training; (c) specific issues and needs training, webinars, and conferences; (d) on-going supervision; (e) informal evaluations and feedback; and (f) formal evaluations and feedback. The client leader's focus on continuous training supports (a) improvement, (b) organizational change, and (c) innovation because the training meets industry standards and the children's immediate needs while keeping the workforce abreast of developing trends in the foster care and advocacy industries. The client leader remains focused on improving customer-centered service by assigning cases to supervisors based on their strengths. One supervisor is more proficient at dealing with the older youth, and the other supervisor is more adept with the younger children.

The client leader considers the workforce members' learning and development desires and ensures the reinforcement of new knowledge and skills on the job by sponsoring (a) continuing education units (CEUs) training, (b) in-service training, and (c) conference attendance. The client organization has several correlations between learning

and development outcomes and key business results in (a) customer-focused product and service results, (b) process efficiency and effectiveness, and (c) safety and emergency preparedness. The client leader evaluates the learning and development system's efficiency and effectiveness through weekly supervision and follow-up. The client organization does not have a formal customer-focused product or service results evaluation, but the client leader does use (a) court recommendations and benchmarks, (b) client visits, and (c) volunteer retention statistics as efficiency and effectiveness performance measurements. The senior leadership has a commitment and goal of assigning a new child to a volunteer within 2 weeks of the child's case referral. The client leader makes this a priority to ensure that the child has an advocacy volunteer and "a voice" within 2 weeks of entering the foster care system. The client leader noted that "We do this very well." The client organization is small, so there is little opportunity for career progression for the workforce, although the client leader places importance on developing the workforce in their present positions with further training and education. The governance board is responsible for succession planning for management and leadership positions and has a written succession plan for the executive director position.

### **Operations**

Successful organizational leaders focus on operational efficiency and effectiveness by managing key product and process (a) design, (b) improvement, and (c) innovation (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Effective leaders, in high-performing organizations, understand that operational efficiency and effectiveness have a critical part in delivering value to customers and ensuring longevity (Baldrige Excellence

Framework, 2019). A systems thinking perspective is helpful for senior leaders to understand the importance of work processes on organizational performance and outcomes. Work process requirements include consideration of (a) design methods, (b) production cycle time and productivity, and (c) delivery processes (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The work process involves evaluations of essential product and business processes, including a thorough mapping of production and services processes to determine efficiency as well as a consideration of redesign or reengineering to meet customers' needs and expectations (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The simplifying of work processes is also an opportunity to employ innovative solutions to achieve efficiency and effectiveness.

The main work processes are any product- and service-oriented processes and any other business processes that the senior leadership deems essential for development and growth to ensure the organization's success (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Work process design pertains to consideration of the entire value chain, including all stakeholders' requirements (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Senior leaders could benefit from considering implementation of innovative processes into the organization's work processes to gain a competitive advantage. In-process measurements might include establishing in-process benchmarks and pinpointing critical stages in the various processes for measurement and evaluation (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Senior leaders must use corrective action to resolve anomalies and return process output to the design requirements (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Organizational leaders can use Lean quality improvement principles to reduce (a) waste, (b) cycle times,

and (c) costs. Six Sigma quality improvement principles are also advantageous for senior leaders to implement for the reduction of process variations and product defects, which yields increased product and service quality and profits. Senior leaders could also implement automation and artificial intelligence (AI) into work processes to increase (a) production capacity; (b) reduce employee stressors; (c) reduce production downtime; (d) analyze and identify work process subtleties; (e) reduce waste; (f) increase work process efficiencies, and profits.

Support work processes are any daily operational processes that are not part of the product's or service's characteristics but have an influence on the efficiency and effectiveness of the product or service's overall performance such as (a) human resources, (b) maintenance, (c) public relations, (d) accounting, (e) legal services, and (f) other administrative departments (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The efficiency of these work processes is equally vital to organizational performance and outcomes because an inefficiency in a support process can delay delivery of (a) raw materials and production inputs, (b) slow production, (c) create safety hazards, (d) lower morale, (e) damage a brand reputation, or (f) create a liability for the organization. Senior leaders use various process improvement methods such as (a) process research and analysis, (b) performance reviews, (c) research and development, (d) quality improvement instruments, (e) benchmarking, (f) alternative technology, (g) information from internal and external customers' processes, and (h) sharing success strategies throughout the organization (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

Senior leaders might discover a wide variety of solutions from process improvement strategies to conduct a partial or full redesign or reengineering of (a) work processes, (b) products, or (c) services (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Senior leaders also understand that work process improvement includes innovation management to ensure proper management of resources funding innovation opportunities by prioritizing that the innovation has a high ROI probability, and recognizing when to reallocate funds to more profitable or successful projects (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit organizations' key work processes could include (a) fundraising, (b) donor retention, (c) public relations, and (d) policy advocacy (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Senior leaders, in high-performing organizations, focus on process improvement from various perspectives to achieve increased (a) product and service performance (customer perspective), (b) operational and financial performance (stockholder or donor perspective), and (c) value chain performance and public-community relations (stakeholder perspective).

**Work processes.** The client leader is responsible for (a) designing, (b) managing, and (c) improving the client organization's key products and work processes. The senior leadership determines fundamental product and work process requirements based on grants' requirements, which affect organizational objectives and goals. The senior leadership ensures that the design of crucial work processes has outcome measures related to grant requirements such as (a) training advocate and supervising volunteers, (b) conducting classes to prepare foster children for independent living, and (c) submitting court reports.

The client leader guarantees the design of products and work processes to meet requirements using new technology, Optima, to track data and KPIs. The client leader uses Optima technology to gain better insights into product and work processes, which improves (a) organizational knowledge and understanding of risk considerations, (b) product excellence, (c) customer value, and (d) the potential need for agility. The client leader ensures that the day-to-day operation of work processes meet key process requirements. The client leader (a) takes the strategic objectives and action plan set by the BoD's strategic planning subcommittee; then (b) divides the action plans into "smaller, measurable steps," and finally (c) assigns the responsibility of actionable tasks to various organizational members as part of the organization's day-to-day operation of work processes. The client leader monitors the day-to-day operation of work processes by conducting weekly staff meetings to ensure that the staff meets critical process requirements. The client leader presents status updates of cases at the monthly BoD meeting as an additional accountability safeguard of outcome measures related to grant requirements. The client leader uses grant requirements as in-process performance measures to adjust and improve work processes. The grant measurements directly influence end-product quality and performance, which is the well-being and advocacy of the children in the organization's care. The client leader did not discuss how they determine their important support processes. The client leader did not discuss any formal strategies for improving work processes to (a) improve organizational products and performance, (b) enhance core competencies, and (c) reduce variability.

The client leader identified the advocate volunteers as the organization's main suppliers because they supply advocacy for the children. The senior leadership (a) selects, (b) qualifies, and (c) positions suppliers to meet and enhance operational needs such as performance and customers' satisfaction through a preliminary vetting process, including (a) background checks, (b) a 30-hour preservice training, (c) in-service training, and (d) regular supervision. The supervisors are responsible for (a) measuring, (b) evaluating, and (c) providing feedback to the volunteers and providing updates at weekly staff meetings. The senior leadership has a process for dealing with poorly performing suppliers. The client leader explained that "we counsel those who are performing poorly and remind them of the expectations, and their "job responsibilities"; if necessary, and all other options are exhausted, we do "fire" volunteers." The client leader also sits on multiple boards to collaborate with various agencies that supply a plethora of services to the children. The client leader has established relationships with these collaborators that welcome open communication and feedback to streamline and improve services to the children.

The client leader does pursue various innovation opportunities, such as strategic opportunities that they determine are intelligent risks. The client leader views new grant applications and various funding sources as innovative opportunities for intelligent risk taking. The client leader shared during one communication, "I am in the office the rest of this week, working on the grant application and our fundraiser (it is right around the corner!)." The client organization does not have discretionary financial and other resources available to pursue innovative opportunities. The client organization has a

small budget with less than \$2,000 in the budget at the end of the fiscal year. The well-being and advocacy of the children are the client organization's top priority. Any pursued opportunities must enhance the primary mission; otherwise, the senior leadership discontinues those opportunities for higher priority opportunities.

**Operational effectiveness.** The client leader ensures operational effectiveness management for the client organization through (a) process efficiency and effectiveness, (b) security and cybersecurity measures, and (c) safety and emergency preparedness. Senior leadership manages the (a) cost, (b) efficiency, and (c) effectiveness of the organization for fiscal health. The BoD and senior leader create a budget before starting the new fiscal year and remain within the budget parameters. The client organization also has an emergency fund for financial emergencies only. The client leader explained, "We do have a fund that we can use in the event of an emergency, but it really is only for an emergency." The major costs for the organization are operational expenses such as (a) payroll, (b) rent, and (c) utilities.

The senior leadership has control over the costs because of the "limited variability in cost." The client leader integrates (a) product-service cycle time, (b) productivity, and (c) other efficiency and effectiveness factors into the organization's work processes based on the court's (a) orders, (b) grant requirements, and (c) strategic objectives. The client leader uses weekly staff meetings as supervisory accountability to prevent service errors and rework. The client organization's work, as a nonprofit service organization, does not have any applicable (a) warranty costs; (b) customers' productivity losses; or (c) costs of

inspections, tests, and process or performance audits. The client leader balances the need for cost control with their clients' needs by adhering to a rigid budget.

The senior leader ensures operational continuity and enhanced information systems' reliability from (a) system crashes, (b) downtime, and (c) loss of information. The client leader stores all the client organization's files on a secure cloud, accessible from any location. The client leader ensures minimal information loss, except for a power loss resulting in loss of unsaved data. The client leader explained that "this is a relatively new system (since the 2016 flood) to enable us to work remotely, with complete access to data and files."

The client leader has organizational processes to maintain business continuity during emergency and crisis situations. The client leader responded to the natural disasters by having the office staff work from home. The office staff used various means of communication to maintain confidentiality including (a) e-mail messages, (b) telephonic communication, and (c) telephonic conference calls amongst the (a) office staff, (b) volunteers, and (c) partnering agencies when necessary. The client leader has all organizational documents including cases stored in a secured cloud database for remote access by authorized personnel. The board president held the monthly board meetings at their home for the 5-month duration in which the organization's office was inaccessible due to damage from the natural disaster in 2018. The client leader instituted the same work-remotely action plan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The client leader is aware of cybersecurity risks and ensures the security and cybersecurity of sensitive or privileged data and information using secure cloud storage

and appropriate level password access. The client leader manages electronic and physical data and information to ensure confidentiality and appropriate access only. The client leader explained that “we have a volunteer who provides IT support and ensures that all of our information is secure from threats.” The client leader, with the assistance of the volunteer IT support, maintains organizational awareness of emerging security and cybersecurity threats. The client leader, with the guidance of the volunteer IT support, identifies and prioritizes information technology systems to secure the organization’s knowledge assets from cybersecurity attacks. The volunteer IT support’s responsibility is to protect these systems from cybersecurity attacks. The volunteer IT support is responsible for (a) detecting, (b) responding to, and (c) recovering from cybersecurity breaches. The client leader is uncompromising about providing a safe operating environment for the client organization’s workforce. The office staff does not remain in the office if a potential risk is evident. The office staff works remotely without interruptions to the organization’s clients and business needs because they can access files from any location. The client leader shared that “we have experienced two floods in 2 years, we are more acutely aware of the weather, potential flooding (from hurricanes and stalled storms). Safety of our staff is paramount.” The client leader expressed a need to translate the informal working disaster and emergency preparedness plan into a formal document.

### **Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management**

The fundamental basis of the Baldrige Excellence Framework systems approach is (a) measurement, (b) analysis, and (c) knowledge management (Baldrige Excellence

Framework, 2019). Senior leaders' ability to (a) access, (b) analyze, and (c) employ quality information swiftly is central to effective leadership and management. A performance system based on (a) facts, (b) organizational knowledge, and (c) agility are foundational for senior leaders to improve organizational performance and competitiveness (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Senior leaders identify and use data and information to (a) assess, (b) evaluate, and (c) review organizational performance to support strategic planning and enhance performance (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

Strategic planning is important for organizational sustainability, but organizational leaders must make nanosecond decisions based on developing events and facts for short-term survivability in the (a) post-2008 Great Recession era, (b) COVID-19 economy, and (c) Global Social Justice movement. Senior leaders can use (a) measurements, (b) analysis, and (c) improvement results as a focal point of aggregation and analysis using nonfinancial and financial data and information into an integrated performance assessment and management system (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Organizational dashboards are advantageous for leaders in any size or type of organization to (a) measure, (b) analyze, and (c) manage knowledge in real-time. Senior leaders use (a) measurements, (b) analysis, and (c) improvement results to forecast and preempt (a) swift emerging trends, (b) internal or external shifts, or (c) unforeseen events as well as (d) identify industry and marketplace best practices (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

Senior leaders can use an organizational dashboard to review KPIs and understand the organization's overall performance and status at a glance, and thereby make fact-based decisions in real-time. Organizational leaders use an integrated performance assessment and management system to enhance organizational learning and improvement. The purpose of performance (a) measurement, (b) analysis, (c) review, and (d) improvement is for senior leaders to gain clarity of their (a) processes, (b) influencing KPIs, and (c) process management; in doing so, they can direct organizational efforts toward the achievement of key strategic objectives and organizational results (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

**Measurement, analysis, and improvement of organizational performance.**

Organizational leaders use measurement and analysis methods to evaluate the organization's performance and then make the necessary improvements to reach peak performance. How senior leaders choose and interpret data and information to assess and evaluate performance affects strategic planning and performance enhancement outcomes (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Organizational leaders can use organizational performance evaluations as opportunities to implement innovative ideas and processes.

***Performance measures.*** The client organization has various methods to (a) measure, (b) analyze, and then (c) improve organizational performance. The client leader uses information gathered from the supervisors' daily direct supervision of volunteers to track data and information on daily operations. The supervisors provide weekly updates of case statuses to the client leader during the weekly staff meetings. The client leader uses the technology software, Optima, to track (a) the number of new cases opened, (b)

the number of cases closed the number of children served, (c) the number of advocate volunteers, and (d) the number of court reports submitted to the AOC, on a (a) daily, (b) weekly, (c) monthly, (d) quarterly, and (e) annual basis. The client leader presents updates of case statuses at the monthly BoD meetings, at which time the BoD and the client leader can assess the alignment of daily operations with strategic objectives and action plans. The client leader uses comparative data and information gathered from (a) AOC, (b) DSS, (c) DJS, and (d) the regional children's advocacy board reports in aggregate with organizational data and information to track and analyze organizational performance and improvement opportunities and make fact-based decisions. The client organization has the following KPIs in addition to grant requirements to measure and assess the client organization's performance outcomes:

1. Number of children served
2. Number of advocacy volunteers
3. Number of court reports
4. How many advocacy volunteer hours
5. How many months a child is in foster care
6. What services the nonprofit advocates recommend to the court
7. How many recommendations the court actual orders

The client leader prioritizes knowing at all the times the precise number of children in their care and the number of volunteers advocating for the children as well as other critical data and information in order to remain organizationally agile and make the best decisions possible swiftly during any given circumstance.

***Performance analysis and review.*** The client leader uses the KPIs and comparative data to forecast the number of (a) advocate volunteers, (b) supervisory staff, (c) financial resources, and (d) educational training needed for staff and volunteers to meet the needs of children entering foster care and advocacy. The client leader also uses the KPIs and comparative data to identify any new trends developing in the foster care industry, such as the surge in cases with drug-related issues such as the opioid epidemic. The BoD use the KPIs and comparative data to ensure adequate financial resources needed to satisfy (a) the organizational mission, (b) grant requirements, and (c) all legal and regulatory mandates and achieve strategic objectives and action plans. The client leader uses performance analysis to (a) understand performance levels; (b) forecasts of client, organizational, and industry trends, similarities, and correlations; and (c) predict technological trends, similarities, and correlations.

The client organization has internal (a) weekly, (b) monthly, (c) quarterly, and (d) annual reviews to evaluate the performance and capabilities of the organization's (a) workforce, (b) budget and financial management, and (c) client care. The client organization has external organizational assessments conducted by their state association annually. The client organization has a GuideStar profile, which has transparency requirements as part of the GuideStar evaluation process of nonprofits. The client organization also has a governance evaluation by their national association every 4 years.

The senior leadership uses key organizational performance measures and external reviews to understand performance (a) levels, (b) strengths, and (c) improvement opportunities. The senior leadership also uses key organizational performance measures

and external reviews to monitor strategic objectives and target achievements. The senior leadership has identified several strengths as a result of these internal and external assessments. The client organization's performance strengths are (a) fiscal responsibility, (b) efficient programmatic processes, (c) strong collaborative relationships, and (d) workforce stability.

The client leadership has always balanced the annual budget during the 28 years of operation. The client organization has a 97% recommendation rate ordered by the three juvenile court judges, based on recommendations listed in the children's court report. The client organization is the only client organization in the state to have this performance level for court reports. The supervisors and advocate volunteers maintain (a) open, (b) amicable communication, and (b) sharing information with the children's attorneys and DSS to ensure streamlined services and expedited decisions on the children's behalf. The supervisors contact the volunteers weekly and attend all (a) court hearings, (b) mediations, and (c) other pertinent meetings as liaisons between the (a) advocate volunteers, (b) DSS, (c) the children's attorneys, and (d) the court. The organization's governance board has a 95% scoring rate, based on the national association's 4-year governance evaluation. The client organization has a low workforce turnover. The client organization's governance board has an average of two 3-year terms. The senior leader has a total of 16 years with the organization. The supervisors have 21-plus years with the organization. The client organization has one of the highest transparency ratings on GuideStar. The Seal of Transparency ratings are (a) bronze, (b) silver, (c) gold, and (d) platinum (least to greatest). These combined organizational strengths, along with internal

regular performance monitoring and external organizational assessments, are crucial for assessing, aligning, and integrating key performance measures for organizational success.

***Performance improvement.*** The senior leadership uses key (a) performance measures, (b) internal reviews, (c) external assessments, (d) comparative data, and (e) grant requirements to set future strategic objectives and project future workforce and financial needs such as volunteer (a) recruitment, (b) training, and (c) financial requirements. The BoD and client leader identify and develop continuous improvement priorities such as specialized training related to the opioid epidemic and additional fundraising efforts. The client leader also expressed a need to enhance the organization's innovation efforts, including new fundraising events and participation in this DBA Consulting Capstone program. The senior leadership deploys continuous improvement and innovation opportunities in the same method as other strategic objectives. The senior leadership pursues continuous improvement and innovation opportunities using a three-step process. The client leader reviews the action plan set by the BoD's strategic planning subcommittee for continuous improvement and innovation opportunities. The client leader divides the action plans into "smaller, measurable steps," and then assigns various actionable tasks to different organizational members according to individual and job-level capabilities. The client organization's leadership ensures that financial and other resources are available to carry out the organization's mission and action plans while remaining within budgetary boundaries.

**Information and knowledge management.** Organizational leaders use data and information to manage organizational efficiency and effectiveness by staying informed

with real-time aggregated knowledge. How senior leaders develop and maintain their organizational knowledge assets influences data and information quality and accessibility (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Organizational leaders can use organizational performance evaluations as a catalyst to stimulate organizational learning and innovation.

***Data and information.*** The senior leadership recognizes the importance of (a) data, (b) information, and (c) knowledge assets management to (a) ensure the reliability and validity of information, (b) enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness, and (c) encourage innovation. The client leader manages digital data and information to guarantee the (a) reliability, (b) validity, (c) integrity, (d) accuracy, and (e) currency of organizational knowledge assets by using Optima, a secured cloud database software for case management and volunteer management. The client leader has all organizational documents, including cases stored on the Optima data management system. The organizational staff can enter case information and print reports, and the client leader can track data and KPIs in real-time. The client leader conducts an internal audit for “every single [case] file” every 6 months based on a case audit checklist. The client leader and office staff “do corrective actions” to ensure all case files are (a) accurate, (b) current, and (c) adhere to all legal and ethical obligations. The client leader ensures organizational data availability by using Optima technology, which authorized personnel can access remotely using a (a) desktop, (b) laptop, (c) iPad, or (d) smartphone. Optima technology has user-friendly capabilities to assure security and reliability in real-time to enhance day-to-day operational efficiency and effectiveness. The client leader also delegates responsibility of maintaining the organization’s information technology hardware and

knowledge management security and cybersecurity to the volunteer IT support person including (a) detecting, (b) responding to, and (c) recovering from cybersecurity breaches.

***Organizational knowledge.*** The client leader builds organizational knowledge assets by integrating (a) data, (b) information, and (c) knowledge including implicit knowledge. The client leader collects and transfers workforce knowledge primarily through weekly supervision of (a) volunteers, (b) weekly staff meetings, and (c) monthly board meetings. The workforce share (a) data, (b) information, (c) best practices, and (d) insights that can enhance organizational performance. The client leader also holds a position on multiple boards with the chief aim of (a) sharing relevant knowledge, (b) building trusting relationships, (c) collaborating, (d) streamlining, and (e) improving services with various agencies that supply a plethora of services to the children. The client leader shares best practices gathered from the various agency collaborations and board positions with the client organization's BoD and workforce to enhance strategic planning and innovation processes. The client leader recognizes and shares best practices and high performing outcomes with the entire organization to ensure that the workforce can adopt and model the best practices to increase overall organizational performance and outcomes. The client leader also uses opportunities for the workforce to attend local agency-hosted events as well as state and national association conferences to learn industry best practices. The client leader uses both informal and formal methods of communication to disseminate (a) data, (b) information, and (c) knowledge to incorporate organizational learning and enhance organizational performance.

### **Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results**

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. I selected a research question focusing on nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. The client organization has several process strengths in (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) customers, (d) workforce, and (e) operations. The client organization has an effective ethical governance body and senior leader that prioritize the organization's mission of child advocacy. The BoD and client leader prioritize legal compliance and ethical behavior through their decisions and actions and require the same standards of conduct from the organization's workforce. The BoD and client leader demonstrate a commitment to organizational success through fiscal responsibility and strategic (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) management.

The client organization, from the BoD to the frontline advocacy volunteers, has a customer-centered orientation demonstrated by empowering the voice of their clients (the children) and regular active customer engagement through weekly visits and interactions with the children in their care. The senior leadership has excellent (a) communication flows, (b) engaging, and (c) involving all levels of the organization's workforce. The BoD and client leader built strong collaborative relationships with other service agencies and community partners. The BoD and client leader demonstrated commitment to operational excellence through efficient programmatic processes.

The client organization has several strengths in (a) products and processes results, (b) customer results, (c) workforce results, (d) leadership and governance results, and (e)

financial and market results, which yielded an Integrated Approaches results (90%-100%). The client organization has excellent organizational (a) governance, (b) leadership, (c) financial management with a mature performing workforce, and (d) operational performance sustained over time. The organizational leadership also uses internal and external benchmarking to assess and improve organizational performance. The organizational leadership was fully responsive to most questions and provided organizational documents to confirm their statements.

The Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results category has key information for (a) analyzing and reviewing an organization's performance; (b) demonstrating senior leaders' use of organizational knowledge; and (c) providing the operational basis for customer-focused results, financial results, strategy results, and market results (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The Results category has information about the client organization's performance and improvement in all key areas – (a) product and process results, (b) customer results, (c) workforce results, (d) governance and leadership results, and (e) financial and market results. The Results category is a quantifiable category with numerically and statistically driven data that might include items such as (a) total customers served, (b) average wait times, (c) customer service satisfaction ratings, (d) percentage of product defects or returns, (e) governance responsibility, or (f) number of cybersecurity or ethical breaches (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

The results in this section are an aggregated assessment of outcomes based on organizational performance (a) levels, (b) trends, (c) comparisons, and (d) integration (LeTCI). Levels are an organization's present performance on a quantifiable measuring

system (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Trends are an organization's good performance continuation or performance improvement rate over several longitudinal data points (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Comparisons are an organization's performance relative to benchmarking such as (a) similar firms, (b) competitors, (c) industry data, or (d) funding requirements (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Integration is an organization's performance across several key requirements aggregated into one results measurement (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

Benchmarking and an aggregated assessment are necessary for senior leaders to interpret organizational performance results objectively. The Results category is a focus on performance levels relative to those of competitors and other organizations with similar product offerings or services (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit organizations might have mandates from their funding sources directly related to product or service performance measures (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Nonprofit leaders should identify and report those mandated measures as an essential part of the Results category. The results listed at the end of each subsection is an aggregated assessment (LeTCI) based on the client leader's responses, which also has direct relationship to each key business factor listed in the organizational profile as well as the (a) maturity, (b) breadth, (c) depth, and (d) strengths of organizational (a) approaches, (b) deployment, (c) learning, and (d) improvement processes listed in the criteria.

### **Product and Process Results**

The Product and Process Results are the primary outcomes of product and organizational performance. These results are evidence of the organization's product and

service reliability and quality, contributing to customers' (a) satisfaction, (b) commitment, and (c) brand loyalty (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The client organization's LeTCI in key performance measures for product and service performance are important indicators directly related to serving the organization's clients (the children) and satisfying grant requirements.

Specific key measures include all organizational goals and outcomes listed in the client organization's grants (funding source), such as submitting court reports in advance of court reviews and assigning advocacy volunteers within 2 weeks of a child's referral to the client organization. The client leader and supervisors submitted all case reports with accurate and complete information in advance of the scheduled court dates. A presentation of the outcomes related to the main grant requirement's KPI, submitting court reports (in advance of court date), is in Table 1. The client leader and supervisors assigned advocacy volunteers (within 2 weeks of a child's referral) to the advocacy organization. A presentation of the outcomes related to the main grant requirement's KPI, assigning advocacy volunteers (within 2 weeks of a child's referral) is in Table 2. The client organization does not have any direct jurisdictional competitors. The client leader uses other benchmarks established by granting requirements and the AOC to assess the organization's service quality and outcomes on a local level. A presentation of outcomes for achievement of grant goals is in Table 1 and Table 2. The client organization's leadership and workforce focused their outputs on efficiency and time standards to meet or exceed (a) customer satisfaction, (b) organizational goals, (c) AOC's needs, (d) grant requirements, and (e) stakeholder expectations.

The client organization's LeTCI has excellent performance levels sustained over time with demonstrated benchmarking and organizational performance results for most key business factors including key (a) products-services, (b) processes, and (c) action plan requirements listed in the sections, Product-Service Offerings and Workforce Engagement. The Product and Process Results for the client organization is Integrated Approaches (range 90%-100%). Table 1 is a compilation of the Product and Process Results for this section, including the court benchmarks and grant requirements as well as the client organization's percentage of goal achievement for each fiscal year based on the number of court reports submitted in advance of the child's court hearing date. Table 2 is a compilation of the Product and Process Results for this section, including the grant requirements and the client organization's percentage of goal achievement for each fiscal year based on the number of advocacy volunteers assigned within 2 weeks of receiving the child's case.

Table 1

*Results for Court Reports Submitted*

Product and process results	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Court reports submitted	114	160	155	192
Grant requirement KPI/goal	114	160	155	192
Achievement of grant goals	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Note.* The client leader and supervisors submitted all case reports with accurate and complete information in advance of the scheduled court dates.

Table 2

*Results for Assignments of Advocacy Volunteers*

Product and process results	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Assignment of advocacy volunteers	61	73	73	75
Grant requirement KPI/goal	61	66	73	75
Achievement of grant goals	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Note.* The client leader and supervisors assigned advocacy volunteers (within 2 weeks of a child's referral) to the advocacy organization.

**Customer Results**

The Customer Results are the outcomes related to customer satisfaction. These results show the organization's performance about customer satisfaction and engagement from the customers' perspective (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The client organization's LeTCI in key performance measures for customer satisfaction performance are important indicators directly related to serving the organization's clients (the children) and their satisfaction with the assigned advocacy volunteers.

The client leader (a) listens to, (b) interacts with, and (c) observes the organization's potential and current clients (the children) to obtain actionable information to provide the needed services. The advocacy volunteers meet with their assigned youth weekly to maintain a high-level of customer engagement and satisfaction. The client leader serves on numerous committees throughout the county to build collaborative relationships and streamline services. A presentation of the outcomes related to the grant requirement's KPI, client reassignment to different advocacy volunteers, is in Table 3.

The client organization does not have any direct jurisdictional competitors. The client leader uses other benchmarks established by granting requirements and the AOC to assess the organization's service quality and outcomes on a local level. The confidentiality of the organization's industry prohibits a direct comparison of client satisfaction. The client leader uses industry data to roughly compare satisfaction between other programs (in other jurisdictions). The AOC benchmarks and grant requirement goals, for the respective years, were not available for review.

The client organization's leadership and workforce focused their outputs on customer engagement to meet or exceed (a) customer satisfaction, (b) organizational goals, (c) AOC's needs, (d) grant requirements, and (e) stakeholder expectations. The client organization's LeTCI has excellent performance levels sustained over time with demonstrated benchmarking and organizational performance results for most key business factors including key (a) customers, (b) processes, and (c) action plan requirements indicated in the sections, Voice of the Customer and Customer Engagement. The Customer Results for the client organization is Integrated Approaches (range 90%-100%). Table 3 is a compilation of the Customer Results for this section, including the grant requirements and the client organization's percentage of goal achievement for each fiscal year based on client reassignments to a new advocacy volunteer.

Table 3

*Results for Client Reassignments to Different Advocacy Volunteers*

Customer Results	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
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Client reassignments	0	0	0	0
Grant requirement KPI/goal	0	0	0	0
Achievement of grant goals	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Note.* The organization's clients (the children) and their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their original assigned advocacy volunteers indicate whether a reassignment to a different advocacy volunteer is necessary.

### **Workforce Results**

The Workforce Results are the outcomes related to an organization's capability and capacity performance. These results indicate the senior leader's ability to build and maintain a (a) productive, (b) engaged, and (c) learning environment with a workforce focus (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The client organization's LeTCI in key performance measures for workforce performance are important indicators directly related to the workforce's capability and capacity, including (a) appropriate skills, (b) staffing levels, and (c) workforce satisfaction.

The client organization's advocacy volunteers comprise the largest portion of the organization's workforce. The client leader and supervisors host a 30-hour preservice training to new volunteers. The client leader offers the training three times per year, on Monday evenings. The Monday evening training offered regularly allows potential volunteers who work full-time access to the prerequisite training. The preservice training also ensures that the advocacy volunteers have a solid baseline knowledge related to (a) abuse and neglect, (b) DSS, and (c) court proceedings. The periodic trainings are advantageous for the client leader to increase the number of advocate volunteers available per year. The client leader meets the AOC's needs by assigning advocacy volunteers to

each, and every child referred to the program, which is every child in foster care in the county. The senior leadership continuously seeks to diversify their advocacy volunteers by participating in outreach activities to engage various community and religious groups in the county. The senior leadership also request volunteers to participate in the outreach speaking engagements to provide real-life scenarios of the advocacy volunteer experience, which also serves as a workforce development opportunity for the volunteers.

The client leader also guarantees that the workforce participates in in-service training to stay current on emerging trends in the foster care and advocacy industry. The client leader and supervisors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to support the volunteers whenever needed and give guidance in any situation that arises. The client leader also seeks to increase volunteers' workforce satisfaction by surveying the volunteers regularly to learn ways to improve the supervision and support of volunteers and thereby increase volunteer satisfaction. The client leader enhances the office staff's workforce satisfaction by offering a (a) supportive, (b) flexible, (c) family-first work environment, while also requiring accountability and work completion with the highest standards possible. A presentation of the outcomes related to the grant requirement's KPI, advocacy volunteers assigned, is in Table 4. The client organization does not have any direct jurisdictional competitors. The client leader uses other benchmarks established by granting requirements and the AOC to assess the organization's service quality and outcomes on a local level. A presentation of the outcomes related to cases assigned to the organization by the AOC in comparison to the volunteer workforce, is in Table 4.

The client organization's leadership and governance focused their outputs on recruiting a qualified, diversified volunteer advocacy workforce to meet or exceed (a) customer satisfaction, (b) organizational goals, (c) AOC's needs, (d) grant requirements, and (e) stakeholder expectations. There were more cases assigned by AOC each year than advocate volunteer availability. The client organization's LeTCI has excellent performance levels sustained over time with demonstrated benchmarking and organizational performance results for most key business factors including (a) key workforce, (b) processes, and (c) action plan requirements listed in the sections, Workforce Environment and Workforce Engagement. The Workforce Results for the client organization is Integrated Approaches (range 90%-100%). Table 4 is a compilation of the Workforce Results for this section, including the grant requirements and the client organization's percentage of goal achievement for each fiscal year based on the number of advocacy volunteers assigned compared to the total number of children served.

Table 4

*Results for Staffing of Advocacy Volunteers*

Workforce results	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Advocacy volunteers assigned	61	73	73	75
Total number of children served	73	77	77	75
New children assigned	22	22	19	28
Grant requirement KPI/goal	73	77	77	75
Achievement of grant goals	84%	94%	95%	100%

*Note.* The client organization's advocacy volunteers are the largest portion of the organization's workforce. The client leader meets the AOC's needs by assigning

advocacy volunteers to each child referred to the program, which is every child in foster care in the county.

### **Leadership and Governance Results**

The Leadership and Governance Results are the outcomes related to the senior leaders' and governance board's demonstration of (a) sound leadership, (b) legal and ethical behavior, and (c) social responsibility. These results indicate the senior leadership's focus on the importance placed on (a) high ethical standards, (b) internal accountability, and (c) responsibility to stakeholders (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The client organization's LeTCI in key measures are essential indicators directly related to the senior leader's communication and engagement with their workforce and customers to (a) deploy the organizational vision and values, (b) encourage two-way communication, and (c) foster a focus on action.

The client leader cultivates an office environment of (a) open communication, (b) sharing, and (c) free flow of information. The physical office space is small, so the office staff are in proximity and can share information freely. The client leader encourages office staff to keep all office staff updated on their cases. The client leader is aware of all case statuses and youths' conditions to support the supervisors' and volunteers' endeavors in difficult and celebratory situations. The office staff's free flow of information eliminates gaps in case statuses or uninformed instances when handling someone else's case during a supervisor's absence. The client leader can assume responsibility for any case if necessary. The client leader actively engages with the volunteers in addition to the supervisors by speaking with them regularly to (a) receive

client updates, (b) offer support, or (c) provide answers to volunteers' questions. The client organization's current LeTCI in key performance measures for leadership and governance performance also are important indicators directly related to (a) fiscal accountability, (b) legal and regulatory compliance, and (c) oversight audit results.

The client leader is fiscally accountable to the BoD monthly, providing detailed financial reports monthly for both the annual budget and the actual year-to-date figures. The client organization's legal and regulatory results are key measures or indicators of meeting and surpassing regulatory and legal requirements determined by the organization's (a) annual third-party accounting audit, (b) annual state association audit, and (c) 4-year national association audit. The client organization's ethical results are key measures or indicators of (a) ethical behavior, (b) breaches of ethical behavior, and (c) stakeholder trust in the senior leader and governance. A presentation of the outcomes related to the grant requirement's KPI, (a) fiscal, (b) legal, (c) ethical, and (d) regulatory breaches, is in Table 5. The client organization also holds one of the highest seals of organizational transparency awarded by GuideStar. The client organization does not have any direct jurisdictional competitors. The senior leadership uses other benchmarks established by the AOC, in addition to granting requirements and goals, to assess the organization's service quality and outcomes on a local level. The main assessment is whether the client organization has any (a) ethical breaches, (b) fiscal going-concern audit opinions, or (c) adverse regulatory actions. The client organization adheres to the NASW Code of Ethics as the guiding code of conduct. Members of the governance and senior leadership actively participate in the community and boards on behalf of every

child in foster care in the county, but the governance and leadership must always maintain strict confidentiality.

The client organization's leadership and governance focused their outputs on (a) internal and external fiscal accountability, (b) high ethical conduct, and (c) stakeholder accountability to meet or exceed (a) customer satisfaction, (b) organizational goals, (c) AOC's needs, (d) grant requirements, and (e) stakeholder expectations. The client organization's LeTCI has excellent performance levels sustained over time with demonstrated benchmarking and organizational performance results for most key business factors including key (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) processes, and (d) action plan requirements listed in the sections, Leadership and Strategy. The Leadership and Governance Results for the client organization is Integrated Approaches (range 90%-100%). Table 5 is a compilation of the Leadership and Governance Results for this section, including the grant requirements and the client organization's percentage of goal achievement for each fiscal year based on the number of adverse legal actions resulting from (a) ethical breaches, (b) fiscal going-concern audit opinions, or (c) adverse regulatory actions.

Table 5

*Results for Ethical Breaches, Fiscal Going-Concern Audit Opinions, and Adverse Regulatory Actions*

Leadership results	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Number of adverse actions	0	0	0	0
Grant requirement KPI/goal	0	0	0	0
Achievement of grant goals	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Note.* The client organization does not have any direct jurisdictional competitors for comparative data analysis. The client governance and leadership use prior years' performance as benchmarks to assess present year performance.

## **Financial and Market Results**

The Financial and Market Results are the outcomes related to an organization's (a) financial stability, (b) strategy fulfillment, and (c) marketplace successes. These results indicate the senior leadership's achievement level with implementing strategic objectives resulting in financial viability (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The Financial and Market Results are the quantifiable metrics of the organization's overall financial health as a result of the leadership's decisions and actions and day-to-day operational performance. Key indicators for financial performance might include (a) operating margins, (b) ROI, (c) customer group profitability, (d) market segmentation profitability, or (e) subsidiary profitability (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). Key measures for financial viability might include (a) days cash on hand, (b) cash flow, (c) liquidity, (d) debt-to-equity ratio, or (e) asset utilization (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019).

An understanding of the particulars of various metrics is important because an organization might have poor performance or profitability with one (a) customer group, (b) market segment, or (c) subsidiary while dominating in other (a) customer group, (b) market segment, or (c) subsidiary, each of which influences financial viability metrics. Nonprofit organizations' and governments' budgetary performance measures might include (a) administrative expenditures as a budget percentage, (b) reserve funds additions or subtractions, (c) fundraising costs versus funds raised, (d) cost avoidance or

savings, (e) responses to budget decreases, (f) lowering of costs to customers, or (g) return of funds as a result of increased efficiency (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The client organization's LeTCI in key indicators are measures directly related to (a) budgetary performance, (b) grant approvals, and (c) fundraising.

The client organization is a small nonprofit with a limited and restricted annual budget. The client leader is responsible for the financial and budget management of the day-to-day organizational operations. The client leader presents the monthly expenditures and year-to-date budgetary performance at the monthly board meetings. The BoD's fiduciary responsibility is to review the expenditures and year-to-date budget to ensure that the organization remains on course financially. The second financial indicator is the organization's grant outcomes. The client leader is responsible for grant management, including reapplying for grants annually and seeking out new grant opportunities. The client organization's main sources of grant funding are (a) state, (b) local, and (c) private foundations. The client leader provides updates at the monthly board meetings on grant activity, including reapplications and new grant funding applications. The third financial indicator is the organization's fundraising activities. The client organization has two major fundraising events each year, one is in the spring, and the other is in the fall. The BoD and client leader assess the financial performance of each fundraiser based on funds raised minus fundraising costs. A presentation of the outcomes related to the grant requirement's KPI, financial performance, is in Table 6.

A separate review of the organization's U.S. IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Tax, for fiscal years (a) 2016, (b) 2017, and (c) 2018 aligned

with the information provided by the client leader. The client organization does not have any direct jurisdictional competitors for comparative data analysis. The client governance and leadership use prior years' performance as benchmarks to assess present year performance. The main assessment is whether the senior leadership could satisfy all budgetary obligations to fulfill the organizational mission and satisfy the margin without exceeding funds available. The client organization has limited marketplace results because the senior leadership does not intend to develop new programs or expand into new markets based on the organization's mandated mission and jurisdictional mandate. The client leader has interests in expanding the scope of grants and charitable donations.

The client organization's leadership and governance focused their outputs on internal and external fiscal accountability and satisfying all budgetary obligations to meet or exceed (a) customer satisfaction, (b) organizational goals, (c) AOC's needs, (d) grant requirements, and (e) stakeholder expectations. The client organization's LeTCI has excellent performance levels sustained over time with demonstrated benchmarking and organizational performance results for most key business factors including key (a) financial performance, (b) processes, and (c) action plan requirements listed in the sections, Organizational Governance and Financial Accountability. The Financial and Market Results for the client organization is Integrated Approaches (range 90%-100%). Table 6 is a compilation of the Financial and Market Results for this section, including the grant requirements and the client organization's percentage of goal achievement for each fiscal year based on the organization's financial performance, including (a) budgetary performance, (b) grant approvals, and (c) fundraising. Table 7 is a compilation

of the Financial and Market Results for this section, including an itemization of the client organization's 3-year budgetary performance such as itemized income and itemized expenses for fiscal years (a) 2016, (b) 2017, and (c) 2018. The itemized percentage of total income is in parentheses.

Table 6

*Results for Financial Performance Including Budgetary Performance, Grant Approvals, and Fundraising*

Financial results	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Income	\$209,743.00	\$212,937.00	\$210,632.00	\$228,727.00
Expenses	\$207,331.00	\$207,331.00	\$208,886.00	\$228,074.00
Net ordinary income/deficit	\$2,412	\$5,606	\$1,746	\$653
Grant requirement KPI/goal	Break even	Break even	Break even	Break even
Achievement of grant goals	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Note.* The BoD and client leader assess the organization's overall financial performance based on income minus expenses, which results in a net ordinary income or deficit.

Table 7

*Results for Financial Performance Including a 3-year Budgetary Itemization of Income and Expenses*

Financial results	FY16	FY17	FY18
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$209,743.00</b>	<b>\$212,937.00</b>	<b>\$210,632.00</b>
Contributions	\$3,500 (2%)	\$3,500 (1%)	\$2,500 (1%)
Corporate income	\$5,000 (2%)	\$5,000 (2%)	\$4,000 (2%)
Funds raised	\$55,000 (26%)	\$55,000 (26%)	\$56,500 (27%)
Government aid	\$101,937 (49%)	\$101,937 (48%)	\$109,132 (52%)
Other income	\$8,000 (4%)	\$8,000 (4%)	\$5,500 (2%)
Private grants	\$39,306 (19%)	39,500 (19%)	\$33,000 (16%)
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$207,331.00</b>	<b>\$207,331.00</b>	<b>\$208,886.00</b>
Accounting services	\$5,000 (2%)	\$5,000 (2%)	\$5,000 (2%)
Association dues	\$400 (1%)	\$400 (1%)	\$1,000 (1%)
Fundraising event	\$10,000 (5%)	\$10,000 (5%)	\$11,000 (5%)
Insurance	\$4,000 (2%)	\$4,400 (2%)	\$4,000 (2%)
Office supplies	\$300 (1%)	\$300 (1%)	\$1,500 (1%)
Program service expenses	\$1,000 (1%)	\$1,000 (1%)	\$1,000 (1%)
Background checks			
Volunteer recruitment			
Rent	\$12,999 (6%)	\$12,999 (6%)	\$12,999 (6%)
Salaries & related expenses	\$171,032 (82%)	\$171,032 (80%)	\$169,787 (81%)
Telephone	\$2,600 (1%)	\$2,600 (1%)	\$2,600 (1%)

*Note.* The information and data listed here are an itemization of the client organization's 3-year budgetary performance including itemized income and itemized expenses for fiscal years (a) 2016, (b) 2017, and (c) 2018. The itemized percentage of total income is in parentheses.

Table 8

*Aggregated Results of Client Organization's AOC Reports*

AOC reporting results	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Children served	73	77	77	75
Volunteer advocates	61	73	73	75
Court reports submitted	114	160	155	192
New children assigned	22	22	19	28
Cases closed	17	28	16	25

*Note.* The information and data listed in Tables 1 through 5 are here in aggregate.

## Key Themes

**Process strengths.** The Baldrige Excellence Framework has five graduated steps of process maturity related to strategic goals and operational performance (a) Reacting to Problems (0-25%), (b) Early Systematic Approaches (30-45%), (c) Aligned Approaches (50-65%), and (d) Integrated Approaches (70-100%). The client organization's process results rank in the Integrated Approaches (70-100%) range. I assessed the client organization using methodological triangulation based on the client leader's responses to (a) the Baldrige Excellence Framework, (b) semistructured interviews, (c) the organization's archival documents, and (d) GuideStar records.

The client organization has several process strengths in (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) customers, (d) workforce, and (e) operations. The client organization has an effective ethical governance body and senior leader that prioritize the organization's mission of child advocacy. The BoD and client leader prioritize legal compliance and ethical behavior through their decisions and actions and require the same standards of conduct from the organization's workforce. The organization's governance board has a 95% scoring rate, based on the national association's 4-year governance evaluation. The client organization also has one of the highest Seal of Transparency ratings on GuideStar, including (a) bronze, (b) silver, (c) gold, and (d) platinum levels (least to greatest).

The BoD and client leader demonstrate a commitment to organizational success through fiscal responsibility and strategic (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) management. The client leadership has always balanced the annual budget during the 28 years of operation through budgetary fiduciary and short- and long-term strategic

planning. The client organization, from the BoD to the frontline advocacy volunteers, has a customer-centered orientation demonstrated by empowering the voice of their clients (the children) and regular active customer engagement through weekly visits and interactions with the children in their care.

The process strengths of the client organization also include workforce stability. The client organization has a low workforce turnover. The client organization's governance board has an average of two 3-year terms (6 years). The senior leader has a total of 16 years with the organization. The supervisors have a total of 21-plus years with the organization.

Communication is another process strength of the client organization. The BoD and client leader have regular communication at the monthly board meetings to stay abreast of budgetary and case statuses. The client leader and supervisors have an open, free flow of communication in the office to remain updated on all case statuses. The supervisors and advocacy volunteers have weekly communication to remain updated on the children's statuses and provide supervisory support and coaching. The advocacy volunteers have weekly visits with the children to understand the children's state of being and give them a trusted adult to voice their (a) thoughts, (b) interests, and (c) concerns.

The BoD and client leader built strong collaborative relationships with other service agencies such as (a) the courts, (b) DSS, (c) DJS, (d) a regional children's advocacy board, (e) the clients' attorneys, (f) civic organizations, and (g) places of worship to (a) streamline services, (b) increase the children's well-being, and (c) recruit

advocacy volunteers. The BoD have regular speaking engagements, and the client leader serves on multiple boards on behalf of the organization's mission, child advocacy.

The BoD and client leader demonstrated commitment to operational excellence through efficient programmatic processes. The client organization has a 100% accurate court report submitted rate (in advance of court date). The client organization has a 97% recommendation rate ordered by the three juvenile court judges, based on recommendations listed in the children's court reports. The client organization is the only advocacy organization in the state to have this performance level for court reports.

The client organization's strategic goals and operational processes resulted in Integrated Approaches (90-100%). The client leadership demonstrated proficiency in (a) strategic planning and implementation; (b) fiscal accountability and societal responsibility; (c) organizational communication and learning; (d) repeatable processes for efficient and effective operational performance; (e) regular tracking, measurement, and evaluation of processes for sharing knowledge; (f) improvement, and (g) innovation.

**Process opportunities.** The client organization's process strengths in (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) customers, (d) workforce, and (e) operations, along with internal regular performance monitoring and external organizational assessments, are crucial for (a) assessing, (b) aligning, and (c) integrating key performance measures for organizational success and sustainability. Therefore, I offer the following recommendations as process opportunities for the client leadership to enhance the organization's performance and readiness. The client leadership and workforce do many processes well. The main area for process improvement is the documentation of various

process items. The client organization has a mature, performing organization because the organizational members, from the BoD to the frontline advocacy volunteers, have longevity with the organization. There is a wealth of tacit (implicit) knowledge available for capture at every organization level.

**Leadership.** In the area of leadership, I recommend that the BoD and client leader create a formally documented statement of (a) mission, (b) vision, and (c) values. The client organization does have a formal mission statement but does not have a formal vision or values statement, although the (a) BoD, (b) executive director, (c) staff, and (d) volunteers understand an informal vision and values as (a) child advocacy, (b) integrity, and (c) confidentiality, which is evident in the organizational performance and ethical behavior. The organizational leadership documenting organizational vision and values in addition to the mission will provide a historical and sustainable legacy for future organizational leaders and members and enhance the present organizational direction. Another leadership suggestion is for the client leader to take a formal, in-depth leadership assessment to identify their leadership style's nuances. The senior leader has not taken a formal leadership assessment to gain detailed insights about their leadership style and profile. Leadership assessments could reveal hidden attributes of a leader's (a) vision, (b) values, (c) beliefs, (d) expectations, and (e) qualities that enhance their leadership style and decisions. There is an abundance of leadership style assessments to identify and evaluate natural and learned leadership styles. A simple Internet search yields a plethora of companies offering assessments, some backed by empirical research while others are not. A third suggestion is to consider a leadership development program should the

organization expand in size or services as part of the organization's long-term strategy items. A leadership development program could also enhance the competencies of all organizational members.

**Workforce.** In the area of workforce, I recommend that the senior leadership capture the tacit knowledge of the workforce through (a) archival videos, (b) recordings, and (c) notes of current staff, from the BoD to the frontline volunteers, to use as an organizational archive and knowledge bank. The archival records do not need to contain confidential information about a specific child or case. The senior leadership could capture archival recordings in a way that addresses how supervisors coached advocate volunteers in a specific type of scenario, or how leadership responded to certain type situations such as pivoting swiftly during the COVID-19 pandemic to sustain the organization remotely. These records become valuable historical documents for the organization while maintaining the confidentiality of specific cases.

The client leader takes the (a) health, (b) security, (c) cybersecurity, and (d) accessibility of the office staff and volunteers seriously. The client organization has formal written documentation and contractual agreements regarding (a) legal compliance, (b) ethical behavior, and (c) code of conduct for the workforce, including advocacy volunteers. The client leader has an informal crisis and mitigation strategy for responsibilities and response plans for the (a) BoD, (b) office staff, (c) volunteers, and (d) children for emergencies such as natural disasters and crises as the COVID-19 pandemic. A recommendation to improve organization safety and security processes is to create formal (a) security, (b) cybersecurity, (c) emergency, and (d) disaster response strategies,

including (a) formally documenting emergency and response procedures, (b) the chain of command procedures, and (c) any other vital information related to actionable disaster responses. The safety and security formal document might also include (a) accident prevention, (b) inspection results, (c) root-cause analysis of failures, and (d) recovery, in addition to the disaster and emergency preparedness plans. I recommend that the senior leadership post the formal disaster response strategy on the organization's secured intranet for access by authorized personnel and advocacy volunteers remotely.

The client organization has strategic challenges and advantages in staffing the organization's volunteers of BoD and advocates that meet with the children each week. The organizational leader's challenges are (a) attracting, (b) recruiting, (c) qualifying, and (d) training an adequate number of advocates to stay abreast of the increasing number of cases received from the court regularly. A recommendation is for the senior leadership to identify a local advertising agency that would donate their services to create a marketing campaign to increase awareness about the need for advocacy volunteers. The local advertising agency would benefit from the donated services by increasing their social capital in the community with their in-kind gift to the client organization. The senior leadership could use the marketing campaign to supplement the BoD members' speaking engagement efforts in the community for advocacy volunteer recruitment.

***Operations.*** A performance improvement system includes evaluations and improvement of the organization's key processes and projects and any auxiliary projects (Baldrige Excellence Framework Program, 2019). The client leader explained that there are annual formal personnel evaluations and as-needed informal feedback, although there

are no formal plans for the ongoing development of the paid staff or volunteer workforce. A suggestion is for the senior leadership to implement formal plans for ongoing workforce development. The senior leadership could create a simple template that highlights the organizational member's (a) strengths, (b) opportunities, and (c) area(s) of development, including listing (a) specific, (b) measurable, (c) actionable, (d) relevant, and (e) timely goals (SMART). The organizational member could also list stretch goals to incorporate developmental areas of specific interest, such as taking a mediation webinar, public speaking seminar, or leadership class.

The client organization also does not have a formal performance improvement system. The senior leadership receives formal and informal feedback from (a) the court (external), (b) DSS (external), (c) funding partners (external), and (d) other affiliations (external) that have viable information for the governance board and senior leader to use for informal, ongoing evaluation and improvement. The client leader did not discuss how they determine and improve their important support processes. The client leader also did not discuss any formal strategies for improving work processes to enhance core competencies and reduce variability. A key opportunity for improvement is for the senior leadership to identify and evaluate process performance and process improvement related to support processes such as (a) human resources, (b) maintenance, (c) public relations, (d) accounting, (e) legal services, and (f) other administrative departments. Senior leadership could establish formal strategies for improving work processes to enhance core competencies and reduce variability as another improvement opportunity.

Another process opportunity is for the senior leadership to aggregate formal and informal feedback from key stakeholders ([a] the courts, [b] funding partners, [c] DSS, and [d] other affiliations) into a formal documented performance improvement system, including listing the AOC guidelines and granting requirements as KPIs. The client leadership could also include the internal self-checks such as (a) the 6-month case audits; (b) monthly, quarterly, and annual budgetary targets; and (c) the external annual accounting audit results as KPIs into the formal document performance improvement system. The senior leadership could incorporate formal strategies to identify and improve work processes to enhance organizational core competencies and reduce variability. The client organizational members are already doing these things well. However, the senior leadership does not have a formally documented system of what they are doing well in an integrated manner. The senior leadership can enhance the well-performing organization by documenting what and how they execute a high-performing organization for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

**Results strengths.** The Results category is a quantifiable category with numerically and statistically driven data that might include items such as (a) total customers served, (b) average wait times, (c) customer service satisfaction ratings, (d) percentage of product defects or returns, (e) governance responsibility, or (f) the number of cybersecurity or ethical breaches (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). How senior leaders choose and interpret data and information to assess and evaluate performance affects strategic planning and performance enhancement outcomes (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019). The client organization has various methods to (a) measure, (b)

analyze, and then (c) improve organizational performance yielding the strengths of the following results. The results in this section are an aggregated assessment of outcomes based on the organization's LeTCI, based on the client leader's responses, which also has a direct relationship to each key business factor listed in the organizational profile and the (a) maturity, (b) breadth, (c) depth, and (d) strengths of organizational approaches, (e) deployment, (f) learning, and (g) improvement processes listed in the criteria.

The client organization has opportunities for increasing workforce results, which is critical to the senior leadership fulfilling the organization's mission of child advocacy. The BoD members rotate the responsibility of community outreach activities every month through speaking engagements at various community and civic outlets, including places of worship. The BoD members use speaking opportunities to create public awareness about the client organization's mission to provide a voice for abused and neglected children and encourage volunteer recruitment. One suggestion is for the senior leadership to identify a local advertising agency that would donate their services to create a marketing campaign to increase awareness about the need for advocacy volunteers.

A second suggestion is for the organizational leadership to host quarterly open-house events to increase awareness about the need for advocacy volunteers. The senior leadership could host open-house events in person or virtually to observe social distancing safety practices. The senior leadership could giveaway (a) t-shirts, (b) mugs, and (c) reusable shopping bags to those participants who qualify, such as remain to the end of the virtual open house as well as live or work in the designated county of the organization. The giveaways are another opportunity for the organizational leadership to

promote and create awareness about the organization's mission in the community. The senior leadership could use these marketing efforts to supplement the BoD members' in person or virtual speaking engagement efforts in the community for advocacy volunteer recruitment. Another results opportunity is that the senior leadership aggregates the AOC guidelines and granting requirements into a formal documented performance improvement system, including listing the guidelines and requirements as KPIs.

### **Project Summary**

Nonprofits are critical to the survival of (a) individuals, (b) families, (c) communities, and (d) society, increasingly so since the 2008 Great Recession and during the COVID-19 pandemic, but many leaders of nonprofit organizations are struggling to survive and keep their organizations from closing. The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. The study was of a nonprofit organization in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States in the post-2008 Great Recession era and during the COVID-19 pandemic. I identified the various challenges that nonprofit leaders face through the TBL conceptual lens and using the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2019; Elkington, 1994).

The client organization is a nonprofit advocacy organization for children. The client organization consists of (a) 12 BoD, (b) one executive director, (c) one office manager, (d) two supervisors of volunteers, (e) 75 volunteer advocates, and (f) 75 children that the organizational members advocate for regularly. The client organization is small with a strict budget, but the senior leadership employs all available resources to

achieve the organization's mission of child advocacy and satisfy the margin. The client organization has (a) an active, long-sitting governance board; (b) an experienced high-performing senior leader and workforce; as well as (c) operational performance sustained over time.

The BoD and client leader demonstrated commitment to operational excellence through (a) fiduciary responsibility, (b) long-term strategic planning, and (c) efficient programmatic processes. The BoD use community involvement as a key opportunity to promote and further the organization's mission and recruit advocacy volunteers through monthly speaking engagements. The client leader uses collaboration as key opportunities to (a) build trust, (b) cultivate relationships, and (c) streamline services with other community organizations by participation on multiple regional boards. The senior leadership provides an extensive preservice and ongoing training for volunteers to maintain an agile, prepared workforce. The senior leadership also uses internal and external fact-based benchmarking to assess and improve organizational performance. The BoD and senior leader seek out innovative strategies and programs to improve the achievement of the organization's (a) mission, (b) increase revenue, and (c) satisfy the organization's margin.

I used the (a) TBL conceptual lens, (b) Baldrige Excellence Framework, (c) semistructured interviews, (d) the organization's archival documents, and (e) GuideStar to identify key themes during my study of the client organization. The senior leadership employs various strategies from a systems perspective considering the key elements of (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) finances, (d) customers, (e) workforce, (f) operations, (g)

results, (h) innovation, and (i) stakeholders resulting in process strengths in these areas.

The research analysis yielded the key themes of (a) effective ethical governance and leadership, (b) fiduciary responsibility, (c) long-term strategic planning, (d) efficient programmatic processes, (e) listening to the voice of the customer, (f) workforce preparedness, (g) stakeholder trust-building and collaboration, (h) internal and external fact-based benchmarking, (i) emergency and crisis preparedness, and (j) sustainable innovation including alternative revenue generation.

The client organization has several strengths, based on the Baldrige Excellence Framework, in (a) product and process results, (b) customer results, (c) workforce results, (d) leadership and governance results, and (e) financial and market results that yielded an Integrated Approaches results (90%-100%). The TBL concept and Baldrige Excellence Framework are relevant to this study because the client organization's leadership demonstrated viable strategies employed systemically to achieve sustainability, defined in the nonprofit sector, as (a) fiscal stability, (b) efficiency, and (c) effectiveness, evaluated from a holistic, systems-based perspective of the organization's processes and performance outcomes. Overall, the client leadership employed successful strategies for (a) fiscal stability, (b) efficiency, (c) effectiveness, (d) operational excellence, and (e) agility to achieve short-term survivability and long-term sustainability in the post-2008 Great Recession era and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

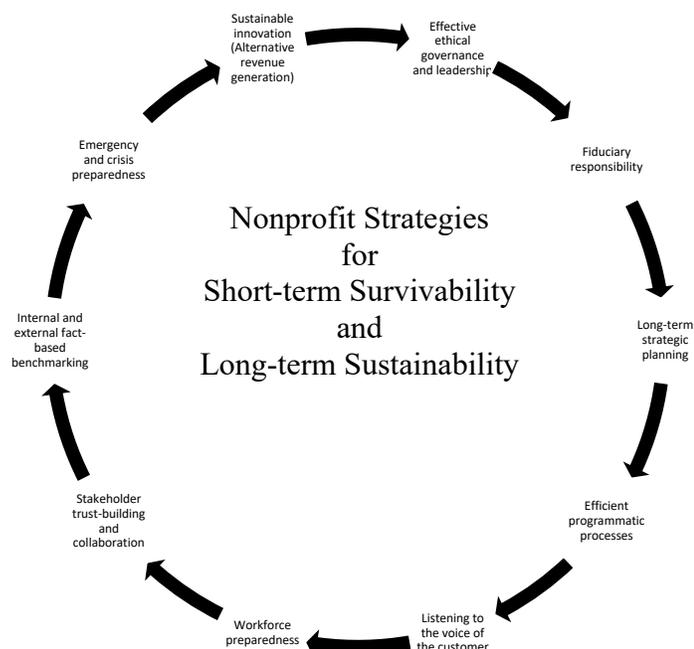
### **Application to Professional Practice**

This qualitative single-case study's significance was to explore nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability because many leaders

of nonprofit organizations are struggling to survive and remain operational. Business and management research is a systematic examination or exploration of business and management phenomenon to (a) discover new information, (b) test existing theories or concepts, and (c) furthering the body of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2016). Business and management research findings are useful to business leaders when leaders can apply theory practically to professional and managerial practice (Saunders et al., 2016).

This study has insights and business implications that reveal opportunities to positively impact nonprofits' mission and margin, including (a) fiscal stability, (b) efficiency, (c) effectiveness, (d) operational excellence, and (d) agility to achieve short-term survivability and long-term sustainability in the highly volatile post-2008 Great Recession era and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The client organization's leadership in this study demonstrated and shared in detail systemic strategies that other nonprofits might employ to improve their organizational processes and performance outcomes in the areas of (a) leadership, (b) strategy, (c) finances, (d) customers, (e) workforce, (f) operations, (g) results, (h) innovation, and (i) stakeholders resulting in process strengths in these areas. The research analysis yielded the key themes of (a) effective ethical governance and leadership, (b) fiduciary responsibility, (c) long-term strategic planning, (d) efficient programmatic processes, (e) listening to the voice of the customer, (f) workforce preparedness, (g) stakeholder trust-building and collaboration, (h) internal and external fact-based benchmarking, (i) emergency and crisis preparedness, and (j) sustainable innovation including alternative revenue generation. Figure 3 is an illustration

of the systemic strategies that the client organization's leadership used for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.



*Figure 3.* The systemic strategies used by the client organization's leadership for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

### Leadership

The client organization has an effective ethical governance body and senior leader who prioritize the organization's child advocacy mission. Kearns, Livingston, Scherer, and McShane (2015) found that nonprofit leaders in thriving nonprofits employ a mixture of (a) conceptual, (b) technical, and (c) interpersonal skills daily to successfully lead their organizations. The conceptual skills are concepts and ideas related to (a) vision; (b) strategy formulation, planning, implementation; and (c) goal setting (Kearns et al., 2015). Technical skills are business skills and knowledge explicitly related to the organization's (a) industry, (b) organizational work, and (c) daily operational activities (Kearns et al., 2015). The interpersonal skills of trust-building and communication were the nonprofit

leaders' primary skills to achieve the organization's mission and organizational peak performance (Kearns et al., 2015).

Responsible leadership (RL) positively and considerably affects each element of an organization's TBL performance (Javed, Ali, Asrar-ul-Haq, Ali, & Kirmani, 2020). Zawawi and Wahab (2019) found that sustainable organizations' development has an underlying influence previously not regarded, leaders' spirituality, also known as corporate spirituality. Corporate spirituality is the intersection of the (a) psychological, (b) management, and (c) spirituality disciplines (Zawawi & Wahab, 2019). Academia and practicing experts also listed corporate spirituality, derived from well-developed research on mental well-being, in the Mental Illnesses Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (Zawawi & Wahab, 2019). Organizational leaders' spiritual values affect their decision-making and, in turn, organizational sustainability. Integrity, trustworthiness, honesty, loyalty, and other virtues are derivatives of moral attitudes linked to corporate spirituality (Zawawi & Wahab, 2019). Leaders and managers can make sound decisions while evaluating (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic elements in their organizations when provided with awareness resources for identifying and understanding how their corporate spirituality influences their decisions (Zawawi & Wahab, 2019).

Another growing trend in TBL literature is entrepreneurial leadership (EL). Nor-Aishah, Ahmad, and Thurasamy (2020) examined the effects of EL on the various elements of the TBL and an organization's sustainable performance. EL involves identifying and using entrepreneurial opportunities to achieve organizational goals, including alternative revenue generation. An EL mindset has significant effects on the

social sustainable performance (SOSPF) and environmentally sustainable performance (ENSPF) of an organization, but EL has insignificant effects on economic sustainable performance (ECSPF) (Nor-Aishah et al., 2020).

Nonprofit leaders could employ a mixture of (a) conceptual, (b) technical, and (c) interpersonal skills, as a practical business application, to improve their leadership skills for leading their organizations successfully. Leaders of nonprofits could reflect on their spiritual beliefs and practices to consider the influence their spirituality and moral attitudes have on their leadership (a) decisions, (b) actions, and (c) organizational outcomes, including sustainability performance. Leaders of nonprofits also could adopt an EL mindset, as a practical business application, to seek out entrepreneurial opportunities and incorporate entrepreneurial strategies into their long-term planning and short-term action plans for fresh perspectives and new ways to address existing challenges such as (a) diminishing predictable philanthropy and revenues, (b) volunteer recruitment and retention, and (c) streamline service dispensation. Nonprofit leaders also could adopt an EL mindset, as a practical business application, to gain a competitive advantage over any hybrid firms entering the nonprofit sector. Nonprofit leaders might consider incorporating these strategies into the leadership aspects of their strategic (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) management because a mixture of (a) conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills; (b) corporate spirituality awareness; and (c) leaders' entrepreneurial mindsets are viable elements to incorporate for a nonprofit organization's short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

## **Legal and Ethical Behavior**

The BoD and client leader prioritize legal compliance and ethical behavior through their decisions and actions and require the same standards of conduct from the organization's workforce. Ethical governance boards have a strong, positive correlation to TBL performance (Bakhsh, Mahmood, & Iqbal, 2019). High performing governance boards have notable, positive TBL connections with the (a) social, (b) environmental, and (c) economic bottom lines (Nursimloo, Ramdhony, & Mooneepen, 2020). Nursimloo et al. (2020) noted that their findings indicated an incentive for oversight boards to ensure accurate reporting and transparent voluntary disclosures to maintain trustworthy relationships with stakeholders. Board capital with stakeholders increases when board members possess a diversity of the right (a) knowledge, (b) skills, (c) background, and (d) experience for good organizational governance in public and private sectors (Ngu & Amran, 2019).

Board diversity has a direct effect on board performance. Board diversity, specifically gender and racial diversity, is a direct influencing factor on board governance policies and practices, including internal and external governance policies and practices (Buse, Bernstein, & Bilimoria, 2016). Board diversity increases board performance, which increases board capital. Diversity of board capital is a significant driver of effective organizational governance, (a) leading to healthy financial performance and high-level sustainability, (b) strengthening organizational reputation that again, in turn, (c) enhances financial performance and organizational sustainability (Ngu & Amran, 2019).

The practice of board (a) diversity, (c) inclusion, and (c) equity by organizational governance leaders create positive cyclical results of (a) organizational peak performance, (b) financial health, and (c) long-term sustainability. Nonprofit leaders could evaluate the organization's reporting practices and employ accurate reporting and transparent voluntary disclosures, as a practical business application, to improve their ethical governance and maintain trustworthy relationships with stakeholders to leading their organizations successfully. Leaders of nonprofits also could ensure that their governance board has a gender and racial diversity, which increases board governance policies and practices, in turn, increasing board capital with internal and external stakeholders. Nonprofit leaders might consider incorporating these strategies into the governance aspects of their strategic (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) management because (a) accurate reporting; (b) transparent voluntary disclosures; as well as (c) board diversity, inclusion, and equity are essential for a nonprofit organization's short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

### **Fiscal Responsibility and Strategy**

The BoD and client leader demonstrate a commitment to organizational success through fiscal responsibility and strategic (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) management. The client leadership has always balanced the annual budget during the 28 years of operation through budgetary fiduciary and short- and long-term strategic planning. Some governance boards continue to struggle with issues identified by scholars in the literature decades ago, such as (a) legal and ethical behavior, (b) financial

oversight, (c) strategic management, (d) recruitment difficulty, and (e) lack of board member engagement (Jaskyte & Holland, 2015).

West and Ries (2018) identified funding and financial stability among the top challenges facing nonprofit leaders, particularly Chief Financial Officers (CFOs). Organizational (a) mission, (b) funding, (c) financial health, and (d) financial sustainability are key points in candid conversations that nonprofit leaders have with their stakeholders such as (a) funders, (b) lenders, (c) supporters, (d) regulators, and (e) sector watchdog advocates (West & Ries, 2018). Strategic (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) management are crucial for nonprofit organizations' stability and sustainability since board membership changes usually occur every 2 to 4 years (Brosan & Levin, 2017). Senior leaders (a) affirm the organization's vision, mission, and priorities; (b) informs their decision making; and (c) guides the future organizational direction with strategic planning (Brosan & Levin, 2017). Leaders' sustainability strategies influence organizational sustainability outcomes. Senior leaders' sustainability strategies range from reactive, unsustainable strategies to proactive, sustainable strategies (Lopez-Cabrales & Valle-Cabrera, 2020).

A governance board's commitment to TBL has a direct influence on organizational strategic performance (OSP) and CSR outcomes and indirect TBL performance (Masud, Rashid, Khan, Bae, & Kim, 2019). Governance boards should consider (a) strategic plans, (b) a roadmap, and (c) an operational plan that evolves or is modifiable with rapid external disruptions or internal changes (Brosan & Levin, 2017). Successful governance boards create actionable steps to (a) establish a strategic planning

subcommittee; (b) collect internal data from process performance and stakeholders; (c) collect external data on emerging trends and competitors; (d) identify strategic planning areas based on aggregated internal and external data collection results; and (e) implement, assess, and improve the strategic plan often (or periodically) (Brosan & Levin, 2017). A governance board constructs a viable, fluid working plan rather than a finite report using these steps. Nonprofit leaders might consider incorporating the previously mentioned actionable steps that successful governance boards use into their governance aspect of effective strategic (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) management, as a practical business application, to improve organizational (a) performance, (b) stability, and (c) sustainability because financial responsibility and effective strategy are crucial for a nonprofit organization's short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

### **Customers**

The client organization, from the BoD to the frontline advocacy volunteers, has a customer-centered orientation demonstrated by empowering the voice of their clients (the children) and regular active customer engagement through weekly visits and interactions with the children in their care. Nonprofit leaders should understand the difference between their customers and other stakeholders because a customer-centered orientation is necessary to (a) listen to, (b) understand, and (c) meet the needs of the organization's primary customer (Mittal, 2018).

Some nonprofit leaders struggle with understanding the difference between the nonprofit's customers and other stakeholders. The customer is the reason why the

organization exists, and without customers, the organization is nonexistent. Some scholars consider all stakeholders customers (Jones & Shandiz, 2015). Nonprofit leaders cannot fully understand their customers' needs if senior leadership groups all stakeholders into one category and treats them as the primary customer (Mittal, 2018). The senior leadership is in jeopardy of becoming solely mission-centered instead of customer-centered when nonprofit leaders consider all stakeholders ([a] service recipients, [b] funders, [c] donors, [d] volunteers, [e] regulators, and [f] public) as their primary customer. The danger of a mission-centered only focus is that senior leaders might lose focus of satisfying the needs of their customers in pursuit of internal improvement activities that do not meet or exceed customers' needs (Mittal, 2018). The senior leadership should consider who are the direct recipients of the organization's services (Mittal, 2018). The answer is the identification of the organization's customers. The next consideration is the customers' direct needs and customer satisfaction drivers once senior leadership identifies their customers (Mittal, 2018).

All stakeholders are important. Nonprofit leaders can then identify the varying (a) needs, (b) expectations, and (c) satisfaction drivers of other stakeholders in addition to the primary customer (service recipient) (Jones & Shandiz, 2015). Customer satisfaction drivers are useful for quantifying TBL indicators. The profit indicator is a reflection of sales (for-profit) or funding and donations (nonprofit) (Darbari, Kannan, Agarwal, & Jha, 2019). The people indicator is a reflection of (a) jobs created, (b) employee turnover, and (c) philanthropic activities (for-profit), or (d) recipients served, and (e) volunteers trained and retained (nonprofit) (Darbari et al., 2019). The environmental indicator is a reflection

of any number of organizational activities such as manufacturing of (a) raw materials; (b) emissions; (c) waste disposal; or (d) recycling affecting the air, water, earth, or animals (Darbari et al., 2019). Some stakeholders might serve a purpose in meeting or protecting customers' needs throughout the value chain, but other stakeholders are not the primary customer (Mittal, 2018). Customer identification and customer-centered orientation in a nonprofit organization are critical to improved performance and compliance (Mittal, 2018).

Customer-centered orientation is vital to the organization's survival. Structured methodical surveys and other customer feedback tools for (a) listening to the voice of the customer, (b) assessing overall satisfaction and determining drivers of satisfaction as well as (c) customer loyalty are necessary for nonprofit leaders to successfully (a) listen to, (b) understand, and (c) meet the needs of their organization's customers rather than using (a) one-time surveys, (b) focus groups, or (c) events to gauge customers' satisfaction (Mittal, 2018). Nonprofit leaders might learn from their for-profit counterparts who masterfully employ various customer feedback tools for (a) listening to, (b) understanding, and (c) meeting the needs of their customers. Customer feedback analysis tools range from economical metric-tracking spreadsheets to sophisticated algorithms (Amarah & Langston, 2017; Darbari et al., 2019; Shapiro & Oystriick, 2018).

Customer-centered orientation is an (a) ongoing, (b) deep, and (c) systematic understanding of the nonprofit's primary customers' needs and satisfaction while also engaging in and cultivating relationships with other stakeholders to satisfy both the organizational mission and margin. Nonprofit leaders could ensure a customer-centered

orientation, as a practical business application, by (a) identifying their primary customers, (b) listening to the voice of their customers, (c) gaining an understanding of their primary customer's needs, and then (d) incorporating actionable goals into their strategic plan to meet and exceed customers' needs. Nonprofit leaders could repeat the same process to (a) identify, (b) listen to, and (c) understand other stakeholders' needs to incorporate actionable goals into their strategic plan to meet and exceed stakeholders' needs. Nonprofit leaders might consider incorporating these strategies into the customer and stakeholder aspects of their strategic (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) management because effective (a) listening to, (b) understanding, and (c) meeting the needs of the organization's primary customer are essential for a nonprofit organization's short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

### **Workforce and Other Stakeholders**

The senior leadership has excellent (a) communication flows, (b) engagement, and (c) involvement with all levels of the organization's workforce. The BoD and client leader built sustainable collaborative relationships with other service agencies and community partners. Scholars suggest that organizational leaders use two-way communication with internal and external stakeholders to (a) engage in dialogue; (b) listen to and understand better stakeholders' knowledge levels, attitudes, and needs; (c) receive feedback; (d) develop relationships; and (e) encourage participation (Shan, Panagiotopoulos, Regan, De Brun, Barnett, Wall, & McConnon, 2015). Senior leaders use two-way communication to demonstrate that they value stakeholders' voices and improve organizational performance (Shan et al., 2015).

Social media platforms have emerged as viable communication tools between organizational leaders and their stakeholders (Shan et al., 2015; Wang & Yang, 2020). Nonprofit leaders' use of social media platforms was primarily for sharing (a) mission stories and pictures, (b) useful information, (c) news links, and (d) mission advocacy (Wang & Yang, 2020). Nonprofit leaders focused more on informational communication than interactive communication on social media platforms, which is too time-consuming given that some nonprofits are small organizations and do not have staff with dedicated social media responsibilities (Wang & Yang, 2020). Some for-profit organizations have budgets for dedicated social media staff. For-profit leaders have the resources and dedicated time to regularly engage with customers on social media and consider the personal (a) desires, (b) opinions, and (c) feedback of their followers (Wang & Yang, 2020). For-profit leaders used social media as an interactive communication tool to answer consumers' and other stakeholders' questions or respond to their comments in real-time (Wang & Yang, 2020).

Offline interactive communication remains the most viable method that nonprofit leaders use to engage internal and external stakeholders. Most nonprofits are small, so the nonprofit leader has personal involvement with every aspect of the organization, from strategic planning to employee supervision (Drollinger, 2018; Jones & Shandiz, 2015). The nonprofit leader also is the central communicator and relationship builder upstream with the BoD and downstream with the organizational (a) staff; (b) volunteers; and in some cases, (c) service recipients; as well as (d) external stakeholders such as funders, regulators, and community partners (Drollinger, 2018; Jones & Shandiz, 2015). For-profit

leaders have an established understanding that effective listening and communication skills equate to (a) building trust, (b) developing long-term relationships, and (c) sustained sales with customers (Drollinger, 2018).

Nonprofit leaders' ability to effectively communicate and build trust with internal and external stakeholders is fundamental for the organization's long-term sustainability. Nonprofit leaders' facilitation of trust-building for boards and followers result in high-performing boards and workforce, in turn leading to fiscal health and operational peak performance (McAuley, 2019). Nonprofit leaders consider employees' good qualities vital to organizational success. Nonprofit leaders' transparent communication and authentic engagement are antecedents of employees' positive behavioral outcomes of (a) commitment, (b) organizational citizenship, and (c) job satisfaction (Akingbola & van den Berg, 2019). Positive and authentic leadership engagement has positive employee mindsets and work-related outcomes (Frino, Djibo, & Desiderio, 2019).

A growing trend in the nonprofit sector is interorganizational collaboration among human resource nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies to (a) reduce duplication of services, (b) increase cost effectiveness, and (c) prevent fragmentation or gaps of services to recipients (Atouba, 2019). Various factors shape these positive collaborative relationships, such as (a) effective communication, (b) trust, (c) prior reputation, and (d) experience of the nonprofit leaders (Atouba, 2019). Nonprofit leaders understand that effective listening and communication skills are critical to cultivating trustful relationships with funders and major donors, which is essential to strategically allot their time and energy to acquire larger gifts rather than spending considerable

organizational funds to acquire many smaller donation amounts (Drollinger, 2018). The risk with this strategy is that the nonprofit organization might become dependent on a few major donors, in turn placing their organization in financial jeopardy, given the recent economic downturn and depleting philanthropy trends. Nonprofit leaders might consider diversifying their mix of financial revenues to include (a) government and major funding, (b) small donations, and (c) entrepreneurial activities.

Nonprofit leaders' (a) effective communication, (b) engagement, (c) relationship building, and (d) collaborative activities with internal and external stakeholders are vital for sustaining nonprofit organizations. Nobrega de Almeida, Viana de Souza, Bastos Paiva, and de Barros Camara (2018) identified leaders' practices of communication and information dissemination of sustainability reports. The leaders used traditional forms of (a) mail, (b) telephonic, and (c) e-mail messages as communication with customers. The leaders relied on face-to-face and virtual methods, including (a) weekly, (b) monthly, and (c) annual meetings, to effectively communicate with suppliers (Nobrega de Almeida et al., 2018).

Leaders' knowledge of diverse information dissemination and communication practices is helpful for effective communication with a variety of customers and suppliers, contributing to the improvement of the relationships with their stakeholders. Nonprofit leaders could develop excellent (a) two-way communication flows, (b) engagement, and (c) involvement with all levels of their organization's workforce (internal) and stakeholders (external), as a practical business application, to (a) engage in dialogue; (b) listen to and understand better workforce and stakeholders' knowledge

levels, attitudes, and needs; (c) receive feedback; develop relationships; and (d) encourage participation in the organization's success. Nonprofit leaders also could cultivate trust and sustainable collaborative relationships with other community partners and agencies, as a practical business application, to (a) pool available community resources, (b) create community thinktanks for innovative, (c) collaborative problem-solving, and (d) streamline services. Nonprofit leaders might consider incorporating these strategies into the workforce and stakeholder aspects of their strategic (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) management because (a) effective communication and engagement, (b) trust building, and (c) collaboration are fundamental for a nonprofit organization's short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

### **Innovation**

The BoD and client leader proactively seek innovative ways to apply creative organizational thinking and solutions to existing organizational processes and challenges. Scholars increasingly regard social innovation as sustainable innovation and a necessary component of successfully implementing the TBL and operational excellence (Longoni & Cagliano, 2018; Svensson, Mahoney, & Hambrick, 2020). Innovation and innovative strategies might have varying meanings to different nonprofit leaders and subsectors (Svensson et al., 2020). Organizations have varying degrees of sustainable innovativeness knowledge and capabilities based on their (a) size, (b) resources, and (c) time perspective (Longoni & Cagliano, 2018).

Scholars and nonprofit practitioners have different meanings of innovation and innovativeness. Scholars define social innovation as disruptive while also solving or

improving social problems. Social innovation is a form of technology that relates to individuals' and organizations' efforts to create changes that have a broader and deeper significant effect on social systems and the disadvantaged social groups' experiences and perspectives as a whole (Shier et al., 2019). Moore et al. (2015) defined social innovation as any (a) project, (b) service, (c) process, (d) framework, or (e) model in which the social innovator questions the (a) existing patterns, (b) asset and power flows, and (c) assumptions in a social system where the development happens, resulting in disruptive changes that transpire over time. Social technologies are fresh concepts and practices intended to improve the overall macroquality of life in which a range of valuable choices are available to the identified groups (Shier et al., 2019).

Nonprofit practitioners' meanings of innovation and innovativeness have five themes (a) social transformation experimentation, (b) fiscal sustainability, (c) collaborative solutions, (d) fresh means for mission achievement, and (e) local contextual adaptations (Longoni & Cagliano, 2018). Organizational leaders with a (a) long-term strategic planning horizon, (b) high uncertainty and risk tolerance, (c) considerable capabilities for past experiences of learning, and (d) sustainable innovativeness expansion capacities prepare their organizations to mitigate and negotiate trade-offs between TBL dimensions (Longoni & Cagliano, 2018).

Organizational leaders have the opportunity, regardless of (a) size, (b) resources, and (c) time perspectives, to think creatively beyond existing constraints in new ways by challenging existing norms and protocols to discover uncharted strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. Nonprofit leadership might incorporate, as a

practical business application, one or more of the previously mentioned innovation and innovativeness themes into their strategic planning and management activities. Nonprofit leaders also could adopt a disruptive mindset, as a practical business application, to seek out creative organizational thinking and solutions to existing organizational processes and challenges. Nonprofit leaders might consider incorporating these strategies into the innovation aspect of their strategic (a) planning, (b) implementation, and (c) management because creative and disruptive thinking are necessary for a nonprofit organization's short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

The client organization achieved sustainability, as defined in the nonprofit sector, as (a) fiscal stability, (b) efficiency, and (c) effectiveness. The client organization's leadership in this study used systemic strategies of (a) effective ethical governance and leadership, (b) fiduciary responsibility, (c) long-term strategic planning, (d) efficient programmatic processes, (e) listening to the voice of the customer, (f) workforce preparedness, (g) stakeholder trust-building and collaboration, (h) internal and external fact-based benchmarking, (i) emergency and crisis preparedness, and (j) sustainable innovation including proactive revenue generation that other nonprofits could emulate to achieve peak performance in their organizational processes and performance outcomes. The client organization has several strengths, based on the Baldrige Excellence Framework, in (a) product and process results, (b) customer results, (c) workforce results, (d) leadership and governance results, and (e) financial and market results, which yielded an Integrated Approaches results (90%-100%). Overall, the client leadership employed successful strategies for (a) fiscal stability, (b) efficiency, (c) effectiveness, (d)

operational excellence, and (e) agility to achieve short-term survivability and long-term sustainability in the post-2008 Great Recession era and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study contributes to expand the sustainability body of knowledge with a comprehensive case study demonstrating how nonprofit leaders could apply (a) strategies, (b) action plans, (c) operational performance, (d) innovation, and (e) alternative revenue generation for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Nonprofit leaders in the United States are struggling to survive and keep their organizations operative, as essential organizations of society. Nonprofits undergird communities by providing critical services that the government officials and business leaders are unable to address for various reasons. Nonprofits are critical to the survival of (a) individuals, (b) families, (c) communities, and (d) society increasingly more than ever since the 2008 Great Recession and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonprofit leaders realize that governmental and philanthropic support continues to diminish, which increases the strain to satisfy both their mission and margin while the need for their services increased. Fifty-five percent of U.S. nonprofit organizations are without adequate cash reserves to sustain their operations beyond 3 months (McDonald et al., 2015) while facing statistical realities that 50% of first-time donors donate only one time, and nonprofits have attrition rates annually of 30% for repeat donors (Ramanath, 2016). Scholars and practitioners can gain an in-depth understanding about nonprofit systematic strategies and how to implement those strategies to position their organizations for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

I address in this study's findings each aspect of a nonprofit organization from the (a) boardroom, (b) leadership, (c) strategy, and (d) customers to the (e) frontline employees, (f) volunteers, and (g) other stakeholder relationships as well as (h) alternative revenue generation. The implications for positive social change are that nonprofits' survivability and sustainability have a direct impact on the most disadvantaged citizens in terms of services provided such as (a) food; (b) shelter; (c) physical, mental, and spiritual health; (d) education; (e) elderly well-being; (f) jobs training; (g) havens for the abused and neglected; (h) childcare; (i) community reentry of former prisoners; (j) transportation; and (k) advocacy; and (l) policy; as well as (m) access to the arts and (n) environmental stewardship. The positive social impact of nonprofits fosters outcomes of (a) hope, (b) stability, (c) self-worth, (d) self-esteem, (e) dignity, (f) safety, (g) health and well-being, (h) development, and (i) self-reliance for all individuals and organizations, which extend in benefits to all as part of the greater good.

### **Recommendations for Action**

I suggest that senior leadership consider focusing on social entrepreneurial activities as alternative revenues to increase organizational income. The client leader conveyed an openness to securing additional grants of any size to fund the work of the organization's mission, child advocacy. The client leader seeks innovative approaches to serve the children best and identifies organizational strengths and improvement areas. Economic downturns such as the 2008 Great Recession and 2020 COVID-19 pandemic have significant repercussions that affect nonprofits' fiscal stability in the short- and long-term including (a) increased competitiveness, (b) diminishing predictable revenues,

(c) depleting philanthropy, and (d) a simultaneous increased need for nonprofits' services by vulnerable populations (Ferro et al., 2019; Jensen, 2018; Kellner et al., 2017; Mataira et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015). Some nonprofit leaders welcome the concept of creating innovative, socially value-enhancing entrepreneurial operations that consider market forces and opportunities with great attraction and interest in response to deepening worries about declining resources and the fiscal health of their organizations (Mataira et al., 2014).

The client leadership could adopt an EL mindset and use social entrepreneurial activities as alternative revenues to increase income streams by creating added value to sustaining supporters. Social entrepreneurship is an established phenomenon to fund social programs in countries such as (a) the Philippines, (b) Great Britain, (c) France, and (d) the United States (Mataira et al., 2014). Nonprofit leaders must train and equip their organizations to pivot with agility and adaptive capabilities due to altered, increased competitive market conditions (Mataira et al., 2014). Some nonprofit leaders were struggling for their organizations' survival after the 2008 Great Recession, and further exacerbated by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Nonprofit leaders must shift their mental models of (a) funding, (b) fundraising, and (c) revenue generation in the nonprofit sector and pivot toward social entrepreneurial activities for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability as the competitive need for funding increases.

The social enterprise is an organization or program in which the leaders promote social change using traditional enterprise and market forces, focus on positive social outcomes of direct services and mission awareness rather than focusing on primarily

profit generation as in traditional enterprises (Bravo, 2016; Colley et al., 2017; Han & McKelvey, 2016; Horisch, 2015; Matairea et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015; Youssef, et al., 2018). SEs reinvest all earnings into the organization to facilitate increased positive social effects whether the organization has a for-profit or nonprofit legal structure (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016; Hemphill & Cullari, 2014; Kurland, 2017, 2018; Matairea et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015; Rusch et al., 2019).

Scholars found that fiscally healthy organizations have grant limits of approximately 14% of their total revenue portfolio (Ashley & Slyke, 2012). The nonprofit client leadership does not need to revamp their entire organizational (a) structure, (b) systems, or (c) processes to become a social enterprise; instead, the client leadership can pivot to adopt key social entrepreneurial activities to (a) increase organizational revenue generation, (b) manage dependency on grant funding, and (c) further diversify the organization's funding sources for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. Additionally, nonprofit leaders must organize and communicate their organizations' work with (a) brevity, (b) clarity, and (c) measurable statistics to engage supporters in these (a) busy, (b) distracted, and (c) economically strained times (Matairea et al., 2014). Social branding and advertising to attract and secure future financing needs is a valuable and critical strategic component as a counter-response to fiscally stringent realities in the nonprofit sector (Matairea et al., 2014). The creation of media presentations as a public announcement with a tagline is a valuable strategy to enhance fundraising efforts, such as campaigns for (a) food security, (b) poverty eradication, (c) safe drinking water, (d) social inclusion, (e) job creation, (f) personal and professional development, or

(g) ending the devastation of addiction to individuals and families (Mataira et al., 2014).

The client leadership could use a comprehensive media presentation using the organization's logo and tagline to enhance community awareness of child advocacy, using (a) traditional, (b) social media, and (c) mobile communication channels.

Hegner et al. (2017) identified that some marketing managers lack the necessary knowledge to achieve brand love with their customers, a key to brand sustainability. Organizational leaders must also understand mobile marketing's intricacies, including critical touchpoints throughout the customer journey (Grewal et al., 2016). Mobile marketing push-pull ads and engagements during the (a) trial, (b) repurchase, and (c) loyalty stages move the customer from awareness to brand loyalty (Grewal et al., 2016). Hegner et al. (2017) found that the ability to anthropomorphize a brand rather than brand affordability is the determining factor that facilitates brand love among frequent and infrequent brand-users. Hegner et al. (2017) concluded that brand love establishment is of the most significant importance for brand sustainability because brand lovers are sympathetic to and often forgiving of brands when brand (a) adversity, (b) disappointment, or (c) displeasure occurs.

Organizational leaders must understand how to integrate their (a) online, (b) social, (c) mobile, and (d) conventional data to gain a 360-degree customer view (Grewal et al., 2016). Organizational leaders need a clear understanding of the significant differences between online and mobile marketing compared to traditional offline marketing. Mobile marketing is a viable and innovative method for nonprofits to engage and reach potential supporters. Mobile marketing reduces the time and effort for donors

to support their favorite causes, thereby eliminating all donating barriers. A potential donor can use an instant text message (SMS) to send a keyword to a designated code, which allows them to give a small donation such as (a) \$1, (b) \$3, (c) \$5, or (d) \$10 to their favorite charity as well as encourage friends and family to do the same (Fames, 2012). A nonprofit could receive numerous donations in an instant on the strength of social viral giving, ignited by one collaborative supporter that engages other individuals in their social network, which creates a distinct competitive advantage from other organizations that still rely on traditional, costlier methods of donor fundraising and marketing.

Some nonprofit leaders have begun using mobile marketing as a creative solution to engage their organizations' valued (a) donors, (b) supporters, and (c) other stakeholders (Heraghty, 2014). Smartphones have a wide variety of ways to interact via (a) social media links, (b) interactive applications, and (c) text messaging (SMS), which constitute collectively a virtual ecosystem that is ideal for mobile marketing (Heraghty, 2014). Mobile applications and marketing are essentially the new platforms for communications between (a) businesses and customers, (b) donors, or (c) supporters, which is replacing the website platform. Nonprofits have many specific benefits when using mobile marketing including downloadable applications (apps) to foster engagement beyond social media "Likes" such as using (a) the person's name and sending greetings, (b) birthday wishes, (c) special offers, (d) confirming appointments, (e) updating supporters on a specific campaign or social justice issue, (f) QR codes for donors to access certain information and promotions, as well as (g) preset offer capabilities to send

offers at preselected times (Heraghty, 2014). Mobile marketing strategies are effective primarily because mobile communication has urgency and a way to connect through time-sensitive offers resulting in immediate and personal communication of a nature that captivates people (Heraghty, 2014).

Nonprofit leaders must also understand how to evaluate social media effectiveness and mobile engagement concerning the financial bottom line. Nonprofit leaders who master social branding and marketing of their causes will fare better at securing resources than those who do not learn to effectively wield this powerful tool (Mataira et al., 2014). The effective use of (a) social media business-customer interactivity, (b) brand engagement, and (c) brand love cultivation maximizes the potential results for (a) increased revenue, (b) profits, and (c) brand sustainability for organizations. Each facet of (a) business-customer interactivity, (b) brand engagement, and (c) brand love is essential because each one contributes to moving the consumer from brand awareness closer to brand sustainability.

Nonprofit leaders can use these strategies of (a) social branding, (b) business-customer interactivity, (c) brand engagement, and (d) brand love to efficiently and effectively engage and influence organizational stakeholders from (a) donors, (b) supporters, (c) advocates, and (d) other community stakeholders with digital competencies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. The client leadership could employ these same social entrepreneurial, and social branding tactics in combination to innovatively broaden the organization's revenue-generating and volunteer capacities. The client leadership might consider initiating a membership campaign in

conjunction with a marketing campaign previously suggested in the Process Opportunities section of this study.

Many of the major nonprofit organizations, such as (a) St. Jude, (b) Food for the Poor, (c) Wounded Warriors, (d) the Shriners' Hospital, and (e) the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, have membership programs that allow supporters to sustain the organization through monthly contributions with preset amounts ranging from (a) \$19, (b) \$25, (c) \$50, or (d) \$100 automatically deducted from a (a) credit card, (b) checking or (c) savings account. The organization's supporter receives a tangible thank you gift of their support such as a (a) t-shirt, (b) blanket, (c) address labels, (d) tote bag, (e) reusable shopping bag, or (f) travel mug with the organization's name and logo as a sustainable reminder of the organization's mission. The organization's supporter also receives a periodic magazine with stories of how the organizational supporters' resources have furthered the organizational work through direct (a) services, (b) advocacy, or (c) policy changes to benefit the organization's vulnerable population. The organization's supporters also receive social change actionable alerts and updates via mobile and email notifications about mission-driven issues.

The leadership of the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) mastered the art of SE activities with their extensive catalog of (a) educational DVDs, (b) musical sets, (c) books, (d) historical series, (e) t-shirts, (f) bumper stickers, (g) pens, (h) specialty items, (i) streaming media services, and (j) other items of varying interests to cater to their plethora of diverse supporters. PBS's leadership also effectively and efficiently continues to cultivate brand loyalty using various forms of communication such as (a) traditional

mailings, (b) e-mail messages, (c) a mobile app, (d) website, (e) television broadcasting, and (f) semiannual fundraising telethons. PBS's leadership engages supporters' altruistic and self-interest motivations with these various strategies. Nonprofit leaders seeking alternative revenue generation should study PBS's proactive revenue generation activities closely.

Scholars usually consider two opposing alternatives in donor motivation theories, selfless altruism, and self-interest (Worth, Pandey, Pandey, & Qadummi, 2019). Altruism is giving motivated primarily by (a) considering the benefits to others, (b) expressing empathy, or (c) a sense of duty (Worth et al., 2019). Self-interest is the benefit a donor receives in exchange for a monetary gift such as a (a) tax benefit, (b) recognition, (c) prestige, (d) social status, (e) relationships, or (f) psychological benefits such as joy and warm feelings from giving (Worth et al., 2019). In this same way, the client organization's leadership could design an innovative SE strategy to encompass a (a) membership program, (b) marketing campaign, and (c) tangible items, thereby tapping into the altruistic and self-interest motivations of supporters with tangible and intangible benefits to the organization's supporters. The innovative SE strategy outcomes could broaden awareness of (a) the organization's mission, (b) increase financial supporters and qualified volunteers, (c) inform sustainers of mission-critical updates, (d) promote upcoming events, and (e) increase the organization's alternative revenue-generating capacity.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The strengths of this study include a comprehensive literature review on sustainability and the TBL, and an in-depth qualitative single-case study of nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability to make sense of the phenomenon with rich, meaningful description. Limitations are shortcomings and weaknesses out of the control of the researcher that the researcher addresses through discussions with a (a) forthright, (b) practical, and (c) accurate self-criticism of one's research (Brutus et al., 2013; Ellis & Levy, 2009). The main limitation is the use of a single-case study and a small sample size. The focus of my single-case study was one nonprofit organization in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States in which I had contact with the organization's senior leaders only. The use of a single-case study limits the transferability of the study findings. The single-case study's information is not transferable, as noted by critics, because the data are reflective of a single, individualized organization, setting, and set of circumstances (Yin, 2018). My recommendation for future research is a multiple-case study to expand the (a) research, (b) understanding, and (c) findings of how different leaders in various nonprofit organizations employ strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. My second recommendation for future research is a multiple-case study of nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability during the COVID-19 pandemic. My third recommendation for future research is a longitudinal case study of nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. Future researchers

could focus on nonprofit leaders' varying strategies highlighting (a) differences, (b) similarities, (c) new EL mindsets and SE activities, or (d) disruptive strategies.

### **Reflections**

I began this DBA Doctoral Study process with limited to minimum knowledge of and experience with nonprofits' operational procedures and processes other than as a (a) donor to my favorite charities, (b) member-attendant at a place of worship, and (c) volunteer for my most-beloved causes. My primary identifiable bias, as a researcher and scholar-consultant, regarding the nonprofit sector was suspicions of the unethical use and distribution of funds collected by nonprofits. News reports of organizational leaders' misconduct and personal experience of a nonprofit leader's unethical use of organizational funds left me skeptical and with a clear bias about nonprofit leaders' fiduciary behavior and accountability. I followed a strict adherence to the research questions and protocols provided in the Baldrige Framework and Manual for the DBA Consulting Capstone in addition to the IRB guidelines to mitigate my researcher bias and the potential unfavorable effects on the research (a) participants, (b) my research reporting, and (c) findings (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2017; Walden University, 2019).

I learned many strategies about excellent organizational governance during this DBA Doctoral Study process, in which my preconceived attitudes about nonprofit leaders evolved. I realized that signs and demonstration of excellent (a) fiduciary accountability, (b) governance, and (c) leadership include (a) excellent record-keeping and regular reporting by nonprofit leaders to the governance board are imperative for the leader's

fiduciary accountability; (b) followed by transparency reporting to stakeholders by the governance board; and (c) third-party, and independent auditing. I have considerable respect for the client organization's governance and leadership because they are a successful model for other nonprofit leaders to follow for (a) fiduciary responsibility, (b) fiscal stability, (c) efficiency, and (d) effectiveness for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability.

### **Conclusion**

Sustainability matters more than ever as (a) financial, (b) health, and (c) environmental disasters affect lives at the (a) global, (b) national, (c) community, (d) family, and (e) individual levels. Leaders can no longer suppose or ask how sustainability affects them and their organizations. Suppose sentinels do not stand watch protecting goals of sustainable development at the international level such as (a) the World Health Organization tracking the spread of communicable diseases; (b) the International Monetary Fund promoting world economic stability; (c) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advising the public on pandemic mitigation and proper social distancing practices; or (d) other national, state, and local level leaders advocating for individuals well-being and the environment. Citizens might begin to see societies breakdown in unprecedented ways because no longer is the financial bottom line the only predictor of organizational health and societal well-being. The financial bottom line is an outcome of underlying actions such as (a) ethical governance and leadership, (b) successful strategy, (c) customer engagement, (d) workforce preparedness, (e) operational performance, (f) stakeholder trust-building and collaboration, (g) emergency and crisis mitigation, (h)

innovation, (i) social and environmental conduct, and (j) overall organizational well-being.

During the 2008 Great Recession, many people learned that individuals live in a global world and connected financially on a global scale. What happens on one side of the world can have consequential effects on the other side of the world. During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, many people learned that everything in the living world is connected directly or indirectly. Systems have far-reaching consequential effects on other seemingly unrelated systems. People, the planet, and profit impact each other. Leaders, strategy, performance, and results matter, but so do customers and front-line workers who are essential to citizens' survival. Furthermore, partners and viable supply chains are essential to responsibly (a) grow and harvest raw materials; (b) manufacture and produce; (c) transport; and (d) deliver goods and services to the end-users; while (e) mitigating harm to the (a) socially, (b) environmentally, and (c) financially connected ecosystem. People learned as customers that individuals must act responsibly, purchasing only what each person needs to leave enough for others. Moreover, the planet matters because without a healthy environment, no one, in the present generation or future generations, will survive.

### **Sign of the Times**

Global pandemics, systemic financial instability, unethical leadership behavior, and widespread social unrest indicate the (a) volatile, (b) complex, and (c) uncertain times that individuals live in and conduct business. No longer can organizations see issues related to (a) people, (b) the planet, and (c) profit in isolation in which one does

not have repercussions on the other. The ongoing business closures and layoffs due to the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the 2020 riots and looting across major U.S. cities; in addition to unprecedented (a) wildfires, (b) floods, and (c) storms as tangible signs of climate change are evidence of this point that business sustainability matters. The fact of the matter is that the TBL business is a sustainable business, for all types and sizes of organizations, from 2020 forward. Stakeholders' concerns and issues directly impact, positively or negatively, on organizations for 2020 forward. In the new volatile economy, the following actions by leaders are crucial for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability:

- Nanosecond agility to pivot as needed
- Excellent, loyal customer service
- Transparent, honest, and swift communication with stakeholders
- Strong, genuine, trusted partnerships and collaborations
- Embedded creative, unconventional thinking and disruptive innovation

Nonprofits matter because of their essential role in communities in which they address the needs that government officials and business leaders are unable to address for different reasons. As the volatility and unforeseeable crises of modernity continue to unfold, sustainable nonprofits are crucial on society's frontlines to serve the needs of and advocate for the rights of vulnerable and potentially marginalized populations. Nonprofits must be sovereign to do so. Nonprofit leaders must provide (a) effective ethical governance and leadership; (b) fiduciary responsibility; (c) long-term strategic planning, implementation, and management; (d) efficient programmatic processes; (e) heightened

customer engagement of listening to, understanding, and meeting their customers' needs; (f) workforce preparedness; (g) stakeholder trust-building and collaboration; (h) internal and external fact-based benchmarking; (i) emergency and crisis preparedness; and (j) sustainable innovation including entrepreneurial leadership and proactive alternative revenue generation. Nonprofit sustainability requires financial strength and stability, as well as systemic peak performance to survive unpredictable events in the short-term and steward the organization through evolutionary changes and shifts for longevity.

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## Appendix: DBA Interview Protocol

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Interview Protocol

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Introduction Script

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What I will do as part of the interview protocol is, as follows:

- Introduce myself and build rapport.
- Explain the interview process.
- Review the informed consent and human subject rights including rights to withdraw from the interview process at any time.
- Set the stage for future interviews by explaining what the participant should expect to occur during the interview process.
- Answer any questions about the interview process and schedule.
- Send the participant e-mail messages as a courtesy reminder of upcoming scheduled telephone interviews.

Introduction Script

Greetings [client leader name],

I am Aretha Day from Walden University's Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program. I will serve as scholar-consultant to your organization during the next 40 weeks in which I will interview you about nonprofit leaders' strategies for short-term survivability and long-term sustainability. I would like to schedule a telephone conversation with you to learn additional information about your organization, your role as the executive director, as well as your organizational needs and expectations for the DBA Consulting Capstone program. Likewise, I would like to discuss in detail your rights as a research participant including the informed consent form. Therefore, please provide two alternative dates and times for the coming week as well as the following week when we can have a 45-minute to an hour introductory session. Once I receive your availability, I will match it with my schedule and send you a confirmation email.

In the meantime, I will continue to explore the [insert client organization name here] website in preparation for our conversation. Likewise, I am providing my executive profile for your review. [Insert client name here], it is an honor and privilege to serve as a consultant to your organization. I look forward to working with you in the coming weeks to benefit [insert client organization name here] as well as the individuals and communities that you serve.

Warmest regards,

Aretha Day

Scholar-Consultant

Walden University, College Management & Technology,

Doctor Business Administration (DBA) Program  
Email: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx  
LinkedIn Profile: [www.linkedin/in/arethaday](http://www.linkedin/in/arethaday)

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### Interview Script

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1. The interview protocol begins.
  2. I will greet the participant and establish small talk before beginning the formal part of the interview.
  3. I will ask participant for permission to turn on the digital audio recording before beginning the interview.
  4. I will turn on the digital audio recording device and notify the participant that the recording is on.
  5. I will thank the participant again for agreeing to participate in the interview process.
  6. I will remind the participant that if they have any questions about the questions that I pose, please feel free to ask me to repeat the question or give further explanation.
  7. I will ask the participant if they have any questions at this time.
  8. I will ask the participant the interview questions. I will (a) listen intently for any nonverbal cues, (b) paraphrase interviewees answers, and (c) ask follow-up questions for clarification.
  9. I will wrap up telephone call ten minutes before the end of each session to ensure consideration of participants' time.
  10. I will thank participant again for agreeing to participate and ask for the next convenient date to continue the interview process.
  11. I will send a follow-up email recapping the telephone conversation along with a confirmation of the next scheduled interview date and time.
  12. I will send a follow-up e-mail message as a courtesy reminder of the next scheduled telephone interview.
  13. I will have a contingency plan for unexpected emergencies, cancellations, or rescheduling by interviewee or interviewer.
  14. The interview protocol ends.
-

- Listen for any nonverbal cues
  - Paraphrase interviewees answers
  - Ask follow-up questions for clarification
  - Have contingency plan for unexpected emergencies, cancellations, or rescheduling by interviewee or interviewer
1. Interview question
  2. Interview question
  3. Interview question
  4. Interview question
  5. Interview question
  6. Interview question
  7. Interview question
  8. Interview question
  9. Interview question
  10. Last interview question will include a follow-up question prompting interviewee for any additional information or experiences not covered in previous interviews...?
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### Wrap up Interview Script

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Wrap up interview thanking participant for time and engagement in interview

Greetings [client leader name],

Thank you for your participation in the Walden University DBA Consulting Capstone program. Your continued professionalism, time, and engagement have provided the necessary basis to complete my case study. Additionally, the data you provided are enabling this research study to come alive. For this, I thank you.

Warmest regards,

Aretha Day

Scholar-Consultant

Walden University, College Management & Technology,  
Doctor Business Administration (DBA) Program

Email: xxxxxxxxxxxx

Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx

LinkedIn Profile: [www.linkedin/in/arethaday](http://www.linkedin/in/arethaday)

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Schedule member checking

review of case study draft

Dear [Client Leader],

I would like to schedule a meeting with you to present a full draft of the Client Case Study.

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Send participant case study draft

for member checking via email

Dear [Client Leader],

I am sending you a full draft of the Client Case Study for your review of accuracy regarding your responses to the research question and follow-up questions.

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Make corrections and resend participant

subsequent case study draft for

member checking via email

Dear [Client Leader],

I am sending you a full draft of the Client Case Study with corrections for your review. Should you have any corrections or comments, please do not hesitate to make the notations on the document and return to me. I am also available by

phone to have a conversation  
about any part of the study.

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Repeat previous step until participant completes  
member checking process

Dear [Client Leader],  
I am honored to present to  
you a copy of the final Client  
Case Study.

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End of interview protocol procedures.

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