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Sustainability Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations

Ramchand Francisco
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Ramchand O. Francisco

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Review Committee

Dr. Rocky Dwyer, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Janice Garfield, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Denise Land, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2023

Abstract

Sustainability Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations

by

Ramchand O. Francisco

MBA, University of Maryland Global College 2018

BS, University of Phoenix, 2014

Consulting Capstone Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

April 2023

Abstract

Nonprofit leaders face the challenges of ensuring their organizations are financially healthy while navigating economic and organizational issues that require strategies to support program growth with limited financial resources. Grounded in Markowitz's modern portfolio theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies nonprofit leaders used to support program growth and sustainability with limited financial resources. The study participants were three leaders of a nonprofit organization in the northwest region of the United States who had expertise related to the focus of the research. Data were collected through semistructured interviews, analyses of the client organization's internal archival data, and organization documents. Data were analyzed using Yin's five-step approach, and three themes emerged: nonprofits need a paid workforce, stable revenue streams, and a post-pandemic strategy. A key recommendation for nonprofit leaders is to have multiple revenue streams. The implications for positive social change could include enabling nonprofit leaders to gain financial sustainability by having multiple sources of income so that their organizations can continue advocacies that could positively affect the communities they serve. By having more stable funding, nonprofits can have the financial freedom to operate and continue to improve their programs and offerings.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my four girls. My wife and partner, RacsiAnne, you are the wind beneath my wings. To my daughters, Isabela, Tala, and Laya, you can achieve anything in life. Go conquer the world.

Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to give thanks to God, for all things are possible through Him. I also want to thank my family and friends for their support during my doctoral journey. A special thanks to my wife, RacsiAnne, for holding down the Fort while I finished my degree. Thank you to my three daughters, Isabela, Tala, and Laya, you three inspire Daddy to be better every day.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In order for organizations to thrive, they need financial health to ensure continued growth and operations. In the nonprofit sector, financial health is the ability of a nonprofit organization to effectively impact the well-being of its communities while using financial and economic resources (Rottkamp, 2020). For this study, I used the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020) to explore sustainability strategies for nonprofit organizations. Throughout this study, I functioned as a scholar-consultant following Walden University's Consulting Capstone requirements.

Background of the Problem

It is important for nonprofit organizations to have financial stability to be able to successfully operate and grow their organizations. Nonprofit organizations depend on financial resources so that they can conduct their activities for the benefit of individuals, groups, or society (Aschari-Lincoln & Scheck, 2022). Nonprofit organizations, unlike for-profit businesses, derive their revenue through alternative sources such as donations and grants (Bansal et al., 2019). Because of this, nonprofit leaders face the challenge of not having a steady stream of revenue to grow their organizations.

The study was important because it gave nonprofit leaders strategies to improve the financial sustainability of their organizations. Previous researchers have focused on for-profit businesses and other organizations using the conceptual framework, but I addressed similar problems and alternative solutions in the nonprofit sector.

During the post-COVID-19 era, there is a need for a study to tackle the problem of nonprofit financial sustainability. There is a need for nonprofit leaders to learn

strategies that other business leaders are using to ensure the increased program growth of their organizations with limited financial resources.

Problem Statement

To ensure continued operations, the sustainability of nonprofit organizations is linked to the organization's ability to navigate and survive an unstable financial landscape (Aschari-Lincoln & Scheck, 2022). Based on the Nonprofit Center's State of the Sector Report, more than a third of nano nonprofits are struggling financially and are operating at significant financial risk (Nonprofit Center, 2022). The general business problem was that some nonprofit organizations' funding sources are insufficient to assure continuing operations. The specific business problem was that some nonprofit leaders lack strategies to support increased program growth with limited financial resources.

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. This study's targeted population consisted of leaders of a nonprofit organization in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States who successfully developed and implemented strategies to support increased administrative and program growth with limited financial resources. The implications for positive social change include enabling nonprofit leaders to gain financial sustainability and continue advocacies that positively affect the communities that they are serving.

Nature of the Study

There are three research methods: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed (Yin, 2018). I chose the qualitative method for this study. Qualitative research involves

collecting and analyzing nonnumerical data to gather gain in-depth insights regarding a research problem (Saunders et al., 2019). In comparison, a quantitative approach is used to examine variables' characteristics or relationships and is appropriate when numerical data are analyzed to answer the research questions (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). Because I did not examine variables' characteristics or relationships through hypotheses testing, a quantitative approach was not suitable for this study. In the mixed method, the researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the research question (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). Because of the focus of this study, the quantitative and mixed research methods were not appropriate for this study.

Qualitative research designs considered for this study included ethnography, narrative, phenomenological, and case study. I chose the single case study design for my research. Researchers use a single case study design to gain a comprehensive in-depth review of the problem or phenomenon (Yin, 2018). I did not select a multiple case study design because I am focusing on a single organization as part of the DBA Consulting Capstone program. Because I was not exploring the personal meanings of participants' lived experiences, the phenomenological method was not appropriate. In both the narrative and ethnographic approach, researchers rely on an individuals' written stories or explore participants' social interactions in a specific environment (Bauer, 2018), which I did not do.

Research Question

What strategies do nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources?

Interview Questions

1. What financial sustainability strategies have you implemented in your organization?
2. What fundraising strategies have you used in the past?
3. How do you assess the effectiveness of your strategies to achieve the desired performance outcomes?
4. What additional elements, comments, or information do you wish to add regarding your organization's strategies used to to achieve financial sustainability?

Conceptual Framework

Markowitz (1952, 1991) developed the modern portfolio theory (MPT) in 1952, which is the conceptual framework that I used for this study. Markowitz argued that the risk in a portfolio of diverse assets is less than the risk inherent in holding just one asset at a time. Markowitz (1952, 1991) enumerated two key concepts that can improve organizational financial sustainability: (a) every investor's goal is to maximize return for any level or risk and (b) risk is be reduced by diversifying a portfolio through individual, unrelated securities. For nonprofit organizations, revenue is derived from grants, donations, charity events as well as other fundraising methods.

By increasing the number of these revenue sources, nonprofit leaders can increase the financial return, and also reduce the risk of financial volatility. Markowitz's MPT is the conceptual framework lens for this single case qualitative study because MPT provides a diversified financial strategy that can reduce risk of financial volatility.

Combined with the Baldrige Excellence Framework as an assessment tool, I used Markowitz's modern portfolio theory as a lens to understand financial strategies that the organization's nonprofit leaders used to support increased program growth with limited financial resources.

Operational Definitions

Crowdfunding: A fundraising strategy that raises money from many individual donors through the internet (Taeuscher et al., 2021).

Financial sustainability: The ability of an organization to maintain a diverse source of revenue that enables the organization to continue providing ongoing quality services regardless of changes in funding sources, target population, and other internal and changes among its external stakeholders (Francois, 2014).

Nonprofit earned income: Revenue generated through activities such as membership, program, admission, performance, conference, symposium, and presentation fees, newsletters, advertising sales, and consulting services (Pue, 2019).

Portfolio diversification: A financial strategy to reduce resource dependence on any single revenue resource and maintain organization autonomy and overall financial stability (Qu, 2019).

Zero waste: A movement that promotes significantly reducing plastic consumption wherever possible by reducing consumption by reusing objects and material, shopping exclusively second-hand, and recycling any plastic (Müller & Schönbauer, 2020).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are ideas or positions that the researcher assumes to be true, which are not proven (Hart, 2018). I assumed that some nonprofit organizations leaders do not have sufficient funding to ensure continued operations. I also assumed that some nonprofit leaders lack financial stability strategies for the growth of their organizations. Lastly, I assumed that the financial insecurity that some nonprofit organizational leaders face stems from a lack of a diversified financial portfolio.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses beyond the control of a researcher and are associated with factors such as research design, funding constraints, or other factors (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). The first limitation of this single case study was that the information gathered mainly came from one nonprofit organization. The main source of information was the client organization's founder, a current leader, who is the only consistent member of the organization. The second limitation was that the nonprofit leadership has implemented a self-imposed hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, data gathered, including financial information, may represent a time gap. The third limitation was that I was not able to conduct any in-person research and was limited to information obtained through online interviews, surveys, and other available data online.

Delimitations

Delimitations are characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the study and are usually set by the author themselves (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). The focus of the study was nonprofit leaders of a nonprofit organization in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. The study was further bound by the 2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework and I aimed to respond to three questions: (a) Is the organization doing well as it needs to? (b) How do you know?, and (c) What and how should the organization improve or change?

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Financial sustainability is a top challenge for nonprofit organizations globally (Rottkamp, 2020). The envisioned study may offer potential value to both for-profit and nonprofit leaders because it may provide these leaders financial strategies to decrease financial volatility in their organizations. Having financial stability may enable leaders to continue to increase and grow their operations without unnecessary interruptions.

Implications for Social Change

The implication for positive social change is that by mitigating potential financial issues, nonprofit leaders can use their time and energy to focus on their organizations' programmatic growth. Nonprofits, unlike for-profit organizations, operate to serve the public and the communities in which they operate. By ensuring nonprofit leaders have effective strategies to ensure their organizations' financial sustainability, nonprofits can continue to provide value and positively impact the communities they are serving.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

In this qualitative single case study, I explored the strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. This study's targeted population consisted of leaders of a nonprofit organization in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States who successfully developed and implemented strategies to support increased administrative and program growth with limited financial resources. The implications for positive social change included enabling nonprofit leaders to gain financial sustainability and continue advocacies that positively affect the communities that they are serving. I chose MPT as the conceptual framework for my study to help nonprofit leaders with the financial sustainability of their organizations.

Organization of the Literature Review

During the organization of the literature review, I focused on topics related to strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased administrative and program growth with limited financial resources. I focused on peer-reviewed and nonpeer-reviewed journals, completed dissertations, books, articles, and websites to obtain information about revenue diversification strategies for nonprofit organizations. The topics that I explored in this literature review include the following: (a) modern portfolio theory, (b) value-based management, (c) COVID-19 and nonprofit organizations, (d) nonprofit sustainability, and (e) nonprofit leadership.

Strategy for Searching the Literature

I researched peer-reviewed journals, nonpeer-reviewed journals, books, and articles related to my study using the Walden University Library database and Google

Scholar databases linked to Walden University Library databases. I also used ABI/INFORM Complete, Business Source Premier, ProQuest Central, and Sage Journal as academic peer-reviewed databases for my literature review. The literature review included topics that contribute to understanding the study's research question: What strategies do nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources? The keywords that I used included: *nonprofit*, *modern portfolio theory*, *value-based management*, *socially responsibly investments*, *nonprofits and COVID-19*, *nonprofit sustainability*, and *nonprofit leadership*.

My main goal for the literature review was to find strategies that nonprofit leaders can use to increase administrative and program growth with limited financial resources. To achieve financial sustainability, nonprofit leaders have used modern portfolio theory and value-based management, which are two conceptual frameworks that I will discuss in this literature review. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has played a critical role in how nonprofits have operated since 2020, so it was important to discuss how nonprofit leaders must navigate a crisis such as the pandemic as they continue with their operations. I also explore nonprofit leadership and how it can positively affect nonprofit sustainability.

Modern Portfolio Theory

Markowitz's MPT was the conceptual framework lens for this single case qualitative study because MPT provided a diversified financial strategy that can reduce the risk of financial volatility. Markowitz (1952, 1991) developed MPT in 1952 and argued that the risk in a portfolio of diverse assets is less than the risk inherent in holding

just one asset at a time. Markowitz (1952, 1991) enumerated two key concepts that can improve organizational financial sustainability: (a) every investor's goal is to maximize return for any level of risk, and (b) risk is be reduced by diversifying a portfolio through individual, unrelated securities. For nonprofit organizations, revenue is derived from grants, donations, charity events, and other fundraising methods. By increasing the number of these revenue sources, nonprofit leaders can improve the financial return and reduce the risk of financial volatility.

Markowitz (1991) further explained that an effective diversified portfolio should be composed of assets that have returns that have low or negative correlation with each other. By employing this strategy, portfolios are not subject to the rise and fall of entire market classes or in the nonprofit world, revenue sources. Qu (2019) further explained that for nonprofit organizations, funding should come from different levels of government funding, categories of donations, and group of customers. Kingma (1993) developed a model for nonprofit organizations in which managers choose the optimal revenue mix that minimizes the unpredictable risk in a nonprofit's portfolio.

To fully integrate MPT in a nonprofit's financial portfolio, it is crucial to understand the different revenue sources for nonprofit organizations (Qu, 2019). Qu focused on six nonprofit revenue sources: direct public support, indirect public support from fundraising agencies, government grants, program service revenue (including membership dues), investment income and gross revenue from other commercial activities (rents, special events, sales of inventory). Qu showed that there is a positive

correlation between revenue diversification and financial health of nonprofit organizations.

MPT is a financial strategy to help organizations lessen financial risk and financial volatility (Matthies et al., 2019). My client organization's biggest problem was that leaders could not sustain its operations because of financial issues. For the purpose of this study, I refer to my client organization as XYZ. XYZ relies on multiple income streams, including donations and fundraising activities, but none has proved sustainable. Organizational leaders use MPT to support asset reallocation to diversify assets to reduce financial volatility. Although for-profit leaders remain the predominant users of MPT as a financial tool for sustainability, nonprofit organizational leaders have also benefitted from MPT. For example, Qu (2019) determined MPT is a viable tool to estimate the risk of nonprofit financial portfolios. In his research, he used the Herfindahl-Hirschman index to determine whether a portfolio was too concentrated on a particular revenue stream. Qu concluded that portfolio diversification has different effects on nonprofits. This difference is mainly based on whether the nonprofit is funded from government grants or commercial income. Nonprofits that receive the bulk of their budgets from government grants are not adversely affected by having fewer sources of revenue. Qu (2019) showed that organizations' financial sustainability is mainly dependent on their funding sources. Organizations that received government grants did not rely on a diversified portfolio.

Alternatively, Pratt (2018) argued how MPT is leveraged to maximize the returns of a traditional financial portfolio. The author also analyzed the risks associated with traditional investments, including market risk, industry risk, and firm risk. Additionally,

the author introduced using MPT for retirement plan investment. In this example, MPT was used in traditional investments. Based on Pratt's study results, it can be concluded that a diversification of assets and the financial portfolio is a strategy that can help both for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

Another helpful perspective is how MPT is leveraged with timing the markets. Hawley and Lukomnik (2018) discussed how MPT has had a massive impact on the financial world as it changed the market structure, investment philosophy, and investor behavior. The authors argued that while MPT has been helpful, investors and researchers alike might be focusing on the wrong timeframes. The authors suggested that while people should diversify their portfolios to avoid risk, they should also consider the time horizons of their investments because that dictates what risk you should or should not take. Again, their study provided an alternative approach to MPT. Instead of focusing on the benefits of this framework, the authors offered an alternative approach and look towards the time horizon as a factor that should affect the portfolio management of individuals and organizations. Hawley and Lukomnik further noted that a different perspective on how an individual or organizational leader can use MPT for their asset management.

It is important to discuss how an organization can use MPT to best allocate resources to protect environmental goods in the future. Ando et al. (2018) examined data from 26 different conversation cases to develop new metrics to evaluate how MPT can reduce uncertainty in the outcomes of environmental investments. The findings of the study show that MPT works best when multiple investments have negatively correlated

outcomes across climate scenarios. Researchers provided an alternative approach in using MPT to allocate resources for environmental investments (Ando et al., 2018). It is important to examine the study because the study shows how MPT has been adapted from the finance world and has been adapted to environmental challenges including fishery management, pest control and biodiversity conservation. This is another example that MPT can be used in settings outside of for-profit organizations.

Another critical factor is to examine how MPT has affected the financial health of nonprofit organizations that have employed it. Hung and Hager (2019) mentioned the influence of revenue stream diversification on the financial health of organizations. The authors reviewed 40 original studies reporting 296 instances in which they identified a statistically significant association between revenue diversification and nonprofit financial health. The authors also analyzed how revenue stream diversification can lead to less financial volatility and, eventually, financial sustainability. If nonprofit organizations have multiple sources of income, operations are less impacted if one of those sources suddenly dries up.

There are sufficient data that show that with the use of MPT, nonprofit organizational leaders have a better chance of achieving financial sustainability. Based on the 40 original cases from Hung and Hager's (2019) study, nonprofits with diverse revenue streams had a better financial standing than other organizations that relied on a few revenue streams. By achieving financial sustainability, nonprofit leaders can increase administrative program growth for their nonprofit organizations. Much like for-profit business, nonprofit organizations can benefit from the use of MPT to ensure financial

stability and sustainability. By having multiple sources of income, nonprofit leaders can ensure that continuous operations of their organizations as the lessen the risk of financial volatility.

Contrasting Theories

While the use of MPT in for-profit and nonprofit organizations has its advantages, there are also studies that state that concentration and not diversification is the better way of handling finances. Gronbjerg (1991) argued that with nonprofit organizations that have a high reliance of government funding and other institutions, it is better to concentrate on a single funding stream rather than waste money on multiple fundraising fronts. With a concentrated source of revenue, a nonprofit will have greater predictability and organizational control. Frumkin and Keating (2011) also explained that nonprofit organizations that are backed by government contracts have lower administrative and fundraising expenses. The study completed by Chikoto and Neely (2013) also showed that there is a positive correlation between revenue concentration and revenue growth over time. The authors argued that when nonprofit organizations and its leaders are not worried about fundraising and increasing revenue streams to support the programmatic growth of their organizations, the better it is for the organizations. Mayer et al. (2012) argued that adding additional revenue streams does not necessarily translate to reduced financial volatility. What organizations need to focus on is the composition change of a portfolio. Sacristán López de los Mozos et al. (2016) further argued that there are costs associated with acquiring and managing additional revenue sources. There are also other

factors to consider such as conflict of interest between donors as well as decreased operating efficiency brought by a diversified portfolio.

Value Based Management

I also considered value-based management (VBM) as a possible conceptual framework for my doctoral study. VBM is a management philosophy with the end goal of maximizing shareholder value. My client organization is currently working on ensuring financial and programmatic sustainability. An obvious way to do it is to ensure that it has enough funding to support its programs. For my nonprofit organization to achieve that, it needs to engage its shareholders and make a difference. While VBM has been used in for-profit businesses, I want to explore if the framework can also be applied to nonprofits. While the original VBM concepts focus on shareholder value being about long-term shareholder wealth maximization, I want to see if the shareholder value can be something other than monetary profits.

Cozmiuc and Petrișor (2020) investigated how the *new economy* and different business models brought about by digitalization have affected VBM. The authors focused on examining the link between digitalization and value. Cozmiuc and Petrișor examined Siemens, a European corporation leader in digitalization and VBM in its day-to-day operations. The authors used Siemens as a case subject for the study and detailed how the company has used VBM in today's business world. The authors also tackled the digitalization of products, services, and solutions. Cozmiuc and Petrișor identified how the digital age affected VBS. With my client organization trying to build up its digital presence in multiple mediums, it is important to examine how VBS can positively

support this objective. Firk et al. (2019) examined a longitudinal sample of VBM adopters and how their chief financial officers (CFOs) play a crucial role in its success. The researchers focused on the dynamic change when company CFOs change. The initial assumption from the research was that CFO's emphasis on VBM has a positive effect on their organizations. After examining the empirical data, the Firk et al. (2019) concluded that this was the case in most situations. The problem from different organizations is when there was a CFO change o the company, and most of the time, the new CFO did not value VBM as much as the older CFOs did. Findings from research is important to my client-leader because their goal is to ensure that in the future, the nonprofit is passed on to another individual. Thus, my client leader needs to remain financially stable to ensure long term sustainability. The lessons learned from this study of how CFOs shaped their organizations using VBM may provide the means to help with this effort.

Mella (2019) examined the key drivers for VBS. VBS is a new managerial technique as it only started in the 1990s. Mella focused on functional quality, design-based quality, and environmental quality. The author discussed how VBS aims to gain the maximum flow of profits back to its shareholders and how that affects the overall economic value of the firm. The author concluded that VBS must take the three qualities discussed earlier and develop a 'transformative' policy to ensure that these factors are being applied in the internal processes and products of the organization. Mella indicated products and services, their utility, value, and sustainability as drivers of consumer loyalty. With my client organization being an environmental nongovernment organization (ENGO), its leaders must develop consumer loyalty; therefore, I explored the strategies

behind VBS to determine if the concepts that are typically tailored to for-profit businesses apply to my client organization.

Socially Responsible Investments

Another theory possible for the conceptual framework which was considered for this study was the socially responsible investments (SRI). Mussell (2017) explored financial investment that focuses on SRI. The author examined whether implementing SRI can hinder investments in the world of finance. The author questioned who has the authority to deem one investment socially responsible and another investment not. Several factors are considered for this including the environmental, social, and economic corporate responsibilities of these organizations.

It is important to examine this study because SRI is something that investors and stakeholders are considering. My client leader has discussed that there are instances in which the organization cannot accept gifts or donations from certain donors, establishments, or organizations because these entities do not share the same values of my client organization. This is similar to socially responsible investments in which a person will not invest in a business because of a difference in values and beliefs. Unlike leaders of for-profit organizations, leaders of nonprofit organizations are not driven by how much money the organization can make for their stakeholders. Qu (2019) stated that nonprofit organizations have to balance how to generate sufficient liquidity from government funding, service fees, donations, grants, sales, and other revenue streams against remaining true to its mission and vision.

COVID-19 and Nonprofit Organizations

For this section of the literature review, I reviewed the impact COVID-19 has had on nonprofit organizations globally. While the pandemic has negatively affected many businesses, it has also altered how nonprofits leaders operate their organizations.

Impacting factors such as lack of funding, changes in consumer spending patterns, and decrease in community engagement has led to different challenges for nonprofits (Maher et al., 2020). By examining the impacts of COVID in nonprofit organizations, I searched for tips and strategies that I can apply to my client organization.

Maher et al. (2020) provided a framework for examining the fiscal effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors used surveys to assess local governments and nonprofit organizations' strategies during the pandemic. The authors debated the financial challenges to communities worldwide; and determined that communities now need nonprofits more than ever. The authors mentioned how the financial and managerial impacts of COVID-19 are full of uncertainty and how it is too early to grasp the extent of the effects of this pandemic. The researchers homed in on four factors that can positively affect nonprofits during these uncertain times: resilience, intention, sustain, and endurance. The authors received 297 survey responses from municipal and country governments, and nonprofit organizations. Overall, 36.6% of respondents reported good financial standing, 26% reported medium financial health, and 31.1% reported financial difficulty. Studying the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on nonprofit organizations is crucial because it may provide additional insight into what other nonprofits have faced during this pandemic. The pandemic has affected not only the

financial standing of local governments and nonprofits, but also it has adversely affected how people engage with organizations. Michener et al. (2020) examined the effects of COVID-19 on community engagement. The authors focused on the public health sector and recognized disparities in health incomes in the United States by race, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. The authors pointed out that communities showed their resiliency despite these challenges by leveraging community-engaged efforts to improve their health conditions. It is important to examine the effects of the current pandemic on communities across the United States. With the country's current racial and political tensions, my client had challenges to push its message and advocacy across its community. My client leader expressed concern regarding the country's current state and if it is appropriate to re-start their programs based on current events. The research by Michener et al. is relevant because the authors provided insight into this dilemma and suggested the way forward for my client leader.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the sustainability efforts of organizations around the world. Leaders of for-profit and nonprofit organizations were forced to adjust their processes and procedures due to COVID-19 (Hakovirta & Denuwara, 2020).

Studying these strategies may positively affect my client's organization as they aim to rebound from a period of inactivity caused by the pandemic. Hakovirta and Denuwara (2020) pointed out how the pandemic has forced the temporary closure of nonessential stores and services outside supermarkets and pharmacies in many countries.

Governments have also imposed restrictions on movement via curfews and border closures. Because of this unprecedented disruption in commerce globally, companies are

faced with challenges ranging from cash flow to decreasing consumer demand. Because of the drastic changes that industries have had to implement, the authors endeavored to redefine the concept of sustainability as it pertains to the COVID-19 environment given the challenges and changes over the last year. For this reason, organizations and their personnel worldwide were forced to adjust and alter their operations during the pandemic. While many organizations have closed and stopped operating, others braved the harsh conditions to survive this pandemic. We must examine the concept of sustainability during this *new normal* (Hakovirta & Denuwara, 2020).

Sarkodie and Owusu (2020) analyzed how the containment and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic have affected the mobility and manufacturing sectors and their waste management procedures. Waste management is key to society as it helps prevent health risks and the escalation of the spread of the virus. The authors pointed out how the lockdown and social distancing protocols have affected waste management for the study. The authors concluded that waste has increased because people are staying home. Additionally, more people use single-use products because they fear contracting the virus by touching things. Sarkodie and Owusu's research has utility because it can help my client leader understand the challenges, they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. My client organization's mission is to help reduce waste in their community by promoting zero-waste initiatives, and Sarkodie and Owusu's provided insights on consumers' preference for single-use items due to fear of contracting the virus. The unseen benefit from the authors' research is that countries have instituted policies to ensure the sustainable management of waste in their areas. From this information, I developed

strategies that my client leader can use to support their cause while continuing to serving their community. Similar to the manufacturing sector, Kumar et al. (2020) discussed how the global production and supply chain system has been completely disrupted by the widespread effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Nations (UN) launched the sustainable development agenda for 2030, addressing ongoing world challenges like climate change, zero hunger, and environmental degradation. Because of the pandemic, new social sustainability dimensions have come to the forefront. The authors stated how the virus has broken transportation links and distribution mechanisms between suppliers, production facilities, and customers. While most of the world has enforced total lockdowns, this has led to a surge in demand for essential products and services. It is important to study this because my client organization deals with zero waste in its community. The pandemic has presented a unique challenge because consuming more things generates more waste.

Winarsih and Fuad (2021) examined the effects of the COVID-10 pandemic on small and medium enterprises (SMEs). SMEs are some of the most vulnerable sectors due to the smaller size of the organizations. The different precautions brought about by the pandemic, such as social distancing, have adversely affected sales for SMEs. Winarsih and Fuad (2021) examined strategies such as digitalization to help SMEs survive during these tough times. SMEs that strengthen their online presence have a better chance of surviving than SMEs that refuse to adapt. It is important to examine this study because it points out a strategy that most organizations need to implement in their processes: digitalization. Organizational leaders need to leverage social media, online

shopping, digital marketing, and some other concepts to have a fighting chance to survive the COVID-19 pandemic. Consumers have become accustomed to purchasing online, and SMEs need leverage this movement to survive. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the sustainability efforts of nonprofit organizations globally. It is important to study what organizations have done to adapt and survive in the world we live in today. Duncan (2020) explored how nonprofits in the United States have struggled to maintain financial sustainability. The author used the resource dependence theory and general systems theory as lenses to examine this phenomenon. The author also used a qualitative study design to conduct interviews with 4 participants. The study's findings reinforced the need for nonprofits to adapt to the ever-changing economic environment to achieve financial sustainability and serve their communities. It is important to examine what successful nonprofit organizations are doing to achieve financial sustainability.

Nemțeanu and Dabija (2020) examined nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and their actions to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors pointed out how the virus has pushed the boundaries of the medical system and how the virus has negatively affected relationships because of social distancing, elevated stress, anxiety, and depression. In this study, the authors aim to find the best practices of NGOs to adjust and redefine their relationships with their communities amidst the pandemic. It is important to examine this article because it gives us the secondary and tertiary effects of the lesser-known pandemics. While we all know about the economic impact of the pandemic, we also need to talk about the emotional toll that the pandemic has caused on a large number of the population. Because of social distancing and isolation procedures, people are more

separated from the rest of society, and we are already seeing the negative effects of this (Nemțeanu & Dabija, 2020). One solution to combat the adverse effects of the pandemic is for nonprofits to reach out to for-profit businesses. Watson et al. (2020) discussed how nonprofit and for-profit organizations collaborate and form partnerships. The authors examined five case studies involving business-nonprofit engagement. The authors noted that positive outcomes from the partnerships are achieved when one or all of these factors are present: (a) partners enforce their interest, (b) both business and nonprofit combine their assets to create value for partners, society, and the environment and (c) partners navigating differences between institutional logic to enhance shared value. It is important to study how leaders of for-profit and nonprofit organizations adapt to survive. By collaborating and sometimes merging, these organizations combine their resources, cut the fat, and improve their brand image at the same time. We can explore a similar strategy with my client organization to partner up with a for-profit business to improve sustainability.

Severo et al. (2021) analyzed the impact of COVID-19 on sustainability. The authors surveyed 3,236 individuals from both Brazil and Portugal. The authors used the quantitative method to determine how people's behavior changed during the pandemic. The authors showed that the pandemic has helped raise awareness of society and the environment. Additionally, the pandemic has highlighted the need for sustainable consumption. It is important to study the effects of how the COVID-19 pandemic change people's behaviors because we want to know what people value these days. The pandemic has forced many organizations to adapt and survive their processes and

procedures (Severo et al., 2021). We do not have to endure the same mistakes by learning from what other organizations did.

With the restrictions brought about by social distancing, lockdowns, and other safety measures, it has been harder for nonprofit organizations to raise funds to continue to fund their operations and serve their communities. Bin-Nashwan et al. (2020) mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected nonprofits' fundraising efforts. Bin-Nashwan et al. assessed the impact of the pandemic on donors, volunteers, and charities. The authors aim to empirically examine people's intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to engage potential donors in communities positively. The authors used an online survey and received 565 useable responses. The authors concluded that potential donors are looking to contribute to front liners and other heavily affected industries because of the pandemic. These findings challenge my client organization as they are not directly involved with the fight against the pandemic. While funding sources have dried up for nonprofit organizations, the need for their services still remain. Deitrick et al. (2020) aimed to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local nonprofits and their ability to meet their community needs. The study was led by the University of San Diego's Nonprofit Institute. The authors administered a survey targeting nonprofit leaders to provide government officials and other decision-makers with real-time data. The authors also addressed the current economic conditions nonprofits face and their need for immediate and long-term support to continue serving their communities. I needed to study how certain areas and regions in the United States have come together to ensure their nonprofits have the resources to continue their advocacies. With my client

organization, the local government may offer financial aid to alleviate some of the financial and logistical challenges they face with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kim and Mason (2020) examined effective financial management processes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors used data from a survey of more than 600 nonprofit human service and arts organizations. The authors provided empirical data on the benefits of operating reserves for nonprofits. The researchers concluded that arts-and-culture nonprofits were more severely affected than human service nonprofits. It is important to study how nonprofit financial management has affected nonprofit organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic because it provides effective strategies that leaders of some organizations have implemented. With social distancing restrictions, nonprofits have been limited in their fundraising activities, so more than ever, effective financial management is key to nonprofit sustainability.

Nonprofit Sustainability

Unlike businesses that operate to produce profits, leaders of nonprofit organizations are faced with the challenge of providing value to their communities and determining ways to sustain their operations financially (Jensen, 2017). Sustainability is a key component of any nonprofit organization, and my research of this topic is important to gain insights on ways that I can help my client organization. Jensen (2017) mentioned how some nonprofit organizations have adopted for-profit innovations to ensure financial sustainability for their organizations. This study is important because my client organization has some products that can be turned into profit-generating initiatives. The author examined a homeless shelter and how it has challenged norms and adopted a

business-like structure to ensure over 30 years of continued operations. This author focused on a single case, the Assisi House, similar to my Consulting Capstone research. The researcher conducted participant-observation and 15 semistructured interviews with five guests, four volunteers, and six workers. The author concluded that nonprofits are there to serve local communities. Yet, they are constrained by legislators and administrators that have no familiarity with what is happening in the community. Nonprofits such as the Assisi House have had to result to unconventional ways to sustain operations and serve its community by capitalizing on for-profit initiatives.

Rottkamp (2020) tackled ways that nonprofit organizations can achieve sustainability. Rottkamp (2020) identified that 62% of nonprofit executives expressed that financial stability is a challenge within their organizations. Additionally, 86% of these leaders expected an increase in the need for their services. According to the author, some ways to help improve sustainability are achieving organizational alignment, having a good CPA, preparing for the worst possible scenario, understanding the marketplace, managing risk, thinking outside the box, and making tough decisions. Rousseau et al. (2019) focused on local environmental nonprofit organizations (LENOs) and how they contribute to sustainable cities and communities in the United States of America. The study analyzes nonprofit density and city sustainability in the different cities that the LENOs operate. The authors focused on urban cities where 50% of the world population lives. Similar to my client organization, these LENOs strive to provide value to the city and communities that they are in. The study also discusses the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development set by the United Nations General Assembly. The UN talks

about 17 sustainable development goals, and the 11th goal is to make cities safe and sustainable. The study results concluded that a higher density of LENO is directly associated with city sustainability. It supports the notion that high density and high performing nonprofits socially benefit the communities that they are in.

Environmental nongovernmental organizations (ENGO) have increased their presence worldwide, leading the discussion regarding the changing global climate (Cadman et al., 2020). My research on this topic was important to enhance my understanding of my client organization. ENGOs are different from traditional businesses where the bottom line maximizes profit. ENGOs across the globe have different mission sets and studying some of these organizations may give me tools, ideas, and best practices that I can share with my client organization. Cadman et al. (2020) focused on two ENGOs based in Canada, WWF-Canada (a national NGO) and the Ecology Action Centre (a local NGO), and their roles in protecting Marine Protected Areas (MPA). The study also discusses the critical role ENGOs play in conserving environmental resources. ENGOs must also navigate political alliances to ensure that they can get the adequate support they need from the state and federal governments. The authors highlighted the two ENGOs and their ability to adapt to an ever-changing environmental and political landscape. These leaders of these organizations engage in formal and informal fronts to ensure their objectives move forward. ENGOs are considered environmental watchdogs that ensure that the environment has a voice in both the economic and political.

Partelow et al. (2020) examined a dataset of 679 ENGOs to examine their organizational mission, structure, and diversity. The study focused on four topics:

environmental management, climate politics, environmental justice, and ecological modernization. The target population was ENGOs accredited by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The study confirmed the diversity of ENGOs across the globe. Numbers varied from small organizations to large entities with more than 400 employees. The variance also extended to the organization's budgets. The average for an ENGO is 17 employees and a \$3.1 million budget. The authors further assessed common words from the mission and vision of the organizations. The most popular words are environmental, development, and sustainable. These terms helped the study categorize the ENGOs. It is important to examine successful nonprofit organizations to whether I can apply their growth and sustainability practices to my client organization.

Walters (2018) provided fundamental knowledge and skills related to grant writing which is essential in raising funds for nonprofits. The study of this topic is important because leaders of my client organization have expressed the willingness to adopt grant writing to help the organization financially. Grantmaking and grant writing is an ever-changing world, and nonprofit leaders must stay abreast with the changes in that world to be competitive. One key element that the author discussed is uncovering needs in the community. This will often lead to funding opportunities with the local government and the private sector. The author provided step-by-step instructions for new nonprofits and techniques to improve areas such as budgeting, program implementation, logic models, and sustainability.

With the increased competition in fundraising for nonprofits, crowdfunding has been a welcome development in raising resources. Crowdfunding is the process of raising funds through small contributions made online. Zhou and Ye (2019) reviewed 109 nonprofit campaigns in a crowdfunding platform to determine what worked and what did not for these organizations. Zhou and Ye (2019) suggested crowdfunding techniques that may increase fundraising, such as professionalism, persuasive narratives, media-rich content, and effective communication mediums. Another factor plays a crucial role in establishing credibility and legitimacy with the target audience. In the end, authors concluded that people who donate to these crowdfunding platforms look at three things: legitimacy, the argument for worthiness, and social media networks. It is important that nonprofits need to differentiate themselves to ensure that they receive consistent funding from donors. To do this, nonprofits need to innovate and provide value to their shareholders. In his study, Coleman (2019) identified strategies that nonprofit leaders can use to achieve financial stability. Nonprofit organizations can fail to achieve their mission and vision without sustainable funding. Coleman used a balanced scorecard model to conduct multiple case studies to explore different financial strategies from five executive directors of nonprofit organizations in Ohio. Coleman indicated that financial stability was achieved when nonprofit leaders employ effective programming to fulfill their mission and vision by developing collaborative relationships and improving donor commitment through reoccurring donations or endowments. Collaborative relationships can help with financial strategy. My client organization is trying to implement this concept in her nonprofit. Partnering with schools and other establishments in the Pacific

Northwest may lead to a more sustainable financial outlook for the nonprofit. Both authors provided alternative ways nonprofit organizations can increase funding and gain financial stability.

Salway (2020) explored finance and funding models for nonprofit organizations. The author mentioned that nonprofits had been hit hard for the past 10 years because of the financial crises. This is caused by individuals giving less and government funding decline. Compared to the for-profit sector, which has continued to grow even after the financial collapse. In the United Kingdom, 46.7% of nonprofit funding comes from individuals, 32% from the government and grants, and 21.3% from corporate investment. The author mentioned that a shift from this traditional funding to newer funding methods would increase the nonprofit's sustainability, impact, ability the needs of its shareholders, and ability to scale up. It is important to examine this study to provide strategies to help my client organization with fundraising. With the COVID-19 pandemic, fundraising has been put to a halt, and to start back up, leaders are looking for new ways to drum up excitement and attention to the nonprofit and its advocacies.

Gleaves (2017) argued that an organization will only go as far as its leadership team will take it. Gleaves examined an organization and used the transformational leadership theory as the study's conceptual framework. The author discussed different financial strategies for nonprofits to include planned giving, leveraging websites and social media. While all these strategies are helpful, Graves specified that leadership is the most important factor for improving financial sustainability. Gleaves pointed out a common flaw for many nonprofits that are struggling with financial sustainability, and

that is having the right capable leaders steering the ship. While there are many strategies out there to increase portfolio diversification for organizations, organizations will continue to have these problems if the leaders are not using the resources properly. Alternatively, Ntamere (2018) analyzed how radical choice application can lead to nonprofit sustainability. The author also explored how integrated leadership as the backbone of nonprofit leadership. Integrated leadership enables managers to help individuals make career decisions beyond the obvious factors such as pay, perquisites, and location. The author also stated that by applying concepts from business decision-making theories, organizations can positively impact the recruitment and management of nonprofit volunteers. The author took a different approach to nonprofit leadership and sustainability by introducing integrated leadership and other business strategies to improve nonprofit sustainability. Nonprofits, in general, are powered by many volunteers, and by using integrated leadership, nonprofits may be able to get more value out of their mostly volunteer workforce. It is important to study this article because it provided an alternative approach for my client organization. By applying integrated leadership and business concepts, we might be able to change the trajectory of our finances and improve financial sustainability.

Santos et al. (2019) tackled research trends for organizational reputation in the nonprofit sector. More specifically, the authors analyzed 177 articles linked to the reputation of nonprofits and how that has affected these organizations. The authors recognize the increased competition between nonprofits as they vie for a slice of available funds. The authors concluded that nonprofit leaders need to develop skills to

navigate and leverage the internet and the different social networks. Once again, the article points out how nonprofit leaders must adapt to the competitive fundraising world. They must raise awareness for their organizations by leveraging the internet and social media. The authors reaffirmed our (me and my client-organization) belief that we must use the internet and social media as strategies that will help improve my client-leaders organization's financial standing.

Press et al. (2020) focused on the role of linked legitimacy in sustainable business model development. For this paper, the authors used legitimacy as a lens to explore sustainable business models (SBMs) and how they are developed in the business world. The authors argued that legitimacy is a resource cultivated by past sustainable development projects. Additionally, the authors talked about 'linked legitimacy' as a concept where an organization can use a past successful project as an anchor to tout its credibility. They can also use linked legitimacy to collaborate with an already established brand to increase credibility. The authors provided a unique way of providing added value to stakeholders. In the world of for-profit and nonprofit organizations, credibility is key, and this is linked to past performance. Linked legitimacy is a concept where organizations can highlight successful past performances or new collaborations to improve their brand image.

Nonprofit Leadership

Leadership is a concept that is always evolving. Multiple leadership theories have evolved to ensure that the leadership style remains relevant to organizations (Anderson et al., 2017). There are articles about leadership styles and theories, but less is known about

innovations in leadership. There is a gap in understanding how today's leaders can maintain relevance with the changes in technology, globalization, and diversity in the workplace. Because my client organization is founded and currently run by one individual, it is important to examine leadership theories positively affecting nonprofit sustainability.

Anderson et al. (2017) explored the shift in leadership styles that work for the younger generation. The authors mentioned how Millennials or the GenMe generation have different expectations from their leaders and the workforce. The authors explored the five most frequently used leadership theories and how they relate to today's generation. The authors explored the individual differences, work values, and attitudes of different generations about their work. The authors tackled increased individualism, increased focus on work-life balance, and increased entitlement as factors negatively affecting younger generations' work production. The authors also described how leadership theories such as transformational leadership are not as effective to the younger generation because they are self-focused on their own needs and not motivated by the organization's goals. The authors mentioned how younger generations' values and mindsets have changed because of technology, globalization, and diversity in the workplace. The paper provides suggestions on how today's leaders can adapt and innovate to work with the younger generation more effectively. It is important to study this paper because many of the interns and volunteers that my client organization receives are from the Millennial generation. It is important to find ways to better relate to this generation to foster employee buy-in and maximize production.

Henry et al. (2015) reflected on the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and women. The authors focused on the recent shift in global organizations, which has allowed females to lead. The authors stated the biases and misdirection that female leaders faced and how the narrative is shifting today. This article is important because compared to the general body of research regarding leadership, there is a noticeable gap in the articles about women in positions of power in the entrepreneurial world. The authors summarized and critiqued articles that tackled entrepreneurial leadership and women. The authors selected a total of seven papers that they discussed. The paper also discussed the relationship between a country's political status and laws directly affecting women's roles in business. The authors discussed traditional views of women being less effective than their male counterparts concerning running organizations. The authors pointed out how this way of thinking is outdated and inaccurate. Because the founder and leader of my client organization are female, it is important to study women's current shift in global organizations.

Ren et al. (2018) examined new generation employees in China and their preferred leadership styles. This paper is important as it provides an insight into one of the biggest workforces in the world. The authors tackled the shift from leadership-centric to follower-centric and how that has affected employee dynamics. It is important to note that China has seen tremendous increased economic growth in the past 30 years with its workforce. The workers have served as the country's backbone, and it is important to explore their needs from their leaders. The authors reported a shift towards relationship-oriented leadership styles in Chinese organizations because it is now the preferred

leadership method of the Chinese workforce. This is a significant shift from the authoritarian leadership style that has been prevalent throughout the country's politics and business history. New generation employees have stated dissatisfaction over low relationship-oriented leadership styles, and this has, in turn, made them try to change the status quo. The authors mention how trust plays a crucial role in the employer-employee relationship. New generation employees value trustworthiness as they equate it to leaders who will protect their rights and interests. The paper also talks about the new generation of employees' need for involvement and how that has changed leadership approaches in organizations. The authors examined the employer-employee relationship and how the new generation wants to be treated in an organization. The workforce is an area that my client organization lacks, and to build a cohesive team, it is important to understand the best way to relate to these individuals.

Sauer (2011) analyzed new leaders in an organization and how their different leadership styles and approaches can affect team performance. The author provided insight into two case studies that compare a low-status leader with a high-status leader. The case study showed that the low-status leader is more effective when using a directive style. On the other hand, the high-status leader is rated more effective when it uses the participative style. Low-status leaders are praised for their self-confidence in being direct and wield their limited positional power effectively within their organization. High-status leaders are also praised when they do not rely solely on their status and influence as they build personal relationships with their employees. Self-confidence is a key trait attributed to the success of both low-status and high-status leaders. Overall, 68 people participated

in the study as the authors explored their work centers to determine employee leadership style preference. The incoming leaders' characteristics were influenced by pre-assigned factors such as age, educational background, and previous work experience. All these factors played a part in portraying if the leader is low-status or high-status.

Moldoveanu and Narayandas (2019) focused on the need for leadership development in today's organizations. The authors stated how traditional approaches to leadership development no longer meet the needs of organizations or individuals. Throughout the paper, the authors point to three central reasons why the old leadership development methods do not work anymore. The first reason is that organizations do not benefit as much as individuals do when investing in leadership development. Another reason is that leadership development companies do not provide the necessary soft skills to benefit organizations. The third reason is a disconnect in the lessons provided by leadership development companies to the real-world applications that organizations face. The authors provided an insight into the big business that is leadership development. Leadership development companies are scrambling to roll out new programs and seminars to capitalize on the industry gap. As the learning environment shifts from the traditional brick and mortar to online learning platforms, companies are hard-pressed to find new ways to develop their executive leaders. The authors also tackled the future of leadership development. The personal learning cloud (PLC) makes what the future may look like. Moldoveanu and Narayandas (2019) discussed the advantages that the PLC has over traditional leadership development. Learning is also contextualized as learnings value development relevant to their work environment. It is important to examine

nonprofit leaders and the different strategies they have used in growing their organizations and the challenges they face daily. There is much focus on for-profit business leaders, founders, and CEOs, but a lack of studies focused on nonprofit leaders. The authors focused on the different challenges that nonprofit leaders face. These challenges include starting the organization, paying for the nonprofit workforce, and follower engagement and loyalty.

Kim and Charbonneau (2018) stated how nonprofit leaders constantly struggle with the inability to pay competitive wages. The authors gathered its information by surveying 467 nonprofits and their executive directors. In the study, the authors concluded that donative labor is a sacrifice that nonprofit employees must make to ensure the survivability of nonprofit organizations. Morally rewarding work is something that some employees value as compensation for their sacrifice. The study of this topic is essential because my client organization comprises an all-volunteer work core spearheaded by their founder, who volunteers over 40 hours a week without pay. During our initial meetings, we have discussed the need for a more sustainable model for their organization, and proper compensation is one way to achieve this.

Silard (2017) suggested a lack of focus when it comes to nonprofit leaders and their emotion-related leadership behavior within their organizations. The author gathered data from 34 leaders and followers from different nonprofit organizations. Positive leader behaviors that affect nonprofit organizations are: (a) perceived organizational social purpose and (b) perceived self-sacrifice. These actions positively influenced follower incomes in terms of positive engagement and loyalty. This study is important because my

client organization is driven by its founder, who is also their only full-time volunteer.

Because of this and other organizational challenges, emotion-related leadership behavior can affect my client organization's growth and trajectory.

Transition

Section 1 of this paper was about the foundation of the study. In this section, I presented information about the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study. The general business problem is that some nonprofit organizations' funding sources are insufficient to assure continuing operations. The specific business problem is that some nonprofit leaders lack strategies to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. I discussed the need for nonprofit organizations to have financial sustainability to be able to operate and grow their organizations. I also discussed the research question and interview questions that I asked the participants of the city. Additionally, I also explained the why I chose the conceptual framework for my study and discussed the operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study.

Section 1 also featured literature relevant to the study to include the framework I chose for the study, modern portfolio theory and other frameworks I considered such as value-based management and socially responsible investments. By employing the modern portfolio theory, nonprofits can achieve financial sustainability since the organization will have multiple sources of income. By not having to depend on only a few revenue

streams, nonprofits can withstand financial volatility and continue their operations. I also discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected nonprofit organizations. The pandemic has changed how organizations operate and it is vital that nonprofits implement strategies that will keep them relevant post-pandemic. Lastly, I analyzed the current state of nonprofit sustainability and nonprofit leadership.

In Section 2 of this paper, I describe the study itself. This section includes the purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data organization technique, data analysis, reliability and validity, and transition and summary.

Section 3 of this paper will feature the organizational profile of my client organization. This section will present information that includes the key factors worksheet, leadership triad, results triad, collection, analysis, and preparation of results, project summary, contributions and recommendations, application for professional practice, implication for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, reflections, and conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

Section 1 included the foundation of the study, as well as a comprehensive literature review on financial sustainability strategies for nonprofit organizations. In Section 2, I present information regarding the study, including the participants, research method and design, and how I collected and analyzed the data gathered during the research phase of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. The participants in this study consisted of leaders in a nonprofit organization located in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States who successfully developed and implemented strategies to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. The implications for positive social change include enabling nonprofit leaders to gain financial sustainability and continue advocacies that positively affect the communities that they are serving.

Role of the Researcher

I requested consideration and was selected to participate in Walden University's DBA Consulting Capstone program. The Consulting Capstone is one of three doctoral study capstone options where students are partnered with client organizations to assess organizational performance using the Baldrige Excellence Framework. Doctoral students and partner organizations go through a rigorous and detailed selection process. Both parties also adhere to specific Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements and

expectations. To start the process, I was introduced to the client-leader of XYZ organization, and, after several meetings and interviews, the leader and I formulated the general and specific business problem for the study. I then contacted other leaders within the organization to schedule interviews and start the data gathering process.

The role of the researcher in a single case qualitative study is to collect, analyze, and interpret the data to increase understanding of the doctoral study topic (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). Before undertaking this study, I had limited knowledge and understanding of nonprofit financial sustainability. I did not have a prior relationship with my client organization or any of the participants of this study. For the research, I received IRB approval to interview individuals associated with a nonprofit organization located in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. As a researcher, it was my responsibility to ensure that the protocols of the *Belmont Report* are upheld. These protocols include beneficence, respect for the person, and justice regarding the participants of my research study (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). It is also the researcher's primary responsibility to protect participants and the information gathered from the research (Cragoe, 2017). Throughout the interview process, I reminded the participants that all data gathered from the interviews would be used solely for the study, and ensured by the DBA Research Agreement, my compliance with IRB requirements, and my adherence to Walden's code of ethical conduct (Walden University, 2022).

For this qualitative study, I mitigated bias and avoided viewing the data through a personal perspective by incorporating self-awareness strategies and following ethical

research protocols described by Yin (2018). I examined my research and interview questions so that the questions did not reflect bias. I followed the same interview protocol (see Appendix) for all interviews to ensure that I maintained consistency and eliminated any bias based on responses. After each interview, I confirmed that I recorded and validated the data while remaining mindful of any bias that may affect the research. I ensured that I remained mindful during the interview by adhering to the interview protocol and avoiding making unnecessary comments during the interview. Reviewing the data gathered from the participants after each interview improved and helped to ensure credibility of the data collection process. I also used member checking to avoid issues with the data collection process. I accomplished this by making sure the participants confirmed the information they provided to ensure accurate data for the study.

Participants

The participants in this study included three nonprofit leaders from XYZ nonprofit organization. The organization was selected to partner with Walden University and the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) Consulting Capstone. The leader of the client organization agreed to participate in the study through a research agreement. A participant is an individual that provides information that can be used in a case study (Yin, 2018). The eligibility criteria for the study participants were that they were employed with XYZ in a leadership capacity and that they were willing to participate in the study. The leader of the client organization provided me a list of organization leaders including board members and other individuals who

have worked with XYZ for a significant amount of time. I contacted these individuals and received signed consent forms from individuals who wanted to participate in the study. I used scheduled virtual interviews with leaders of XYZ to gather data. As the researcher, it is important that I built rapport with the participants and made them feel comfortable before, during, and after the interview. I used the interview protocol (Appendix A) on all three participants. I started with a few background questions to establish rapport and learn more about the participants and their role with the organization. I then asked the interview questions and followed-up with clarifying questions, if needed. It is important that the interview questions align with the research question (McGrath et al., 2018). The credentials and nonprofit experience of the study participants aligned with the overarching research question: What strategies do nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources?

I did not have a previous relationship with XYZ or the staff; I was assigned to serve as scholar-consultant to the client organization by the DBA Program Consulting Capstone coordinator. Introduction to the client leader by the capstone coordinator enabled me to establish a relationship with the XYZ leader and achieve consensus regarding the business problem for the doctoral study. Scholar-consultants in the DBA Consulting Capstone use the Baldrige Excellence Framework as a tool to help ensure a holistic evaluation of the client organization. The framework (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020) focuses on seven aspects of organizational performance:

1. leadership
2. strategy
3. customers
4. measurement, analysis, and knowledge management
5. workforce
6. operations
7. results

Research Method and Design

Research Method

I chose the qualitative research method for this study. When conducting qualitative research, researchers use a conceptual framework and a variety of data collection tools and techniques (Saunders et al., 2019). More specifically, I used the multimethod qualitative study for this research because I used more than one qualitative data collection technique and analytical procedure. I used content analysis to identify patterns from the interviews and documents that I gathered. I also used thematic analysis to identify meaningful themes that revealed key insight during the interviews.

I also considered the quantitative and mixed methods. I did not use the quantitative research and mixed research methods because these methods are used to examine numerical data with the use of statistical analysis (Walker & Baxter, 2019). I did not use the quantitative approach as this method is commonly used when data collection methods yield numerical data (Saunders et al., 2019).

Researchers use a quantitative methodology to examine the relationships between variables that are measured numerically and are analyzed with the use of statistics and other mathematical techniques (Boeren, 2017). I did not use the quantitative approach for this study because there was no need to examine the relationships between statistical numbers. The mixed method is appropriate for studies when both qualitative and quantitative research methods benefit the study (Saunders et al., 2019). I did not use the mixed research method because of XYZ's business problem. I chose the qualitative methods because it was the most appropriate method to answer the research question effectively.

Research Design

I selected the single case research design for this study. A single case study design affords the researcher an extensive and in-depth look at a problem or phenomenon (Yin, 2018). I also explored other research designs before choosing the single case study design for this research. I explored the multiple case study method; however, as a scholar-consultant in the DBA Consulting Capstone, I decided that the single case study method is the most appropriate method so that I can focus on my client-organization. Researchers can also mix and match different methods, techniques, and designs to complete research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Although the two-case and multiple-case design studies increase the chance of a theoretical replication, I did not choose the multiple-case study design for this study because my study is focused on exploring processes used by leaders of XYZ and does not include an exploration of other nonprofit organizations.

Other qualitative study case designs were also considered for this study, including phenomenological, narrative, and ethnographic designs. A phenomenological approach is more appropriate when exploring a common lived experience from a particular group of people. I did not explore lived experiences; therefore, a phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study. In a narrative approach, researchers collect data by focusing on the lives of individuals as told through their own stories (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). Because I focused on studying a nonprofit organization and not just one individual, a narrative approach was not suitable. An ethnographic approach focuses on participants' social interaction in a specific environment (Bauer, 2018). There are advantages and disadvantages to using each of the three research designs. Qualitative researchers should consider factors such as application, validity, and purposefulness (Harrison et al., 2017). Having considered the other qualitative study case designs, a single case design was the most appropriate for the research topic because I can undertake a focused approach to researching and providing solutions to the business problem of the nonprofit organization.

It was important to ensure that data saturation was achieved in this study. In qualitative research, data saturation is achieved when similar themes are recurring throughout the study and there is no new information presented in the rest of the sources of data (Saunders et al., 2019). When conducting my research, I started seeing the same resources listed as references and that is when I determined that I achieved data saturation.

Population and Sampling

I used purposive sampling to select the three participants of this single case study. This sampling technique relies on the researcher to choose the participants at their discretion to participate in the study (Etikan et al., 2016). The participants all worked in some capacity for the XYZ nonprofit organization. One leader is the founder and director of XYZ nonprofit organization, one is a member of the XYZ board of directors, and one participant is a senior intern. The purpose of this study was to explore strategies to help nonprofits achieve financial sustainability.

The leader of the client organization provided me a list of organization leaders including board members and other individuals who have worked with XYZ for a significant amount of time. As the researcher, it is important to establish rapport and explain the purpose of the study to all participants (Yin, 2018). I used the research questions followed by a semistructured interview to gather data from the participants. The participants had varying degrees of knowledge with regards to financial sustainability within nonprofit organizations. The semistructured interviews were scheduled ahead of time so that participants did not feel rushed, and the interviews were conducted over the phone. I ensured data saturation in the study when I found no new information in my data analysis.

Ethical Research

IRB requires an informed consent document to be signed by the target organization of the study. The client-organization and the participants signed the informed consent document. Each participant in the study agreed to participate in the

study. No incentives were offered to any of the participants. Before the interview, I also ensured that participants understood their right to withdraw from the study at any time by contacting me via phone or email. To protect the identity of the nonprofit organization, I assigned the pseudonym XYZ to refer to the organization and use P1, P2, and P3 to refer to each of the participants, respectively.

As a scholar-consultant in the DBA Consulting Capstone program, I received approval from the IRB. After completing the CITI training and the Form A, I received IRB approval (10-15-20-1014409) to conduct the study. Before collecting data, I sent an email to prospective participants regarding the intent of my study. It is important to establish rapport and let participants feel safe and secure regarding their involvement in any research study (Yin, 2018). I also reassured the prospective participants that they would remain anonymous and that their responses would be used for the purpose of the study. All the data received from the interviews were masked, and I informed the participants that the data collected would be securely stored for a period of 5 years to protect their confidentiality.

I arranged a time and date for the participants to conduct semistructured interviews in which I asked them my research and interview questions. I ensured that the participants had ample time to prepare for the interview and that they did not feel rushed during the interview process. I reiterated the purpose and intent of my study and ensured them their rights as participants to withdraw from the study at any time.

Data Collection Instruments

As the researcher for this single case qualitative study, I was the primary data collection instrument. As the primary data collection instrument, researchers are responsible for the collection and validation of the data gathered in the study (Yin, 2018). I used questionnaires, informal interviews, semistructured interviews, and in-depth interviews for this study to gather data from the participants. Semistructured interviews can be the primary source of collecting data from participants in qualitative studies (Girbig et al., 2017). During the semistructured interviews, I discussed with the three participants the strategies that nonprofit leaders can use to improve programmatic growth with limited financial resources. Additionally, I also asked clarifying and follow-up questions to gather more information for the study and to address any questions with regards to the Baldrige Excellence Framework.

In addition to the four interview questions, I also used an interview protocol (Appendix) to ask other probing questions that helped me understand the participant's role in the nonprofit and their insight on the nonprofit's current administrative, programmatic, and financial standing. The interview protocol and semistructured questions helped me focus on topics and probe for additional information. The interview protocol also helped me ensure that I was consistent throughout my interviews. Additionally, I also used the Baldrige Excellence Framework to help me shape my interview protocol because I used the framework as a tool to assess and analyze information about leadership; strategy; customers; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce; operations; and results.

To enhance the reliability and validity of the data collection instrument and process, I used member checking and transcript review for all three participants. I created the transcripts by transcribing my semistructured interviews. Member checking is a research technique used to further improve the validity and reliability of data gathered during the interview (Madill & Sullivan, 2018). Furthermore, I sent a brief summary to the participants so that they review their responses and provide feedback or clarification, if needed. When I received confirmation of the data gathered, I then proceeded to review the transcripts before analyzing the data. I kept the recordings and transcripts in a password protected folder for security. In addition to the semistructured interviews, I gathered data from multiple sources, including documents provided by the participants and the client leader, including programs, presentations, and financial statements. I also used information publicly available from the nonprofit website. I also used GuideStar to look for more information regarding the nonprofit but there was no information to be found.

Data Collection Technique

I collected the data from the participants by sending them a questionnaire with the interview questions in advance. I then conducted semistructured interviews over the phone to ask the participants clarifying questions based on their answers to the questionnaire. In qualitative studies, semistructured interviews provide the researcher an effective way of gathering firsthand data from the participants (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). The conversations were recorded, transcribed, and reviewed for accuracy, reliability, and validity. I used an interview protocol to ask additional in-depth questions of the

participants regarding their role in the nonprofit and their feedback on the conceptual framework used for the study, modern portfolio theory. It is essential to use both the questionnaire and semistructured interviews as data collection techniques to increase the reliability of the research. By having multiple data sources, it makes it easier to verify the data collected for accuracy and reliability (Noble & Heale, 2019). Having multiple data sources in a case study is also advantageous as it allows triangulation of the information gathered (Harrison et al., 2017). Using the different data collection sources, I was able to use triangulation to verify information for my study. I used triangulation to reduce bias in the data gathered as the information came from different stakeholders of the nonprofit organization.

The advantage of the data collection technique is that I could send my interview questions in advance to enhance my knowledge of the participants and their experience within the nonprofit. Sending the interview questions in advance enabled the participants to gain familiarity of the type of questions I would ask during the interview process. The semistructured interviews provided opportunities for me to ask clarifying and probing questions regarding the participant's involvement with the nonprofit and the conceptual framework of the study. Being able to ask open-ended questions during the semistructured interviews also provided participants an avenue to expand on their answers and share insights regarding the nonprofit organization (Arsel, 2017). I conducted the interviews via phone in compliance with the preapproved data sources required for IRB approval. COVID-19 also played a factor in the interviews being conducted over the phone for the safety of the participants and myself. The disadvantage

of the data collection technique was that correspondence was conducted online and over the phone. It would have been beneficial to conduct the interviews in person to establish a better rapport with the participants. Nonverbal cues are important and would have provided valuable insight into the data collection process.

I also discussed with the participants information that will be used for the Criteria for Performance Excellence that will be included in the Baldrige Excellence Framework portion of the study. The Baldrige Excellence Framework is a framework that leaders of businesses and nonprofit organizations can use for organizational performance, management, assessment, and excellence (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). For this study, I used member checking of the data and transcript review to enhance the reliability and validity of the data. I forwarded a brief summary of all the data collected from the interviews to all the participants of the study to ensure that the information gathered was valid.

Data Organization Technique

Microsoft Word and Excel are the two tools that I used to record and organize the data for this study. I used Word to record notes from my conversations with my client-leader and other participants. I labeled the documents with the date of the exchange for ease of tracking using P1, P2, P3 as participant identifiers. Yin (2018) recommended that researchers use a case study database to store and organize data gathered from research. To maintain organization protocols, I also used Word documents to maintain a journal of my data collection process and ensure effective management of bias and prejudices throughout the study. In research studies, a journal is critical to organize all the information

gathered from multiple sources (Ullmann, 2019). I also used Word to transcribe my semistructured interviews with the three participants of the study. I used Excel to identify common themes in the discussions and track other information presented in the study.

Additionally, I also used Excel to organize and analyze my client organization's financial records. It is vital to organize large quantities of data using tools such as Microsoft Word or Excel to avoid errors where the researcher can misinterpret the data (Gerrish et al., 2017). I am responsible for all data for this study, and it is stored securely for 5 years. All files are stored in password-protected computers, and I am the only one with access to the computers and secured hard drives.

Data Analysis

As the primary researcher for this study, I collected and organized the data from the semistructured interviews from my participants, the nonprofit's website, publicly available sources, and documents provided by the nonprofit. I also used GuideStar but there was no information regarding the nonprofit. Triangulation is the process researchers use to look for similarities or convergence in the data in different sources of information to form themes in a study (Battaglio & Hall, 2018). For this study, I used methodological triangulation to ensure a comprehensive perspective of the data. Methodological triangulation is a common form of triangulation that utilizes multiple data sources (Yin, 2018). I sent an initial questionnaire with the interview questions to all the participants via email. I then formed my interview protocol and scheduled virtual semistructured interviews with all the participants.

I recorded the interviews, transcribed them in a Word document, and sent a brief summary to the participants as part of my member checking process. It is crucial to record the participant's responses verbatim to maintain accuracy in the data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). After the member checking process, I used Excel to identify common themes in the data. It is vital to identify themes prevalent throughout the interviews and to organize the data gathered, I color-coded key themes from the presented data, which helped me correlate them to the key themes from the literature review and the conceptual framework. I used Yin's (see Yin 2018) thematic analysis method where I compiled, disassembled, reassembled, interpreted, and concluded the data. I compiled the data gathered in an Excel document by first separating each idea or topic. I then color-coded the data gathered based on common themes. After completing this, I examined each theme and chose the ones that appeared multiple times throughout the research. From the recurring themes, I then formed my conclusions.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability is correlated to dependability which refers to the consistency of the data in the study (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). There are multiple methods to enhance the reliability and validity of the study. Some of the methods I used in this study are member checking, transcript review, interview protocol, and triangulation. After the interviews, I had the participants review their answers (member checking) to ensure all data gathered were accurate and reliable. In qualitative research, member checking and transcript review increase the reliability of the data collected

(Belotto, 2018). To ensure the consistency of the data in the study, I also used an interview protocol (Appendix). Using an interview protocol, I avoided asking questions that might show bias and skew that data gathering process. The majority of the data for the research were gathered through audio calls and email correspondence between the researcher and each of the three participants. Triangulation allows the researcher to confirm the data collected during the interview process and increase the reliability of the study by fact-checking data against other resources (Noble & Heale, 2019)

Validity

In qualitative research, validity refers to the extent to which the researcher accurately represents the collected data (internal validity) and if the data can be generalized or transferred to other settings (external validity) (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). As the researcher, I understand that I cannot generalize the results of this single case study and that the results are not transferable. Because the scope of this study is focused on one nonprofit organization, the results from this research are not universal. Two methods can be used to achieve validity in qualitative research. The first method supports generalizations by a count of events, and the second method ensures the inclusion of deviant cases that contradict a theory (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). Additionally, researchers can provide an in-depth description of the research project. Utilizing all of these methods contributes to the validity of the research.

Researchers can enhance the study's validity by ensuring credibility, confirmability, and transferability of the data gathered. Member checking was used in this study to strengthen the credibility of the data. Member checking is a technique that

allows the participants to review the interview transcript and provide feedback, if necessary (McCullough et al., 2017). The participants were asked to review the interview in written format and confirm their answers. By utilizing member checking, I was able to confirm data from multiple sources and this helped ensure data saturation for the study as there was no new information uncovered.

Confirmability is another way to enhance the validity of the study. One way to increase confirmability is by using triangulation. Triangulation checks credibility by analyzing data from multiple viewpoints and sources (Yin, 2018). I cross-checked the data gathered during the interview process against other data sources such as the results of interviews with other participants, publicly available documents, and documents provided to me by the client leader.

Transferability is another way to enhance the validity of the study. In qualitative research, it is vital to adhere to the data collection and analysis techniques meticulously. An interview protocol (Appendix) was used for the semistructured interviews to ensure that I adhered to prescribed questions for each interview. The interview protocol also helped me maintain a standard throughout all three interviews. It is important to note that because the scope of this study is focused on a single nonprofit organization, the results cannot be generalized, extrapolated, and transferred (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019).

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I identified my role as the researcher in this qualitative single case study in which I explored the strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. The target population consisted of

leaders of a nonprofit organization in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States who successfully developed and implemented strategies to support increased administrative and program growth with limited financial resources. Data were collected from three leaders through questionnaires, informal interviews, semistructured interviews, and in-depth interviews for this study to gather data from the participants. In addition to the interviews, I gathered data from multiple sources, including documents provided by the participants and the client leader, including programs, presentations, and financial statements. Data analysis included member checking, methodological triangulation, and Yin's thematic analysis process to enhance reliability and validity.

In Section 3 of this paper, I present the organizational profile of my client organization and data and information that includes the key factors worksheet, leadership triad, results triad, collection, analysis, and preparation of results, project summary, contributions and recommendations, application for professional practice, implication for social change, recommendations for action, and my recommendations for further research, reflections, and conclusion.

Section 3: Organizational Profile

Introduction

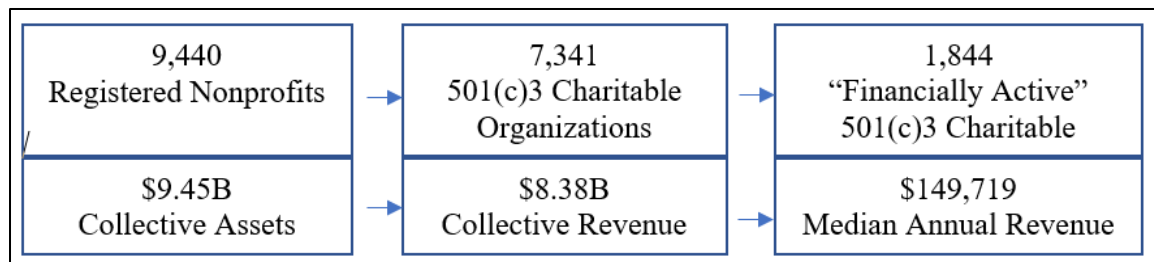
The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. Walden University's Capstone DBA scholar-consultants use the Baldrige Excellence Framework as a benchmark to assess and improve an organization's performance. I used the criteria outlined to provide recommendations for the nonprofit organization. Through the research, I uncovered three thematic findings for the study. The first finding was that the nonprofit organization needed to have a stable and paid work force. Since its inception, the organization has operated with just an all-volunteer workforce, and this is not sustainable. The second finding was that the nonprofit organization needs additional revenue streams to increase financial stability. As the nonprofit increases its footprint in the local area, its leaders will be exposed to more potential donors and partnerships which in turn could lead to more revenue streams. Because of the nature of nonprofits, finding donors that can provide consistent support is also a challenge. There is also the need for XYZ to protect and monetize its innovative intellectual property so that it can scale and create additional revenue. XYZ has created material in the fields of environmental conservation, zero waste and throw-away consumerism that it wants to promote and monetize to help with the organization's financial standing. The third finding was that the COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges for XYZ. The organization lost all the momentum it had before the pandemic.

Consumers have also been hesitant to embrace the zero-waste concept in a time where people are more conscious about second-hand items for fear of contamination.

Key Factors Worksheet

Organizational Description

The XYZ is a nonprofit organization that is based in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. The nonprofit seeks to minimize solid waste pollution by encouraging low-impact consumption; facilitating the recirculation, rather than discard, of usable items; and promoting resourceful ways of living well with less, to ensure a pristine and healthful homeland for future generations. The organization aims to increase awareness of the environmental, social, and fiscal impact of throw-away consumerism. Other goals are to support and expand local recirculation economies and to increase opportunities to reduce and reuse waste in the area. The nonprofit emphasizes the moderation of consumption first, and minimizing waste pollution, second. As seen in Figure 1, the state has 9,440 registered nonprofit organizations that generate over \$8 billion of collective revenue.

Figure 1*State Nonprofits in 2022*

Note. The information is adapted from the State of the Sector report, which is an annual report from the Nonprofit Center, 2022.

Organizational Environment

The organizational environmental assessment of the nonprofit organization includes (a) product offerings; (b) mission, vision, and values; (c) workforce profile; (d) assets; and (e) regulatory requirements.

Product Offerings. The Baldrige Excellence Framework defines product offerings as good and services that an organization offers in the marketplace (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit has several programs that support its main goal of minimizing material consumption and waste while educating consumers in the region. One of these programs is the K12 Curriculum Design and Educational Outreach Initiative to provide seminars and presentations to audiences such as K12 students, college students, general consumer audiences, and grocery shoppers. Another program that the nonprofit offers is the Reuse to Reduce Directory which is an online repository of businesses and nonprofits that provide opportunities to recirculate used goods in the area. The Reuse to Reduce Directory is a service that gives consumers

options to buy, sell or trade used items instead of buying new ones. Another program is the LITE Life Guide which aims to provide consumers everyday lifestyle tips to support adopting zero waste strategies. Another program is the LITE Lines e-newsletter which aims to provide information regarding zero waste in the community. Additionally, one of the more popular programs is the Grocery Shopping Tours & Presentation where the nonprofit educates consumers on packaging of consumer goods and what to look for when grocery shopping. The nonprofit also used to manage the zero waste/recycling effort at the region's oldest and largest community street fair with 40,000 visitors but have since retired from "greening" public events for the present time being.

Mission, Vision, and Values. The Baldrige Excellence Framework refers to the mission of an organization as the fundamental reason that the organization exists (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The mission of the XYZ is to minimize the environmental, social, and fiscal impact of throw-away consumerism, on people and the places they live and love, by advancing the principles of reduce and reuse. One of the objectives of the organization is for the region to environmental sustainability through the lens of material consumption and waste. Another objective of the organization is to have environmental literacy outreach to audiences of all ages and develops programming to make it easier to reduce and reuse consumer items in the region. Over 25% of state nonprofits responded that their organizations did not have a sufficient budget or workforce to implement their mission and services (Nonprofit Center, 2022). XYZ is facing this similar challenge as the organization lost all momentum during the pandemic.

Workforce Profile. In 2023, the nonprofit operates with its founder and its Board of Directors which is composed of five Directors. Nonprofit organizations often rely on volunteers and interns to accomplish work (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). Pre-COVID, the nonprofit employed unpaid undergraduate interns from a state university. It is vital that nonprofit leaders invest in staff to ensure quality program and services (Nonprofit Center, 2022). Because of the all-volunteer workforce of XYZ, having a stable workforce has been a challenge.

Assets. Because of COVID, the nonprofit closed its office space and operates virtually from the founder's home. The organization also has proprietary assets in the numerous presentations that they have developed. The organization also owns office supplies they use for daily operations. In 2023, the nonprofit has approximately \$7,000 in reserves.

Regulatory Requirements. There are mandatory state and federal regulations that nonprofit organizations adhere to (National Council of Nonprofits, 2020). XYZ is a registered nonprofit organization in the state and is required to report its activities.

Organizational Relationships

The organizational relationships assessment of the nonprofit organization included (a) organizational structure, (b) customers and stakeholders, and (c) suppliers and partners. In this section, I will assess and summarize the organizational relationships of the nonprofit organization.

Organizational Structure. The oversight structure of nonprofit organizations may comprise an advisory board, a family council, local leaders, or relationships with

major funding sources (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit is headed by its founder and is also governed by a board of directors, which includes five members. Due to COVID-19, the board of directors has not held its regular board meetings. The founder reports to the board of directors.

Customers and Stakeholders. Customers can be grouped based on common expectations, profiles, behaviors, or preferences (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit's primary customers and stakeholders are the residents in local area of operations. The nonprofit's target demographic for its services ranges from high school students to adult consumers. The nonprofit organization is known in the community as a leader in zero waste initiatives and zero waste education and provides education and alternative consumer options for residents in the area. Customer and stakeholder expectations also drive an organization's operations and program growth (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). Due to the proprietary nature of the nonprofit organization's products and offerings, they can easily pivot to accommodate partnership requests from customers and stakeholders in the local area.

Suppliers and Partners. An organization's supply network comprises entities involved in producing products and services for their customers (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit's suppliers and partners are residents, nonprofits, government entities, K-16 schools, and businesses of the local area they operate in. Nonprofits in Idaho create jobs and bring significant funds to the state including \$4.8 billion in out-of-state resources (Nonprofit Center, 2022). The nonprofit organization's leader also aims to partner up with local government to promote zero

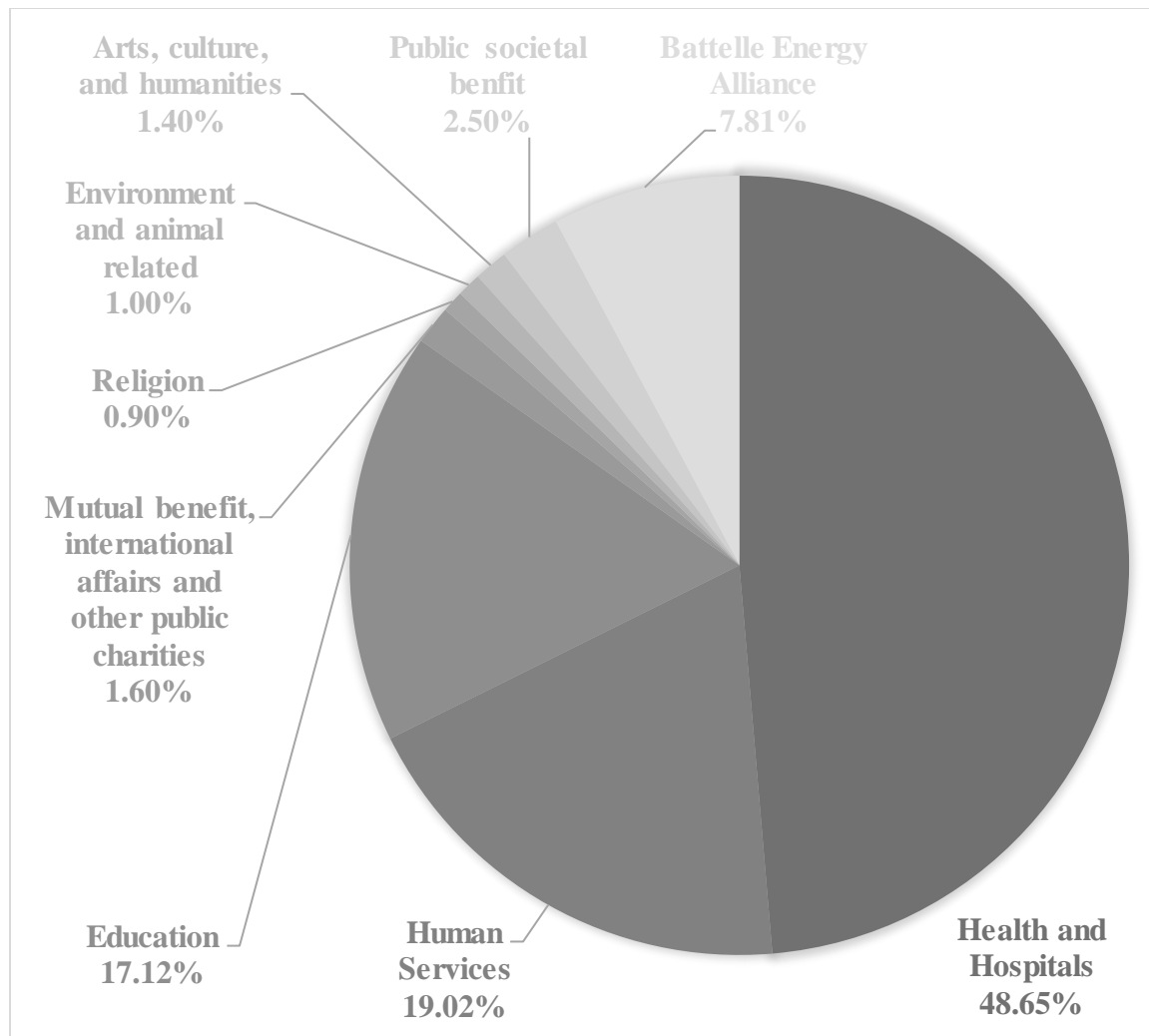
waste initiatives in the area. The nonprofit organization has also collaborated with groceries to provide consumers with education regarding consumer packaging.

Organizational Situation

The review of the nonprofit's organizational situation comprises its competitive environment, strategic context, and performance improvement system. I complete this review to understand the nonprofit organization better.

Competitive Environment

Nonprofit organizations often compete with other organizations for funding, workforce, membership, market share and media coverage (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The competitive environment assessment of the nonprofit organization includes competitive position, competitiveness changes, and comparative data. As seen in Figure 2, environmental and animal related nonprofits represent only 1% of the nonprofits in Idaho.

Figure 2*Share of Nonprofit Staff Subsector*

Note. The information is adapted from the State of the Sector report, which is an annual report from the Nonprofit Center, 2022.

Competitive Position. The nonprofit promotes zero waste initiatives in the area. While there are other organizations in the area that are focused on environmentally friendly advocacies, there are no direct competitors to my client organization. With

nonprofit organizations, brand awareness is key to gain public trust and increase donations (Nonprofit Center, 2022). There are also other organizations that attempt to deliver informal and less sophisticated zero waste outreach, which does present a concern with the possible dilution of available funding resources and confusion establishing the XYZ brand.

Competitiveness Changes. There are several factors that have affected the nonprofit with the main factor being the COVID pandemic. The nonprofit funding in Idaho since the pandemic is not keeping up with inflation and has caused strain in nonprofit budgets (Nonprofit Center, 2022). Because of the pandemic, the nonprofit halted operations and lost all momentum that was gained from the previous years of operation. The nonprofit is heavily reliant on donations, grants, and other types of funding and because of this, operations are dictated by the influx of funding. Another factor is that the nonprofit's workforce is an all-volunteer work force, so they are reliant on people volunteering their time for the organization which has been a challenge during the pandemic.

Comparative Data. There are no published comparative data for the nonprofit. Available published data are from large nonprofit organizations with significantly bigger scope and funding. Because the organization is only a few years old, it is hard to extrapolate data from financial statements for benchmarking purposes.

Strategic Context

Nonprofit organizations may face significant challenges with their products, finances, organizational structure, culture, technology, information security, brand

recognition and other areas (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The key strategic challenge that the nonprofit organizations and its leaders face is financial sustainability. The nonprofit is heavily reliant on donations, grants, and volunteer workforce. For the organization to operate and grow, it needs sustainable and predictable funding so that it can improve its programs and pay its employees.

Performance Improvement System

It is important for senior leaders to set expectations for organizational performance (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit does not have a structured performance improvement system. Senior leaders can also implement reward and recognition programs to motivate the workforce (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). Because the workforce of the nonprofit organization is composed of volunteers, there is no monetary incentive for both the leadership and volunteers to have a structured system to track performance in the organization.

Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers

Leadership

The leadership section is a description of the nonprofit's senior leadership and governance and societal responsibilities.

Senior Leadership

Senior leaders set an organization's trajectory with their vision for the organization (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit organization is led by its founder and is currently working on a volunteer basis. The nonprofit also has five directors on its Board of Directors.

Governance and Societal Responsibilities

Founders and directors govern the nonprofit organization. Senior leaders of an organization promote legal and ethical behavior through their actions (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The organization is bound by its mission and vision to carry out its societal responsibility of promoting and educating the local population on zero waste.

Strategy

The strategy section describes the nonprofit's short and long-term plans to identify strategic development and strategy implementation. It was important to review this section so that I can assess the nonprofit organization's current and future plans.

Strategy Development

An organization's vision can serve as the basis of its strategic objectives and action plans (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit promotes zero waste education and offers resources to stakeholders in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. The nonprofit leaders have established the mission, vision, and values of the organization. Organizational leaders also promote and develop organizational accountability, innovation and intelligent risk taking (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020).

Strategy Implementation

The nonprofit works with a variety of partners in the local area to educate residents regarding zero waste and alternative consumer options. The organization believes that it is essential to educate people starting at a young age to build better

consumer habits as they get older. Another initiative that the organization started is the Reuse to Reduce Directory which is an online repository of businesses and nonprofits that provide opportunities to recirculate used goods in the area. The program aims provides consumers options to buy, sell or trade used items instead of buying new ones. These initiatives target key demographics in the local area to change consumer habits and mitigate throw-away consumerism.

Customers

Voice of the Customer

The nonprofit organization casts a wide net with regards to targeting customers in the local area. The initiatives of XYZ range from educating school-age children regarding environmental awareness to providing adults alternative options to recirculate goods in the area. Because zero waste is an idea that can be taught to all ages, there are few limitations who are the nonprofit's customers. Nonprofits like XYZ also rely on its customers to fund part its operations.

Customer Expectations

Two-way communication with customers and stakeholders is essential for organizations to effectively grow their organizations (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). XYZ has established relationships with its customers in the local area. In 2022, individual charitable contributions funded 26% of Idaho's nonprofit budgets (Nonprofit Center, 2022). For an organization that is vying for limited resources, every contribution counts so it is crucial that the nonprofit listens to its customers.

Customer Engagement

The nonprofit organization's leaders regularly engage with its customers to decide the needs of the local community. Communicating with customers may also include the use of social media as well as customer and workforce electronic forums that allow the public to contact the organization (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit organization also focuses on educating its customers about zero waste and throw-away consumerism. The nonprofit organization held events that are open to the public and the organization got valuable feedback from these engagements.

Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results

Workforce

It is important to assess workforce capability and capacity to ensure high performance within an organization (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). Leaders need to know what their organization's strengths and weaknesses are so that they can adjust their priorities to build on strengths and improve on weaknesses.

Workforce Environment

Nonprofit organizations should ensure workplace health, security, and accessibility for the workforce (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). As of 2020, XYZ has closed its physical office and has mostly been working online. Before the pandemic, the workforce and board of directors had access to the physical workplace and the supplies needed to accomplish the nonprofit programs. The size of a nonprofit organization can directly impact the ability of the nonprofit to continue its mission (Nonprofit Center, 2022). The majority of the workforce of the nonprofit organization are

comprised of interns that are volunteers from a state university. The organization recruits the students from their connections and regular engagements in the schools. The founder also works for that institution and can recruit interns from the school when appropriate.

Workforce Engagement

It is vital that an organization engages, manages, and develops the people they employ to fully align with the overall business needs (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). By listening and developing people, organizations will improve internally and will have a better chance of reaching their full potential. The organization also provides the interns and volunteers real-world experience working for a nonprofit.

Operations

Work Processes

Leaders need to address changes in technology, external environment, culture, or strategic objectives to ensure that their organization keep up with changing times (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). For XYZ, the founder develops presentations for the local community. XYZ also develops tools like the Reuse to Reduce Directory which is an online repository of businesses and nonprofits that provide opportunities to recirculate used goods in the area. Local Interns help out with local engagements and with clerical work in the office.

Operational Effectiveness

Organizational leaders need to manage the cost, efficiency, and effectiveness of their organizations (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The founder of XYZ keeps a detailed accounting of the cash flow and expenses of the organization. XYZ

comprises an all-volunteer workforce, which lowers the operations cost. Nonprofits should not solely rely on volunteer labor as a cost saving replacement for trained professional staff (Nonprofit Center, 2022). Because of the nature of the workforce, volunteers work only when they have the extra time, and this can affect the stability of the organization.

Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance

Nonprofit organization's objectives can be measured by their contributions to the well-being of society. Examples of this include the reduction of carbon footprints, waste reduction, waste utilization, and resource conservation (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). Some donors of nonprofit organizations also demand proof that their funds are being utilized responsibly. XYZ keeps a detailed accounting of all expenses and provides donors this information if needed.

Information and Knowledge Management

The majority of XYZ's products and offerings are intellectual property in the form of innovative presentations, programs, and online repositories. It is vital that the nonprofit protect these products because other entities may copy and use them for their own gain. An example of this is the Reuse to Reduce Directory which is an online repository of businesses and nonprofits that provide opportunities to recirculate used goods in the area. XYZ is planning to monetize this directory to help offset the cost of maintaining it while providing local stakeholders a product that helps them to reduce waste in the local community.

Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. Data collected from semistructured interviews with XYZ leaders, documents provided by the nonprofit, and publicly available information presented the following themes: (a) paid workforce (b) stable revenue streams, (c) post-pandemic strategy.

Thematic Findings

The research question that guided the study is what strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. The three themes that emerged from the interviews and data organization analysis represent the challenges that the nonprofit organization faces as it navigates its way to increase program growth with limited financial sources.

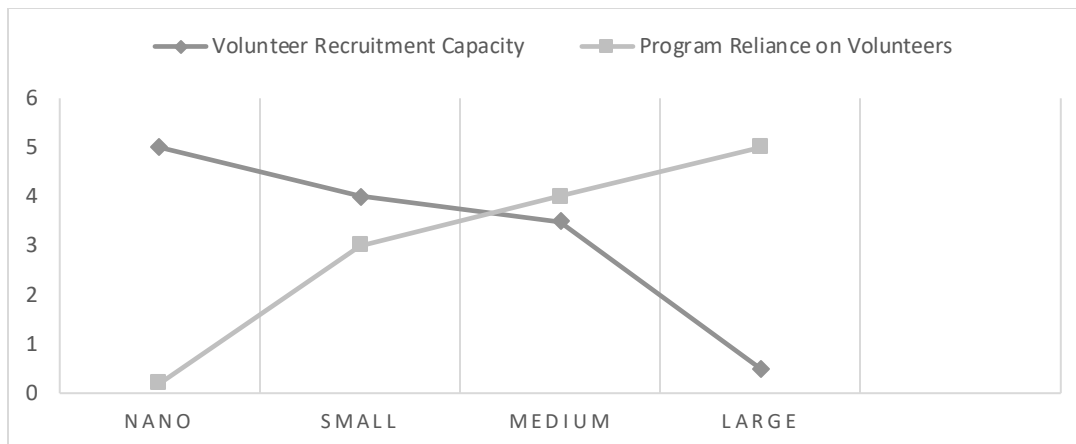
Theme 1: Paid Workforce

The first finding is that the nonprofit organization needs to have a more stable workforce. Volunteers are crucial to the success of nonprofits as it creates extra capacity for the organization to deliver its services and programs to the community (Nonprofit Center, 2022). While the all-volunteer workforce can be a strength due to the low overhead of the nonprofit, this also limits the organization. This issue can be solved by providing monetary compensation to its key workers including the founder and key employees. Studies have shown that nonprofit hiring continues to be a challenge as wages and benefits lag far behind the for-profit sector and attracting top talent can be extremely challenging (Nonprofit Center, 2022). Based on the interview with the three participants

and from data gathered from company documents, XYZ is an all-volunteer operation.

Workforce stability can be accomplished only by providing monetary compensation to its key workers including the founder and volunteers. Presently, the organization operates at the mercy of its workforce's availability, and this is not sustainable. Specifically, the founder of the organization who performs majority of the work is doing it on a voluntary basis. Because of this, the founder has to maintain a regular job and cannot commit all of their time to the success of the organization. Because board members and interns are also volunteers, it can be a challenge to dictate work schedules and meetings. According to all three participants of the study, having a paid workforce will ensure that the founder of the organization can focus on the nonprofit and its programs. Because volunteers operate the organization, they do not have the same capacity and time commitment that paid workers can have. According to the three participants of this study, by having a stable workforce, the nonprofit organization can focus on increased program growth.

Nonprofit organizations should not be expected to solely rely on volunteer labor as a cost saving measure (Nonprofit Center, 2022). The table below illustrates how nano and small nonprofits are heavily reliant on volunteers but do not have the same recruitment capacity that medium or large nonprofits have in the state.

Figure 3*Volunteer Recruitment Capacity vs Program Reliance on Volunteer*

Note. The information is adapted from the State of the Sector report, which is an annual report from the Nonprofit Center, 2022.

In order to grow the nonprofits, it can also help to have a marketing team and a fundraising team. These teams can focus on reaching out to growing the nonprofit brand and reaching out to potential donors. Leaders of for-profit and nonprofit organizations were forced to adjust their processes and procedures due to COVID-19 (Hakovirta & Denuwara, 2020). By increasing the number of donors, the nonprofit can diversify its revenue streams and benefit from Markowitz's modern portfolio theory (1952). There are third-party companies that provide this service, but XYZ has been boot-strapping since its inception and with limited financial resources, these expenses are not a priority.

Theme 2: Stable Revenue Streams

The second finding is the need for the organization to have more revenue streams to increase financial stability. Markowitz (1952) stated that businesses or investments

have a better chance of survival if their portfolio is diversified. Because of the nature of nonprofits, they can be overlooked regarding special loan access and other support programs that are offered to their for-profit counterparts (Nonprofit Center, 2022). The nonprofit currently operates from financial contributions from different donors. Majority of Idaho's nonprofit organization are operating at significant financial risk and cannot maintain four to six months of operating reserves (Nonprofit Center, 2022). In 2018, XYZ received a no-interest loan of \$4,667.32 to cover the start-up expenses on a temporary basis.

Table 1

XYZ 2018 Revenue Report

Revenue Source	Amount
Civic Club Donations	\$322
Corporate Sponsorships	\$750
Board Giving	\$550
Recycling Revenue	\$58.65
Credit Interest	\$.20
No-Interest Loan	\$4667.32
Totals	\$6348.17

The same year, the nonprofit incurred \$6,080.80 in operating costs. This does not include the projected \$36,400 in labor expenses that the nonprofit's director and founder freely gave the organization. The data presented in Table 2 combined with the projected labor cost for the organization clearly shows the need for more stable revenue streams for the nonprofit organization. Nano nonprofits such as XYZ that are operating at significant financial risk can utilize Markowitz's modern portfolio theory to achieve financial stability for their organizations.

Table 2*XYZ 2018 Expense Report*

Expense	Amount
Operations	\$1199.42
Communication & marketing	\$3306.73
Dues, licenses & subscriptions	\$1399.39
Other	\$175.26
Totals	\$6080.8

As the nonprofit increases its footprint in the local area, they will be exposed to more potential donors and partnerships which in turn could lead to more revenue streams. Rottkamp (2020) identified that 62% of nonprofit executives expressed that financial stability is a challenge within their organizations. Studies in Idaho show that more than a third of small nonprofit organizations are struggling financially which is a much higher rate than their larger peers (Nonprofit Center, 2022). Because of the nature of nonprofits, finding donors that can provide consistent support is also a challenge.

Qu's (2019) stated that nonprofits can derive revenue from multiple sources: direct public support, indirect public support from fundraising agencies, government grants, program service revenue, investment income and gross revenue from other commercial activities. An additional revenue source for XYZ is its intellectual property. There is a need for the nonprofit organization to protect and monetize its innovative intellectual property so that it can scale and create additional revenue (Hung & Hager, 2019). The nonprofit organization has created material in the fields of environmental conservation, zero waste and throw-away consumerism that it wants to promote and monetize to help with the organization's financial standing. The nonprofit organization

needs an influx in funding to be able to continually develop, protect and market these programs (Hung & Hager, 2019). By protecting and monetizing its innovative intellectual property, the nonprofit can add another stable source of income and the organization can benefit from Markowitz's modern portfolio theory.

Theme 3: Post-pandemic Strategy

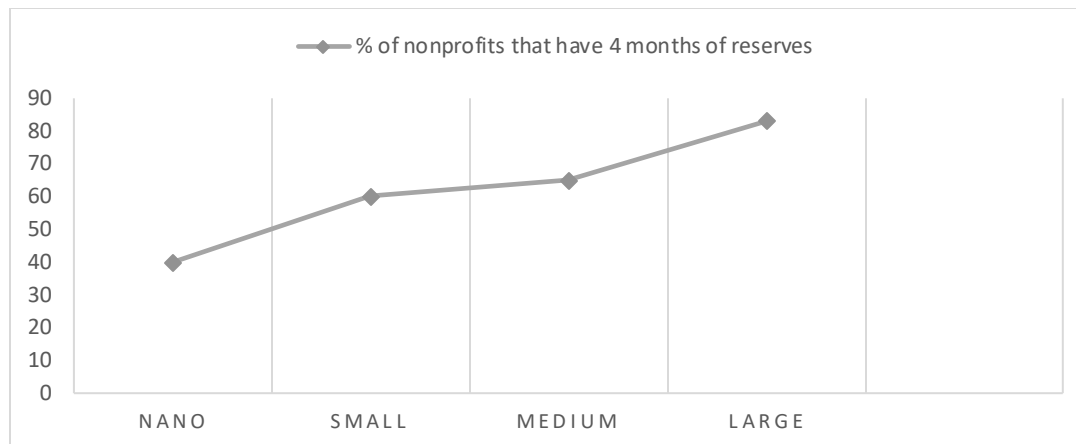
The third finding is that the COVID-19 pandemic has provided significant challenges for XYZ. COVID-19 specific funding opportunities have decreased while nonprofit service needs have increased (Nonprofit Center, 2022). According to the three participants of the study, the COVID-19 pandemic forced XYZ to halt its operations. The organization was still in its infancy stage when the pandemic started, and the organization lost all momentum in its programs and operations. The organization had a variety of presentations and activities to promote zero waste in the community that it was unable to deliver because of COVID-19 restrictions. Unlike some for-profit organizations that were able to pivot and find alternative ways to operate during the pandemic, XYZ had to close down its office space. Because the nonprofit's workforce is also composed of all volunteers, employees did not have much time to devote to the organization in a time of global uncertainty. Another key factor is that consumers have been hesitant to embrace the zero-waste concept in a time when people are more conscious about second-hand items for fear of contamination.

Markowitz (1991) further argued that an effective diversified portfolio should be composed of assets that have returns that have low or negative correlation with each other. By employing this strategy, nonprofits can better navigate a global phenomenon

like the COVID-19 pandemic and reduce financial volatility. Nonprofits cannot afford to rely on only a few income sources. COVID-19 has forced many organizations to adapt and survive their processes and procedures (Severo et al., 2021). The pandemic has now forced organizations to think of creative ways to increase and diversify their funding sources.

Throughout the pandemic, small and medium size organizations have been some of the most vulnerable sectors due to the smaller size of the organizations (Winarsih & Fuad, 2021). Nonprofit funding in the state has dried up in the post pandemic landscape and organizations are struggling financially (Nonprofit Center, 2022). The organization lost all the momentum it had before the pandemic. When COVID-19 recovery efforts started, nonprofit organizations were overlooked and were not part of the U.S. Treasury Paycheck Protection Program (Nonprofit Center, 2022). At the onset of the pandemic, federal and state agencies were focused their efforts on helping for-profit organizations. Since the pandemic, nonprofit funding opportunities have decreased, and it is imperative that individuals and corporate donors step up to help nonprofits fulfill their budgetary needs (Nonprofit Center, 2022).

More than 60% of nano nonprofits in the state reported that they have less than four months of reserve funds to continue their operations. Table 4 shows that majority of nano and small nonprofits in the state are operating at significant financial risk by not having at least 4 months of reserves.

Figure 4*Nonprofit Reserves*

Note. The information is adapted from the State of the Sector report, which is an annual report from the Nonprofit Center, 2022.

COVID-19 has pushed the boundaries of the medical system and the virus has negatively affected relationships because of social distancing, elevated stress, anxiety, fear, and depression (Nemțeanu & Dabija, 2020). During the height of the pandemic, most consumers were especially careful about ensuring that everything was sanitized and disinfected. Consumers were also generating more waste than usual with the popularity of sanitizing wipes, face masks and other pandemic-related, single-use items. Since the nonprofit was forced to halt operations, donations and grants also stopped. Markowitz (1952) stated that organizations benefit from diverse revenue streams to ensure financial stability. While the organization started getting exposure and funding before COVID-19, the pandemic forced to them to shut down operations and they lost all momentum gained from the previous years.

Product and Process Results

Work process effectiveness can include defect rates, results of products, product, service, and work system innovation, work layout improvements, etc. (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit organization did not have a system to measure product and process results. Pre-pandemic, the nonprofit organization mainly operated with intern-volunteers headed by the founder. The founder had a paying job while the interns were in volunteer status so key measures or indicators were not a priority for the nonprofit organization. Having key measures or indicators could be something that the nonprofit can implement to have specific and measurable goals for their employees.

Customer Results

It is important for organizations to cultivate customer engagement and customer relationships (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit organization was in-tune with the local population and provided services that were needed in the community. The nonprofit organization also did presentations to various demographics within the local community and the organization provided information that were specific to that demographic. Examples of these is their K12 Curriculum Design and Educational Outreach Initiative where they offer seminars and presentations to audiences such as K12 students, college students, general consumer audiences, and grocery shoppers. Post-pandemic, nonprofit operations have slowed down and XYZ hopes to regain its footing in the nonprofit space in 2023.

Workforce Results

Workforce-focused performance results include workforce capability, capacity, engagement, and leader development (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit organization is comprised of its founder, five board of directors and interns from a local university. The founder is primarily responsible for developing and delivering the nonprofit's services to the local community. In Idaho, there were a total of 67,417 nonprofit jobs in the year 2022 and the majority of nonprofits employ between five and 20 people (Nonprofit Center, 2022). A limiting factor in the production and capability of the employees of the nonprofit is that they are all volunteers and have to maintain day jobs. Because of this, the founder cannot devote her full time to the operations of the nonprofit. Interns also work in a temporary status. Due to all these reasons, there were no key performance indicators for the workforce.

It is vital for nonprofit leaders to continue learning and developing themselves. In 2021, the founder completed her master's degree in her field of specialization which is environmental education. The knowledge gained from this higher level of education could have a positive impact for the nonprofit organization.

Leadership and Governance Results

The nonprofit is led and governed by its founder and five board of directors. The board of directors advise the founder but there is limited engagement due to the small size of the nonprofit. The nonprofit abides by all legal and regulatory requirements for a nonprofit to operate in the state of Idaho.

Ethical behavior and stakeholder trust are factors that are important in a nonprofit organization (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). The nonprofit is a trusted organization in the community. Businesses and schools in the local area have formed partnerships with the organization.

The societal contributions of the nonprofit organization are felt in the community. The services offered by the nonprofit benefit stakeholders in the area. Programs such as the Grocery Shopping Tours & Presentation where the nonprofit educates consumers on packaging of consumer goods and what to look for when grocery shopping provide value to the local community.

Financial and Market Results

Nonprofit financial and market results may include measures of charitable donations or grants as well as the number of new programs or services offered (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2020). In the state of Idaho, nonprofits in the year 2022 had a median annual revenue of \$149,719 (Nonprofit Center, 2022). In the year 2018, XYZ had a total target revenue of \$25,681 from donations, corporate and individual gifts, events, and earned income. Other revenue avenues that were explored for 2018 were consulting fees, combined federal campaign, and other crowd funding sources.

Nonprofits similar in size with XYZ has an average annual budget ranging from \$50K to \$500K (Nonprofit Center, 2022). For future years, XYZ projected their budget to include allowances for paid labor, newsletter fees, professional development certifications and additional program expenses. This projected budget is in the amount of \$82,557.32 and includes rent, utilities, website design fees, insurance as well as other

nonprofit expenses. While the nonprofit had a projected revenue of \$25,681 in 2018, there is still a large gap from the projected budget. In order for the nonprofit to create more revenue, it needs to expand its reach and develop more programs but in order to that, it needs an influx of donations or grants from the public or private sectors.

Nonprofit individual donations have been an increasing source of revenue for Idaho nonprofits for the last twenty years (Nonprofit Center, 2022). Because financial stability is so important to nonprofits, XYZ will need to capitalize on multiple revenue streams for its operations to continue. Nonprofits also need to quickly adapt and learn how to engage millennial donors (Nonprofit Center, 2022). Due to the increase in the number of nonprofits in the state and the advent of social media over the last decade, XYZ faces the challenge of staying relevant to increase its donor pool.

Key Themes

Process Strengths

The nonprofit's process strengths identified are (a) low overhead, (b) valuable intellectual property, and (c) engagement with stakeholders. These process strengths have been vital to the growth of XYZ from 2018 to before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The nonprofit was founded with a start-up cost of \$4,667.32. The founder operated from her home and subsidized most of the operations cost of the nonprofit organization. When the nonprofit relocated to an office space, they rent was only \$4,200 annually. The founder of the nonprofit has grown the organization organically and have not taken unwarranted financial risks. The volunteer status of its founder, board of directors and interns also contributed to the low overhead costs of operating the nonprofit organization.

The nonprofit has developed programs and services that provide valuable intellectual property to the organization. The nonprofit delivers these innovative presentations to the local community and provides value to its stakeholders. Other services like the LITE Life Guide which aims to provide consumers everyday lifestyle tips to support adopting zero waste strategies has the potential to receive sponsorship revenue for the organization. The Reuse to Reduce Directory which is an online repository of businesses and nonprofits that provide opportunities to recirculate used goods in the area also has the potential to be monetized.

Public trust is vital for nonprofits and fuels the growth and effectiveness of the organization (Nonprofit Center, 2022). The nonprofit has meaningful relationships within the community and the stakeholders they are serving. The organization has partnered up with schools, businesses, and other organizations to spread the message regarding their advocacies. The nonprofit has collaborated with the local city government, the county landfill, the local school district, and a state university. This strong relationship with the local community and other stakeholders bodes well as XYZ looks to expand its current offering of products and services to the community.

Process Opportunities

Process opportunities for improvement are (a) lack of a paid workforce, (b) lack of a performance improvement system, and (c) sustainable funding sources. While the all-volunteer workforce is beneficial to reducing the overhead expenses of the organization, it also limits the nonprofit in its growth. The organization's founder and director cannot dedicate the time warranted to ensure the programmatic growth of XYZ.

The founder has to maintain another job and by paying the founder and other employees, XYZ can have a more sustainable workforce. While interns are a great source of free labor, they also work in XYZ for only a limited time. This negatively affects continuity in the organization and stunts innovation.

While XYZ is still in its infancy stages of being a nonprofit organization, it is important to develop a performance improvement system early on. Every employee who works in the organization needs benchmarks and feedback to increase self-awareness within their work. By having a performance improvement system, employees will have quantifiable goals and metrics to improve themselves.

One of the biggest challenges for nonprofit organizations is finding sustainable funding sources. Due to its small size, it is also hard for XYZ to get federal or state funding. These grants are usually reserved for bigger nonprofit organizations that have already been established for decades (Nonprofit Center, 2022). For XYZ, having a steady stream of revenue is crucial for its growth and survival. There are multiple revenue streams that the organization can tap into, but it will take increased workforce and funding to monetize these potential streams. Another strategy to combat the lack of resources is to collaborate with bigger nonprofits to address large, complex community challenges (Nonprofit Center, 2022). By partnering with other nonprofit organizations in the state that align with their mission, XYZ can gain increase its brand awareness and possibly attract more donors.

Results Strengths

The nonprofit organization's results strengths are (a) extensive expertise and (b) effective programs. The nonprofit is led by its founder who has experience regarding the subject of environmental conservation and waste reduction. The board of directors are comprised of five professionals in the local area and can provide the organization value if they are engaged. The nonprofit also has a proven record of accomplishment when it comes to the programs and services that they offer the local community. Due to its founder being heavily invested in the topic of zero waste, XYZ has developed a strong reputation among key stakeholders in the local area and has collaborated with different businesses, schools and other local institutions.

Results Opportunities

The results opportunities for improvement area (a) navigating the post COVID-19 environment and (b) grow the organization with limited financial resources. XYZ was still in its first two years of operation before the COVID-19 pandemic halted all operations. For-profit and nonprofit organizations around the globe struggled to bounce back from the pandemic but XYZ has had a harder path due to its advocacies. In a world where people are warier of using second-hand items due to the fear of contracting diseases, XYZ has to navigate a new way to push its narrative. The COIVD-19 era also ushered a new set of challenges which include the rise of single-use products—something that the organization has been trying to minimize since its inception. Single-use items such as facemasks and sanitary wipes and now the norm in households across the world.

As the nonprofit looks to continue operations and grow the organization, it now has to do so with limited financial resources. Due to the pandemic, it has been hard for the organization to regain its footing and it will have to find new and reconnect with old donors to fund its operations. Another strategy to grow the organization with limited financial resources is to increase its brand awareness. Studies have shown that there is a high correlation between brand awareness and converting nonprofit supporters into donors (Nonprofit Center, 2022). XYZ will need to strategize on how it can effectively market their message and tell their story to generate long term trust from the community.

Project Summary

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. This study's targeted population consisted of leaders of a nonprofit organization in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States who successfully developed and implemented strategies to support increased administrative and program growth with limited financial resources. The implications for positive social change include enabling nonprofit leaders to gain financial sustainability and continue advocacies that positively affect the communities that they are serving.

I chose MPT as the conceptual framework for my study to help nonprofit leaders with the financial sustainability of their organizations. For the literature review, I focused on topics related to strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased administrative and program growth with limited financial resources. I focused on peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed journals, completed dissertations, books, articles, and websites to

obtain information about revenue diversification strategies for nonprofit organizations. The topics that I explored in this literature review include the following: (a) modern portfolio theory, (b) value-based management, (c) COVID-19 and nonprofit organizations, (d) nonprofit sustainability, and (e) nonprofit leadership.

As the researcher for this single case qualitative study, I was the primary data collection instrument. As the primary data collection instrument, researchers are responsible for the collection and validation of the data gathered in the study (Yin, 2018). After securing IRB approval, I used questionnaires, informal interviews, semistructured interviews, and in-depth interviews for this study to gather data from the participants. Semistructured interviews can be the primary source of collecting data from participants in qualitative studies (Girbig et al., 2017). During the semistructured interviews, I discussed with the three participants the strategies that nonprofit leaders can use to improve programmatic growth with limited financial resources. Additionally, I also asked clarifying and follow-up questions to gather more information for the study and to address any questions with regards to the Baldrige Excellence Framework. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data and three main themes emerged throughout the study: (a) unpaid workforce; (b) unstable revenue streams; (c) COVID-19 and nonprofit organizations.

Contributions and Recommendations

Unlike businesses that operate to produce profits, leaders of nonprofit organizations are faced with the challenge of providing value to their communities and determining ways to sustain their operations financially (Jensen, 2017). For nonprofit

organizations to survive and thrive, they need a paid workforce, stable revenue streams and an understanding of the COVID-19 landscape. These three findings go hand in hand in ensuring that business and organizations thrive in today's world. Nonprofit leaders should prioritize having a paid workforce to ensure continued operations. By compensating key workers within the nonprofit, they can devote their time and energy towards the mission of the organization. In order to do this, the nonprofit will need to have stable revenue streams. This can be accomplished by employing Markowitz's modern portfolio theory. Markowitz (1952) argued that the risk in a portfolio of diverse assets is less than the risk inherent in holding just one asset at a time. Finally, leaders of for-profit and nonprofit organizations should adjust their processes and procedures due to COVID-19 (Hakovirta & Denuwara, 2020). Bin-Nashwan et al. (2020) mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected nonprofits' fundraising efforts and nonprofit leaders need to identify creative strategies to ensure that they have the requisite funds to continue operations. By implementing a post-pandemic strategy, the nonprofit organization can resume its programs and raise funds to ensure continued operations.

Application to Professional Practice

By applying the findings of this study to professional business practice, nonprofit leaders can grow their organizations effectively. One of the biggest challenges nonprofit leaders face is ensuring their organizations are financially healthy to serve their communities and fulfill their advocacies while navigating economic and organizational issues (Rottkamp, 2020). Nonprofit organizations, unlike for-profit businesses, derive their revenue through alternative sources such as donations and grants (Bansal et al.,

2019). In order for nonprofit organizations to grow, it is important to have a paid workforce that can focus on their initiatives without being incumbered by their day jobs. Nonprofit organizations that diversify their funding streams are less vulnerable to funding challenges are more likely to succeed (Tuckman & Chang, 1991). By using the modern portfolio theory in their fiscal transactions, organizations can cast a wide net and increase revenue while minimizing financial volatility. Finally, nonprofit organizations across the globe have to navigate the COVID-19 environment and adjust their operations to be able to survive.

Implications for Social Change

Nonprofit organizations play a significant role in building and improving communities around the globe. Nonprofit organizations depend on financial resources so that they can conduct their activities for the benefit of individuals, groups, or society (Aschari-Lincoln & Scheck, 2022). Over 25% of state nonprofits responded that their organizations did not have a sufficient budget or workforce to implement their mission and services (Nonprofit Center, 2022). By applying the findings of this study, nonprofit organizations have a better chance to thrive and continue their advocacies to benefit their communities. XYZ seeks to minimize solid waste pollution by encouraging low-impact consumption; facilitating the recirculation, rather than discard, of usable items; and promoting resourceful ways of living well with less, to ensure a pristine and healthful homeland for future generations. The organization aims to increase awareness of the environmental, social, and financial impact of throw-away consumerism. Other objectives are to support and expand local recirculation economies and to increase

opportunities to reduce and reuse waste in the area. The nonprofit emphasizes the moderation of consumption first, and minimizing waste pollution, second.

Recommendations for Action

The recommendations from this study can benefit nonprofit organizations to have financial stability to be able to successfully operate and grow their organizations.

Financial health is the ability of an organization to sustain long-term liquidity, solvency, and operating efficiency (Hung & Hager, 2019). The data collected from the research suggests that in order for nonprofit organizations to be effective, they need a steady influx of funds that can be used to propel their advocacies. While XYZ had multiple revenue streams before the COVID-19 pandemic, they needed to increase their revenue by at least 250% to be able to fund the organization. This can be accomplished with the use of Markowitz's modern portfolio theory (Markowitz, 1952). By having a stable revenue stream, the nonprofit can afford a paid workforce that can ensure the continuous operation of the organization.

The COVID-19 pandemic also opened a unique set of challenges for nonprofits around the world. Nonprofit funding in the state has dried up in the post pandemic landscape and organizations are struggling financially (Nonprofit Center, 2022). XYZ also lost all momentum during the pandemic, and it can be a challenge to reconnect to previous donors and find new organizations with which they can partner. The pandemic has impacted factors such as lack of funding, changes in consumer spending patterns, and decrease in community engagement has led to different challenges for nonprofits (Maher et al., 2020). It is recommended that nonprofit leaders examine their organization's

strategies to ensure that successful and continued operations for their organizations. The results of the study will be disseminated in literature, conferences, and training opportunities for nonprofit organizations across the United States. Institutions across the country can use the information from this study to help nonprofit leaders ensure the increased program growth of their organizations with limited financial resources.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings and recommendations from the study might add to the literature of sustainability strategies for nonprofit organizations. The comprehensive review on the literature, interviews, and other data uncovered three significant thematic findings. A limitation of the research is that the single case qualitative study uncovered findings from only one nonprofit organization located in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. The study is also limited by the interviews from three participants that worked with the organization. Future research can be focused on other small nonprofits to explore strategies these organizations used to grow and develop their organizations.

Reflections

The doctoral research process was very challenging but rewarding. Each section of the study provided a different challenge, but all the sections were necessary to see the whole picture and provide the nonprofit educated recommendations. As the researcher, the advocacies of zero waste and environmental conservation are concepts that resonate with me and during my initial engagements with the client-leader, it is possible that this bias showed. As the study went along, I became a more seasoned researcher and put all possible bias aside to gather and analyze the data for my study. Through my research, it is

possible that I had a positive effect on the organization. As I was interviewing the participants and collecting documents from them, it may have changed the way they think about their organization. After completing the study, I now have a newfound appreciation of nonprofits and general and the work it takes for these organizations to grow and survive. Having a master's degree in business administration and being a doctoral candidate in the same field, I only had experience studying for-profit businesses and I did not realize how similar and different nonprofits are.

Conclusion

The objective of my study is to explore strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased program growth with limited financial resources. Through my study, there is no one solution or strategy to accomplish this. To increase program growth with limited financial resources, nonprofit leaders must navigate and find creative ways to increase revenue while also still growing their organization. One way to accomplish this is by applying the modern portfolio theory to combat financial volatility. By having a steady source of income, organizations can then focus on improving its products and services and providing more value to the community. While I understand that nonprofit organizations have to start somewhere, it is crucial that it transitions to a paid workforce that can focus on its advocacies. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in a new set of challenges for nonprofit organizations. Nonprofits now have to find creative ways to navigate this landscape and ensure the survival of their organization.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Thank you for your time in participating in this study. Today, I am just going to ask you a few clarifying questions regarding the nonprofit organization with which you are involved. For the purpose of this study, I will refer to that organization as XYZ. I am Ramchand Francisco, a scholar-consultant with Walden University currently completing my doctoral degree in business administration. The purpose of this study is to explore the strategies nonprofit leaders use to support increased administrative program growth with limited financial resources.

1. Thank the interviewee for their time and for participating in the study.
2. Introduce myself as the researcher and my affiliation as a scholar-consultant with Walden University.
3. Restate the purpose of the study.
4. Explain to the interview their rights as a participant in the study:
 - a. Assure participant of confidentiality of interview and that information will be used only for the study.
 - b. Remind the participant that at any time, they can contact me to be removed from the study.
 - c. Remind the participant that I will be sending them a transcript of our interview to ensure accuracy of the information.
5. Inform participants that the interview will be recorded and ask them if I have their consent to start recording.
6. Conduct the interview.

- a. Refresh of the predetermined interview questions and their answers.
 - b. Ask clarifying and in-depth questions to gather additional information.
 - c. Ask the participant if there is anything they would like to add to their answers.
7. Thank the participants for their time and for participating in the study.

Interview Questions

1. What financial sustainability strategies have you implemented in your organization?
2. What fundraising strategies have you used in the past?
3. How do you assess the effectiveness of your strategies to achieve the desired performance outcomes?
4. What additional elements, comments, or information do you wish to add regarding your organization's strategies used to to achieve financial sustainability?