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Overcoming Barriers to Private-Public Partnerships

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MS, Maryland University, 2017

BS, Norfolk State University, 2015

Professional Administrative Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

SA is an organization that promotes science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education. As a small organization, it continues to look for partnerships that allow the expansion and development of this educational coursework. The organization faces barriers to receiving private and public partnerships. In this professional administrative study, barriers were identified and addressed. Opportunities to improve the availability of collaborations and effective partnerships for this organization were also addressed, expressing the significant benefit that the community receives. The evidence drawn from scholarly resources, quantitative research, and articles highlighted the importance of STEM subjects, and their role in their community. The results of a survey were used to create a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis of the organization. Some of the results gleaned from the analysis of the organization showed that a barrier to effective partnership and collaboration is the lack of financial transparency. This can be rectified by establishing a financial department to create the needed maturity and structure for expansion. Also, this study identified that internal control access, and thought partnering will improve the availability of collaborations for the organization. Social change implications of STEM education and partnerships between the organization and other bodies are also revealed in this study. STEM education provides students with needed analytical and problem-solving skills, gives them an in-depth understanding of the world, and fosters creativity. These benefits will be bolstered by valuable partnerships among organizations in the STEM sector.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Problem

Introduction

STEM education is the study of science, technological advancements, engineering, and mathematical concepts. The Next Generation Science Standards that have been developed in over 40 states have emphasized STEM education (Hang & Srisawasdi 2021). Unfortunately, structural, and practical barriers have hindered access to STEM programs for certain minority groups (Johnson, 2012). The barriers have led to fewer resources in infrastructure and other types of equipment services that are needed to offer students access to quality STEM education programs. There is often a lack of technology access, like computers and software programs, lab equipment, libraries, or other facilities, to practice any required academic or nonacademic activities (Johnson, 2012). These problems would be eliminated by having functional partnerships in underserved areas. In this study I determined how public-private partnerships can be developed in underserved areas to improve STEM education programs in the specific area of a diverse county an area serviced by an organization referenced as SA. The organization address the barriers that prevent additional partnerships that would provide growth and resources to the organization. It has addressed the overall benefit of increasing partnerships to improve SA's current quality and resources. SA has offered recommendations to assist with public-private partnerships to improve the current programming and offer solutions to remove barriers. The importance of creating partnerships at both micro- and macrolevels is to extend the reach of an organization that is preparing young minority children to be future leaders who contribute to the local and

global economy. Public-private partnerships (PPP) in education can increase program efficiency and transparency of public expenditures, improve service delivery, permit quicker responses, and overcome public sector barriers. The investment into education contributes to society due to the research finding that those who have access to quality education continue into higher education and contribute more to taxes and civil involvement (Bustillo, 2019). The proper implementation of PPPs can increase the quality of many industries by closing the gaps in services provided within communities and facilitating more structure around the qualifying process, generating assessment tools, and eliminating barriers to quality programming within growing service organizations. PPPs have been used to progress many industries. Stem education add values to the economy and community and many ways but faces barriers due to the lack of resources and often time organizational structure of the services.

In Section 1 I introduce the organization and share relevant information about SA. I state the purpose of the study, the significance of the study and the overall nature of the study. This establishes the purpose of conducting the study.

Problem Statement

The Next Generation Science Standards developed in over 40 states in the United States have promoted an emphasis on STEM education (Hang & Srisawasdi 2021). Unfortunately, structural, and practical barriers have hindered access to STEM programs for certain minority groups, which is the population that SA services (Johnson, 2012). The barriers have led to organizations like SA having fewer resources in terms of infrastructure and other equipment services needed to offer students access to quality

STEM education programs. There is often a lack of technology access, like computers and software programs, lab equipment, libraries, or other facilities, to practice any required academic or non-academic activities (Johnson, 2012).

While finances are a huge contributor to ensuring effective programming, access to knowledge and political positioning is an area for improvement. The current partnerships are not directly related to educational services and are unable to provide the guidance or resources that make the organization progressive and well supported. The lack of professional collaboration networks and partnerships has resulted in SA not being included in pivotal educational opportunities for the community they serve and decreased the buy-in from the community leaders (Bustillo, 2019). These barriers could be lessened by having functional partnerships that contributed to the development and reputation of the organization. Partnerships at every level will increase the advancement and resources of technology, educators, and the quality of services offered by SA to their students and families. SA is looking to gain this partnership as it has been determined that they are an effective means to advance stem education (Bustillo, 2019).

The organization faces barriers that many mission-focused organizations have in common: the inability to advance and grow partnerships. STEM education programs can improve the quality of education for the overall student, increase skills and disciplines needed for success outside the classroom, and promote a balance of applying technical skills and creative innovation to problem solving. The combination of benefits found in stem education positively impacts the shaping of individuals that enter the job market and ensures that people of color are represented.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study was to analyze the organizational structure, financial defenses, and organizational accountability of SA to determine any limitations that would create a barrier to successful Private-Public Partnerships'. In addition, I assessed the strengths and weaknesses of current or potential PPPs. The purpose of this quantitative study was to provide a greater understanding that forming PPPs can increase the quality of service, the capacity SA is currently providing, and improve the overall infrastructure needed to sustain and progress the organization forward. Partnerships are essential to address the accessibility and quality of resources (Bustillo, 2019) which is a primary barrier (Watters & Diezmann 2013). This included examining the organizational structure, current program of work, communication protocols, and fiscal reporting, all items identified as barriers to developing effective partnerships (Forschner, 2020). I addressed eliminating the obstacles that hinder partnerships by conducting surveys, using theories, and offering SA recommendations. Once the barriers were identified, it created the opportunity to tailor a solution to address the specific elements. In the current state of education in general, like the overpopulation of the classroom, language barriers, virtual learning barriers, and the environmental changes in the County School Systems, more resources are needed to effectively service the areas and eventually extend the organization's reach. As a result of eliminating these barriers in the communities, the achievement will be increasing the number of effective STEM programs in the area identified and improving the quality of education for students with improved resources. This research has acknowledged the discrepancy between the well-served and

underserved communities, hence offering a resolve to bridge the gap by developing partnerships that provide resources to promote adequate access to effective STEM programs in these areas (Estrada, 2016). This study can assist SA by offering information to make an informed decision about improving current working systems that align with methods currently being executed by other successful PPPs.

Nature of the Study

The quantitative study had determined how PPPs are developed with SA to improve STEM education programs. I analyzed the organizational structure, capital and financial capacity, and risk management in relation to SA. These assessments evaluated the strengths and areas of improvement for the organization. A total of 32 people participated. 11 participants are current mentors and staff working within the organization consisting of current graduate students, former educators, and community leaders. Four participants were on the board of directors, three were on the advisory committee, 11 were parents of student participants, and three were staff employed by another organization that has partnered for community opportunities with STEM. PPSs offer infrastructure solutions, increase financial opportunity, and ensure higher quality and timely provision of public services. The data for the study was obtained from a Likert scale survey and supporting research from PPPs and the role it plays in successful collaboration for the organization. The organization will be provided with a recommendation memo as a deliverable. Partnerships would help secure and develop the current organization by removing operation inconsistency, having access to public funding, and lessening risks.

Significance

This study has been tailored to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the current PPP and will conclude with a memo of recommendation. The survey included current employees and stakeholders to best assess the current environment of the organization and how the attributes of SA are aligned with the noted characteristic of successful PPPs. This concluded with a strategic plan outlining the criteria in which they can assess the strengths and weaknesses internally that may create a barrier to successful public-private partnerships. For partnerships to be beneficial, it will be essential to define the needs of the organization and then assets, and then use them to structure a relationship whereby the resources are used efficiently and ensure that the partnerships are fulfilled and identified (Skelcher, 2007).

This will ensure that the organization and the partnering agencies are aligned with similar goals and objectives. When the barriers are addressed, it is anticipated that there will be positive effects on the various stakeholders, including the teachers, who may benefit from the better-quality professional development as well as increased opportunities to collaborate with other partners, and students, to ensure that there is an increased achievement from the STEM program and the organization. In determining the current and potential partnerships' effectiveness, some of the analytical strategies include examining the level of cultural fit between the partners, the current process and internal structure of STEM ACESS, the responsiveness of partners in terms of the ability to avail resources when the need arises, and the extent to which partners align in terms of objectives among others. Partnerships will help implement other curricular programs

based on real-world applications and workplace learning to align students' skills with available future careers (Riley & King, 2011). The critical stakeholders targeted by this study were the local education authorities, parents, teachers, students, community organizations, and individuals and groups championing for better education in marginalized areas. Certain groups in the United States have been misrepresented in education, such as the poor and the minority (Morgan 2020). The schooling system requires a systematic yet swift way to reduce the rate of dropout and out-of-school youth among marginalized communities. Improving education access and quality is a sure way of eliminating crime and unemployment in the community (Lochner &. Moretti, 2004). In that case, the result of an emphasis on STEM education will be increased admissions and graduations, an educated, informed, professional community, and multiple opportunities for employment and empowerment. Empowering the community is the key to social growth. The evidence-based models found in the research will be recommended to the organization. These models can serve as organizing guidelines that recommend the most current practices.

Summary

STEM education has been identified as critical to the education of young people in America (Kocabas et al, 2019). However, its implementation has been a challenge in the United States despite its advantages. The benefits for the community must be clearly explained to the stakeholders for adequate buy-in. Teachers must be trained and professionally developed to keep up with the system's demands, but their resources are limited. The project's success involved both private and public stakeholders in the

education department and external partnerships as well. This introduction paved the way to analyze further the barriers to effective implementation of STEM programs and the role every stakeholder must play to achieve success. Access must be made for all children. This section highlights the need for PPPs to see the implementation as a success. I focused this project on the need for PPPs to implement STEM education to improve the country's performance and quality of education, starting with SA, the organization. The section focuses on the factors that have led to the inadequate ability to acquire partnerships for SA. Section 2 highlights the conceptual framework applied by many industries identifying the benefit and ways to achieve PPPs. To properly examine SA, I used a conceptual framework that has been widely applied in the educational industry for over 15 years and in multiple countries. This concept was applied to offer solutions to the poor quality of educational management that exists in various parts of the world. I identified the barriers to PPPs by evaluating the organization's current structure and offering recommendations that will improve the chances of acquiring PPPs.

Section 2 includes the history and development of the PPP model. There will be key variables or characteristics identified in this section that will aid the comparability of standard practice vs. current practice of STEM. Using the identified standards will provide a foundation to identify commonalities in practice and support the SWOT analysis.

Section 2: Conceptual Approach and Background

Introduction

In this study I identified barriers to forming PPPs that can support adequate resources and expand the organizational reach. Partnerships are essential to developing infrastructure, increasing financial capacity, and increasing sustainability. From the study, I identified ways of finding the best practices for the improvement of current SA practices that can identify successful partnerships. Following the completion of the study, it resulted in a memo to improve or apply systems aligning the organization with noted traits for success. PPPs is a common concept that can be found in many industries. Though this model has had many evolutions as it is practices in different business models the overall objectives and strategy remain consistent. For centuries, this theory has been implemented and developed to become more effective in many (Cuttaree & Mandri Perrott 2011).

Concepts, Models, and Theories

The conceptual framework for this study was the PPP model. The PPP strategy has become an increasingly important procurement option for delivering public works and services like education, transportation, and other infrastructures (Muhammad & Johar, 2017). Though a popular concept, the originator of PPP is not clear. The history dates to the late 1700s with infrastructure development that removed the barriers presented to the United States as they built transportation routes, waterways, and other construction (Buxbaum, 2009). The PPP arrangement allows private or public sector contributors to provide additional value to services offered by the public sectors. The

collaboration and resources will enable the opportunity to address shortcomings in the organization, with the perceived capabilities in terms of finance, expertise, and operational management (Zairol et al., 2014). Studies suggest that PPP can solve complex governance issues and offer closure to service gaps within an organization (Zairol et al., 2014). The involvement of private contributors in government or community programs will provide added value and reduce the governments' financial restrictions to deliver better services to the community (Zairol et al., 2014).

One of the pillars or significant society contributors is education; the collaboration of various entities would positively influence educational effectiveness (Widya et al, 2019) STEM partnerships and initiatives can prepare the students to be in a better position to favorably compete in the global economy of the 21st century (Widya et al, 2019). The institutional environments include informal and formal expectations that must be met to receive broader social support. As such, organizations in institutional sectors are likely to do well to the extent that they can develop structural arrangements and processes aligned with the existing norms' specifications.

For centuries it has been identified that the PPP conceptual model offers a long-term sustainability approach to improving social infrastructure, enhancing the value of public assets, and making better use of taxpayers' money (Ravish & Macleod, 2014). It is applicable in various ways become most relevant over the recent decade to improve the local economy (Akintoye et al., 2003). Ravish & Macleod (2014) conducted a study on the effectiveness of PPPs in Afghanistan. The authors concluded that schools that had facilitated PPPs outperformed those without. They also determined that PPP schools were

superior to government schools (Ravish & Macleod, 2014). Brazil took the same conceptual approach to improve education in the state of Rio de Janeiro (Chattopadhay & Nogueira, 2013). Two of the leading countries in Brazil employed the collaboration strategy to increase leverage resources and technical knowledge from the newly acquired partnerships (Chattopadhay & Nogueira, 2013). With the extent of recorded breakthroughs attained from this model, when the hurdles within SA are addressed, it is believed that there will be positive effects on the various participants, including the teachers, who may benefit from the better professional development, and opportunities to cooperate with other partners, and students, to ensure that there is an increased achievement from the STEM program and the organization

The deficiency of government resources has increased reliance on PPP (Cheng & Xiong, 2021). Though a developed concept, there is less clarity regarding measuring the performance of these new arrangements. PPPs have become a popular way for governments to engage private actors in the delivery of government infrastructure and services to increase quality and provide better value (Cheng & Xiong, 2021). There are various definitions for PPPs. PPPs have unique nuances making them challenging to characterize. A factor that repeatedly happens is that PPPs have assumed the responsibility of organizational management and governance, as an institutional arrangement for a beneficial financial relationship, and as a development strategy. The accost analysis of dictat diverse definitions indicates that there is no fixed definition of PPP. Several gaps have been identified related to issues of governance, management, and policy design of PPPs as it stands to date (Khanom, 2010). The 1990s saw the

establishment of the PPPs as a vital tool of public policy worldwide (Osborne, 2000, p. 1) as an outcome of new public management (NPM). NPM has caused the focus of management to shift from public service towards service delivery. The principles of NPM encouraged the establishment of PPPs as a new management tool (Osbourne, 2000). Now PPPs have become a favorited tool for providing public services and developing society and industries alike.

The project-based management typology of PPPs called *elementary partnership* was utilized. This process includes highlighting an organization's significant issues, risks, and specific management challenges they present (Mazouz et al, 2008). This information allows public managers to execute resolve with a framework to establish and manage PPPs. Elementary partnership is a strategic tactic for acquiring partnerships. Here, the partnerships are looking for a flexible organization that will guarantee a quality public service like education in the general interest or social advancement (Viola et al., 2008). There are three elements of the PPP framework: process and institutional responsibilities, public financial management, and PPP program governance. These three elements help shape the contributions of a PPP and the areas of the establishment. SA was surveyed on the current state of their organizational process and responsibilities, financial management, and program governance. These are major determining factors in PPP efficiency and interest.

Primarily because the relationship to industries varies and more complexly, the needs of organizations differ, causing partnerships to take an individually risk-benefit assessment approach (Koontz & Thomas, 2012). Performance measures based on

traditional governmental forms, such as centralized planning and regulation, are relatively straightforward and not able to be adapted to some organization's cultural environment or individuality. Effective collaborative governance, the wide range of policy tools for enabling and encouraging public-private partnerships—such as grants, contracts, and technical assistance—can adequately address more nuance in distinguishing outputs from outcomes. Deciding on the most suitable output and outcome measures is important for public-private partnerships. It fosters progress and bolsters accountability for unmet goals (Koontz & Thomas, 2012).

Effective partnerships that support STEM education programs can improve the quality of education for the overall student, increase skills and disciplines needed for success outside the classroom, and promote a balance of applying technical skills and creative innovation to problem solving (Margherio et al, 2020). The concept bears a predictive assumption about the relationship between the desired changes and actions likely to produce those changes. Well-organized and sustainable partnerships are the anticipated reforms in STEM education programs. Organized and well-designed partnerships with other agencies and businesses will likely expose the students to critical real-life elements of prospective occupations such as policy, operations, hiring, project work design, and future disciplines. This will affect their readiness for careers more positively. Another improvement is teachers' knowledge and understanding of the STEM standards due to the practical experiences of various partnerships that are likely to impact STEM quality in and out of school contexts (Riley & King, 2011). The partnerships will also form the basis for teacher professional learning and development, tailored to

increasing students' achievement (Riley & King, 2011). The collaborations and partnerships will improve current operational deficits, provide fiscal management, and increase exposure. They can also be better placed to qualify and engage the required workforce in the critical STEM areas. There is also a shift toward standard-based evaluation meant to guide the progress of partnerships toward the quality of STEM programs. This creates room for improvement programs, which are supposed to check on partnerships' success as time goes by (Fifolt & Seary, 2010).

There is a need to pay attention to the institution environment when implementing a strategic purpose, especially when partnership efforts are tailored towards ensuring voluntary participation. The institutional settings include informal and formal expectations that must be met to receive broader social support (Kania & Kramer, 2011). . This includes the expectations of the organizational behavior that are obtained from the general belief system. As such, organizations in institutional sectors are likely to do well to the extent that they can develop structural arrangements and processes aligned with the existing norms' specifications. When this is expanded beyond the boundaries of an organization, the institutional environment, which affects an organization's collaborative behavior, can be looked at to respond to the formal intrasector pressures. Such pressures may include meeting outcomes, allocating resources, and the informal cross-sector expectations to believe in a shared vision and affirm that collaboration or partnership is necessary for the organization to enact a vision (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

There also exist some works on impediments to the organization and overcoming the barriers. For instance, Solli-Sæther, Karlsen, and Van Oorschot (2015) pinpointed

poor communication, lack of resources, lack of monitoring, and evaluation, among other factors. As such, partnerships may be attained by addressing such issues.

There is evidence supporting that PPPs are a successful administrative solution in other industries and should be implemented in educational administrations. Effective PPP will support the planning, participating, and evaluation of these systems to impact potential partners, society, and education. It is within reason to believe that improving children's educational access will yield long-term outcomes in an area that will lead to the community's ability to adapt to new technological practices and advancements, increasing the sufficiency and progression of the community.

Relevance to Public Organizations

Education is a communal and societal aspect and requires collaboration and coordination of all aspects of the community, namely the private and public sectors. Working together is the key to having a collective impact that best serves the community and the economy. Therefore, the coordination required to overcome these barriers exceeds that between public and private sectors alone but for all industries in the economy and education. Consequently, it is critical to understand the relationships between the organizations and public-private organizations, and how the collaboration will affect the advancement, organizational structuring, and financial management, all in efforts to achieve an impactful difference in missions' goals (García-Holgado et al., 2019).

Public-private partnership is based on the idea of mutual missions and added values. Participants recognize benefits and anticipate the ability to assist with the

advancement of the organization. Though some partnerships have a clear monetary advantage, other partnerships may be less tangible but progress-driven concerning the advancement of people. Public-Private partnerships are the collaborative design needed to support community service organizations in their efforts to improve social infrastructure and primary education in this study. Community-based organizations are having to close their doors because of the inability to develop and sustain efficiency. Education is a pivotal part of developing society. Across the world, many educators and administrators come to the table to discuss the educational system's needs, lack, and potential. Allowing more structured PPP models to infiltrate the educational system can bridge the gap in services being offered to current students and their families.

Partnerships such as these also require the involvement of the citizens. For the colleges and universities to fully prepare for STEM, the school must be included in the discussions for practical impacts. Communities are critical to implementing STEM, especially when involved in the awareness of the importance of STEM for the community and the economy. The education landscape keeps changing and warrants the need to rear citizens who can apply their skills to solve practical world problems. Rather than pay unnecessary attention to the failures of the public school system, success can be achieved through working on the schooling process and increasing accountability. PPP offers many advantages for the public sector. Partnerships can address the limitations of resources, the lack of local infrastructure, or program development of the organization offering improvements to the organization.

The strategies used in the past to deal with the education system's issues include sole attempts by private and government organizations without including all stakeholders. The study intends to understand the correlation of strengths and weaknesses identified by SA as they relate to the successful elements of PPPs found through research. PPP allows organizations to lead according to sustainable development goals (Cheng&Xiong,2021). the theoretical framework is based on dimensions: driving force, subject, process, and object. It is concluded that the feasible and sustainable PPP framework elucidates the development process and pattern of PPP. It not only satisfies the PPP development needs globally but also provides a reference value for other developing industries across the globe (Cheng and Xiong, 2021).

Organizational Background and Context

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are considered the cornerstones to preparing future generations to deal with the ever-changing world challenges. Therefore, America has developed the country education system and made it the global leader in STEM industries. Achieving this goal demands several commitments from the local government and the education system. The teachers must be additionally trained to meet these new needs. The students also need understanding and training on how to apply critical analyses in STEM-related situations. The quality of education and training also must be improved to meet the levels of other countries (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019). The most critical aspect of STEM Education implementation in America that requires additional focus is implementing STEM strategies in minority communities. SA is a registered 501c3 non-profit

organization. Locally serving students in an underserved area, the organization has been working toward growth and efficiency for the last three years. The organization has a small Board of Directors and an advisory committee for the development and service of the organization. SA has a small staff and volunteer mentors who service their students at satellite locations and host community outreach within Dade County.

STEM ACESS Organization can get the foundation necessary to compete fairly against White and male students globally through these strategies. Access to STEM disciplines is critical in developing minority communities by advancing educators, decision-makers, and the economy into the understanding of the opportunities that arise from the implementation of STEM (García-Holgado et al., 2019). The ability to secure private-public partnerships directly influences addressing racial equity in programs offered by the educational system. SA has prioritized the needs of children from adverse backgrounds, and partnerships would increase the organization's ability to reach more students.

Role of the DPA Student/Researcher

As an education enthusiast, it is my responsibility to contribute as a scholar to improve communities and organizations alike. Several issues have been affecting the education sector which directly affects communities of color and socioeconomic disadvantages. These issues include the declining quality of education, increased rate of dropouts, and inequality in the access and affordability of education. Another concern is the declining focus and emphasis on STEM education and the negative connotations associated with the subjects. I aim to support organizations by being a conduit of

knowledge and skill specifically for minority student groups and women, to have equal access to high-quality programs that are supported by successful Public-private Partnership relationships and resources.

Summary

SA is looking the expand its reach to develop partnerships. Creating an effective and collaborative partnership to address well-known barriers to stem education programs like service efficiencies, reporting methods regarding data collection and monitoring, financial management, and other opportunities that significantly influence the organization's successful operation. This will improve the effectiveness of the application of stem education and would increase and benefit the student educational experience in public schools. Stem education has been determined to positively influence students as it develops critical thinking, analytical problem solving, familiarity with growing technology, and encourages creativity. Small organizations need the support of PPPs to meet the needs of the progressive society.

Section 3 provides in detail the process of data collection and how it will be analyzed to support the study. This section is an in-depth about the significant impact and value STEM education has and what could be done to increase effectiveness. The section addresses the relevance and process of the study.

Section 3: Data Collection Process and Analysis

Introduction

STEM education is the study of science, technological innovations, engineering, and mathematical concepts. Unfortunately, structural, and practical barriers have hindered access to STEM programs for certain minority groups (Johnson, 2012). The barriers have led to fewer resources in infrastructure and other types of equipment services that need to offer students access to quality STEM education programs. There is often a lack of technology access, like computers and software programs, lab equipment, libraries, or other facilities, to practice any required academic or non-academic activities (Johnson, 2012). These problems would be eliminated by having functional partnerships in underserved areas. This local area of service is home to over 27 STEM Program oriented schools, only a handful are public (Charter) schools with no financial obligations. These schools are called MAGNET schools which require a qualification process that s excludes many potential students from the program exposure (Hinds 2017). The five magnet schools and over 50 charter schools all have PPPs as an alternative method for providing educational choices. To the community, of the Public Schools are aware of the value of developing collaborative relationships with businesses and organizations within the community.

This study might hold significance for other public organizations and can add to the research literature on the importance of implementing a strategy of acquiring effective PPPs and other collaborations that support STEM and different methods in their schools and communities to achieve the same results in community advancement through

education. The outcome was important in restructuring education to improve performance and student outcomes. The current state of SA should be aligned for a progressive PPP. By conducting a survey centered around the conceptual framework of a successful PPP, my intent was to gather information to understand the characteristics held by SA that are in solid alignment with standard practice to offer insight to the organization (see Matji et al. 2015).

I used a survey that allowed a small sample group to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the organization. The questions on the survey aligned with three significant elements noted to make a successful PPP. Though there are many things to consider when developing a partnership, the elements selected readily apply to the organization and capture the central pillars of any business structure, organizational structure, finances, or program governance.

Section 3 provides my process of data collection and how I used it in the study. In this section I outline the procedures and ensure it is aligned with conceptual framework. The significance of the study is reflected in this section by ensuring the data is being collected with integrity and efficiently.

Practice-Focused Questions

The main problem is the collaboration between public and private organizations since the community's involvement is key to the success of educational programs. Understanding the barriers to PPP and the best way to overcome them will be key to its success. In establishing a good PPP arrangement, studies have suggested that both participants, public and private, should complement in three significant aspects: (a)

program governance that requires mutual coordination, (b) public financial management identified as shared risk and benefits, and (c) organizational arrangement which includes developed process and clarity of institutional responsibilities (Zairol & Haigh, 2014). After acknowledging their own roles and the characteristics of the PPP arrangement, this framework suggests that the required result is obtainable through the proper application (Zairol & Haigh, 2014). The questions below served as a guide to my study:

1. How do stakeholders of the organization perceive the role of financial structuring/funding in sustaining a partnership?
2. Based on the perceptions of stakeholders of the organization, what are the organizational processes that are important to successful partnership in STEM?
3. Based on the perceptions of stakeholders of the organization, what elements of program governance would be critical to ensure successful partnerships in STEM?

The inclusion of all the stakeholders, the teachers, parents, students, the community, and private and public organizations, were critical to the project's success. The data established the current standing of the organization regarding the conceptual framework which include but are not limited to, efficient infrastructure, financial capacity, and program governance. From this data, I developed a comparison of the standard characteristics of successful PPPs and SA`s characteristics and offer improvements based on the proven and relevant working functions of PPPs. SA has the same common barriers as most small nonprofit organizations. SA lack’s financial

structure, secured funding, programmatic consistency, and the resources for strategic planning for growth and development. Despite the barriers, SA is still an organization in its infancy stages, making it palatable and poised for guidance. The organization has built a rapport in the community as a place of service and retains many healthy relationships.

The evidence highlighted the strategies that can promote PPPs and limit the barriers to the inclusion of all stakeholders. The collection and analysis of evidence showed the best way to collaborate between public and private organizations and work with the whole community. Understanding the role of the community, the public, and the private sector was critical to finding the connection missing in STEM operations.

Source of Evidence

Surveys are a common way to gauge consumer experiences and provide feedback to (Milner & Furnham 2017). This survey consisted of questions directly associated with the three elements needed to obtain or sustain a successful partnership (The World Bank & Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, 2008). Based on the framework of PPPs, established elements support the success of partnerships. With those elements, I conducted a SWOT analysis demonstrating SA's current strengths and weaknesses and identify potential opportunities and threats to the progression of the organization. Those who participated in the survey offered insight into the everyday functions or qualities of the organization.

Participants

A survey was sent to 32 staff or stakeholders using an online platform. Eleven participants are current mentors and staff working within the organization consisting of

current students, former educators, and community leaders. Four participants were on the board of directors, three were on the advisory committee, 11 were parents of student participants, and three were staff employed by another organization that has partnered for community opportunities with STEM. The staff and stakeholders represent those currently acting in a professional capacity at the organization, and stakeholders included volunteers for the organization or those who may have previously received services. The number and selection of participants was selected to give diverse feedback and represent every area of the organization. This survey consisted of 15-20 questions in which the participants choose from the Likert scale their beliefs on specific attributes or culture of STEM ACESS that were directly related to characteristics. The questions aligned with the elements noted within the conceptual framework that established the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The result of the SWOT analysis identified opportunities of improvements and validate the current success and the organization was offered a recommendation memo.

Procedures

Technology has now made access to online surveys a common practice (Evans & Mathur 2005). Survey Monkey is a popular platform that allows the design and application of various kinds of surveys (Abd Halim et al, 2018). The survey consisted of a Likert scale. This scale represents a set of answer options that cover a range of opinions on a topic. Likert Scales generally use a 5-point scale that ranges from one extreme opinion (Joshi et al 2015). Generally, the Likert survey question incorporates into its scale a moderate or relatively neutral option. Likert scales remain one of the most

common ways to measure opinions, perceptions, or behaviors (See Appendix A). Developing the survey instruments means the process starts with the study's objective and purpose and identifying what is being measured. I developed the questions using the conceptual framework, initial conversations with the organization regarding their organizational programs, and the review of this information with my program chair.

The first step in validating the survey is to establish the extent to which it is effective in terms of its goals. This required having stakeholders who understand the topic patriciate in the survey questionnaire. The questions effectively capture the topic under investigation outlined by the conceptual framework. The responses to survey questions identified what is done well, what needs improvement, and what are some opportunities and threats. There is also the identification of three areas of importance outlined in the conceptual framework allowing the assessment of the areas specifically.

The questionnaire was framed in a direct, simple, and unbiased format, ensuring every question is "measuring" something in an impartial way. A rating scale was developed to represent the responders' true attitudes. The instructions for completion remained easy to understand. The recruitment of participation had been provided by the organization. The organization supported the study by offering a list of contact information of those who participated in the survey. This list included stakeholders, employees, current and former students, student's parents, and previous partners. The request for this information was provided within 7-10 business days after institutional review board (IRB) approval and granted 7-10 business days after the formal request by email is made to the organization. The survey questions have been developed to align

with the data needed to aid the study. The survey aligned with the conceptual framework utilizing questions that can determine the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The questions are relevant to the current standing of the organization. The questions were manually imported into the online platform. The platform sent emails to each participant with a 48-hour completion request but allowing access for completion for seven days. Consent and authorization were obtained using an e-signature from the participant. A signed document notification will remain in the research record, and the participant will have the option to receive a signed copy. This was also an opportunity for the participant to opt-out.

The organization has collected the information of all those in their contact list. The data collected was imported to excel utilizing a chart form platform. A sample chart was created based on the imported data. The data results were manually sorted to ensure validity and remove any blank or nonblank responses. The answers were counted from the dataset and based on that data, and there was a percentage calculation. A report was be created as a visual tool accompanied by a chart.

Client Organization Approval

The organization has approved the qualitative study and agreed to assist me by offering me access to the surveyors through the organization’s email contact list. The Walden IRB Approval process was completed. The process ensured no ethical or biased concerns regarding the Professional Administrative Study. Participants included volunteers, board members, participants, and affiliates from the nonprofit organization.

Following the completion of the IRB review, the study was provided with the IRB approval number 05-02-23-0851454.

Protections

The Organization allowed the participation of all staff and stakeholders interested in supporting the study. The incentive was participating in a study to advance the status of a mission-forward organization. The survey was returned anonymously, protecting the privacy of the individuals. The data collected was solely be used to produce a SWOT analysis for the organization and does not require specifying individuals' responses. This practice protected the identity and ethical standard of anonymous participation. The survey was sent and asked to complete voluntarily. If selection sample is not efficient meaning, there is less than 10% of the noted stakeholder's participation request will be made to the organization to engage and offer the survey to additional stakeholders. SA has shared their contacts and support the study with no restrictions to survey questions. (See Appendix B)

Analysis and Synthesis

To complete the administrative study, the quantitative data analysis software SurveyMonkey was used for thematic analysis. Participant responded data was collected anonymously within the platform for data protection. Data integrity was maintained by reviewing, undergoing error checking, and validation to ensure integrity.

The data collection tools were consistent with the surveying platform. The use of this platform allowed for integrity protection, identity protection, and data protection. The method was also convenient for participants. For validity, the survey was offered to

stakeholders of the organization through a list provided by the organization. The organization offered a digital inventory of stakeholders. The contact list was then sent formal communication with consent and Information about the study and survey process. The tentative timeline for the study was seven business days upon receipt of the survey.

Analysis System

SurveyMonkey offers quantitative data analysis software that allows researchers to organize, analyze and interrupt data in a raw and unstructured form. The process of extracting the data required a sequence of events to ensure proper exports.

Data Integrity

Acknowledging that data integrity can be compromised through human error, a preventive measure is to follow a checklist to ensure data has proper access controls, backup optimization, and all data duplications would be removed. The importance of the sequence in which the data was handled allowed for limiting risk of error.

Survey monkey captured the data collected by the responders. The platform tracked the completion of all surveys generated within the time frame requested. The information was exported from that platform to Microsoft excel. Once the information was in excel, all columns will be transposed, creating a vertical range of anonymously participants labeled 1-25. This process was repeated with the response columns. Using a measure of central tendency, the objective will be to describe a set of data by identifying the central position within the set of data.

Using the Likert Scale chart in this form can directly be imported into a chart within the Chartfom platform for visual attachments. The data was averaged, and the

median was determined based on the research to establish where each element falls in SWOT analysis. Within Microsoft, there is a plugin installation called Chartform that aided in the automation of visual charts. The survey was sent with restrictions that required its completion before submission to avoid any potential of missing data.

Deliverables

After the review of data and completion of the study, the organization was offered a Recommendation Memo. This Recommendation Memo consist of a summary of the data, a review of the research, and recommendations to suggest actions to be taken in response to the study's findings.

Summary

STEM Education has been identified as critical to the education of young people in America. However, its implementation has been a challenge in America despite its advantages. The benefits for learners must be clearly explained to the stakeholders for effective implementation. Teachers must be trained and professionally developed to keep up with the demands of the system. The success of the project must involve both private and public stakeholders in the education department. This introduction paves the way to analyze further the barriers to effective implementation of STEM programs and the role every stakeholder must play to achieve success. Access must be made for all children, including people with disabilities and minority groups. This section highlights the need for private-public partnerships to see the implementation as a success.

This project focused on the need for private and public partnerships in the implementation of STEM education to improve the performance and quality of education

in the country. The section focused on the factors that have led to the inadequate response to STEM despite the declining quality and access to education. This section highlighted the conceptual framework applied in the STEM education integration process. This section highlighted the need to identify the barriers to the success of STEM to identify the best practices and strategies that can achieve the goal.

Section 4: Evaluation and Recommendations

Introduction

In this section, I created a study to address the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvements within SA. 32 participants were contacted, and data received from them were well curated in detailed reports and charts. Some of such strengths are the visibility of the organization in the community and the stable target market. However, a weakness can be spotted in the method of managing financial resources. Other areas for improvement centered on, program governance, and organizational arrangements. Therefore, if measures like financial transparency, diversity of programming and Board representations, and consultations with professionals are put in place, the organizations workforce highly desired skills will be enhanced, and PPP will be fostered.

Sources of Evidence

SA continues to have structural and practical barriers that have hindered access to STEM programs for minority groups (Scott & Martin 2014). The barriers to PPP have led to the organizations needing more resources in terms of infrastructure and other equipment services required to offer students access to quality STEM education programs. Due to the nuance of partnership needs and working relationships, partnerships are often tailored to address both internal and external processes for business improvement. I analyzed the frequency distributions of a Likert scale survey. Organizational structure, financial defenses, and organizational accountability to determine any limitations that would create a barrier to successful PPPs. I concluded by

assessing the strengths and weaknesses of current or potential PPPs and developed a recommendation memo offered for the organization.

The organization provided me with a list of contacts. Requests were sent to members via email, including the consent form and link to complete the survey. Those interested in participating could consent and complete the survey using the link provided. Once a participant agreed, they were provided access to the survey. Data was captured through survey responses via the SurveyMonkey Platform. Before participation, participants were notified that the survey was anonymous and would not disclose personal information. At the start of each survey, the platform notifies the participant that they can choose not to participate at any time.

Participants of the study were stakeholders of the nonprofit. This included participants who receive services, board members, and other organization affiliates. The participants have varying levels of affiliation, backgrounds, and experiences related to the organization. Surveys were sent out on May 10 and May 14, 2023. Though the initial attempt was for 20 volunteers to respond with completion to the anonymous survey, there were 23 completed surveys. The survey remained available until the deadline, and no additional attempts were made to surveyors for completion due to the desired number being met. The criteria used to determine participants were (a) 18 years of age or older and (b) associated with SA or have experience with PPPs. Due to anonymity, no other demographics were captured.

Findings and Implications

I orchestrated this research study in a five-phase analytic approach of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. This phase begins with an informal analysis or rearranging of the data to analyze. After the survey, the data was compiled and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Following the initial analysis, I separated the data using the conceptual framework elements to measure central tendency. I developed a numeric code and identified themes based on the PPP framework; this allowed for all three areas comprising of financial transparency, program governance and organizational arrangements to be represented within the survey. The survey platform allowed the categorization, coding, and interpretation of references. Interpreting the data assisted my organizing and structuring the findings. Following the completion of analyzing the data, it was formally organized and a deliverable was completed. The data was collected and presented in the final phase of the conclusion.

The data revealed that the stakeholders disagree that finances are recorded and reported accurately either in the quarter or biannually, with the lowest agreeance scores in financial transparency being 37%, Indicating a significant need for improvement. Considering such significant weakness in financial transparency, a well-structured financial department has to be established. With regards to program governance, the data revealed that the organization is considerably innovative and adaptable. 70% of participants said that the decision making process is transparent, and they are duly aware of their roles and have been provided with the necessary resources to perform tasks. The program governance data can still be enhanced with thought partnering and internal

control access provisions. On the part of organizational arrangements, it is revealed by 80% of stake holders that there is an open-door policy with management and only 33% of stakeholders believe that the organization suffers from a dwindling market. To improve the organizational framework, consultations can be made with professionals within the STEM education sector. If the areas identified in this study are improved, fruitful partnerships will be easily established.

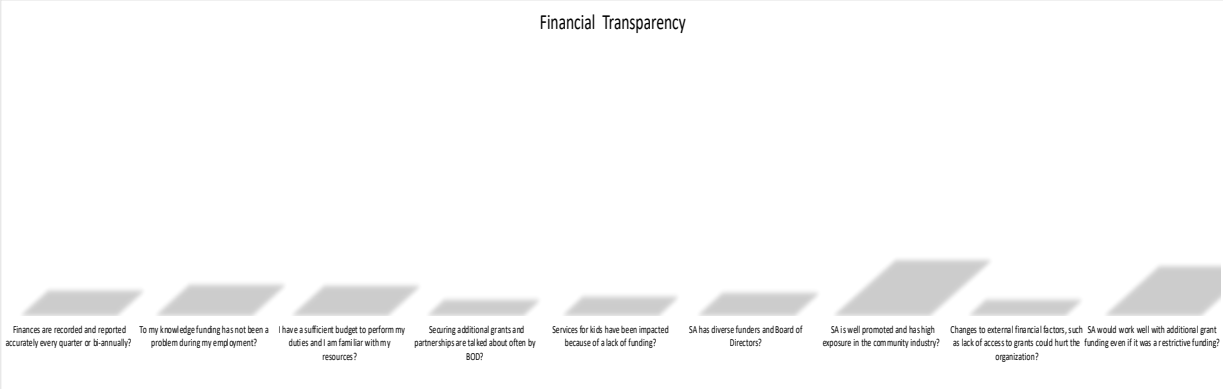
Financial Transparency

The theme that was established at concluding the data analysis was that the responders need more understanding and comfort with the organization's funding ability, financial planning, and transparency. Emerging patterns identified by using frequency distribution which shows the means of the response being the lowest of the three identified conceptual frameworks.

The series of questions pertain to the financial transparency of the organization. The questions were answered to assess the responder's understanding of how the organization is funded and its daily financial practices to answer each of the following questions an understanding of funding, financial practices. Figure 1 presents the findings of a series of questions that related to the financial transparency.

Figure 1

Financial Transparency

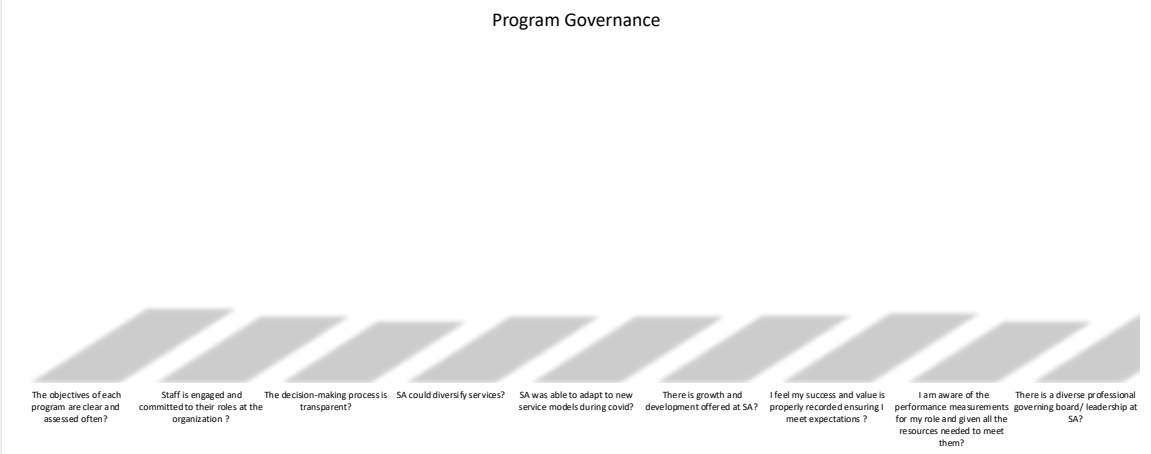


Program Governance

Program governance pertained to the program structuring and process of the organization. Responders assessed the organization based on their individual experiences of how the organization is run and its daily practices to answer each question. Using frequency distribution, the results offered insight into improving transparency in the decision-making process and identifying the expectations and resources needed for staff to meet their goals. Program governance explores an organization's ability to be adaptable and innovative. They can assess the talent pool by completing work studies, job analyses, and program evaluations. These are the structural components of the organization's ability. Because perception is such a relevant piece in partnership, program governance also covers the perception the organization has. Figure 2 presents the findings of a series of questions that related to program governance.

Figure 2

Program Governance



Organizational Arrangements

Organizational arrangements articulate organizational structuring. It is assessed by analyzing how the organization is set up, its function, tools, and systems that aid an organization in achieving its objectives, and the employee's ability to complete their work effectively and efficiently while building cultural norms (Clawson & Pitts 2006). This data set outlines that though transparency is an issue, programmatically, the organization maintains strength in the community by recognizing its benefit and supporting its staff with an open-door policy. It is also identified that only 33% agree that the organization's market is shrinking, indicating the remaining 77% of responders believe there can be service expansion and longevity an opportunity. Figure 3 presents the findings of a series of questions that related to the organizational arrangements.

Figure 3

Organizational Arrangements

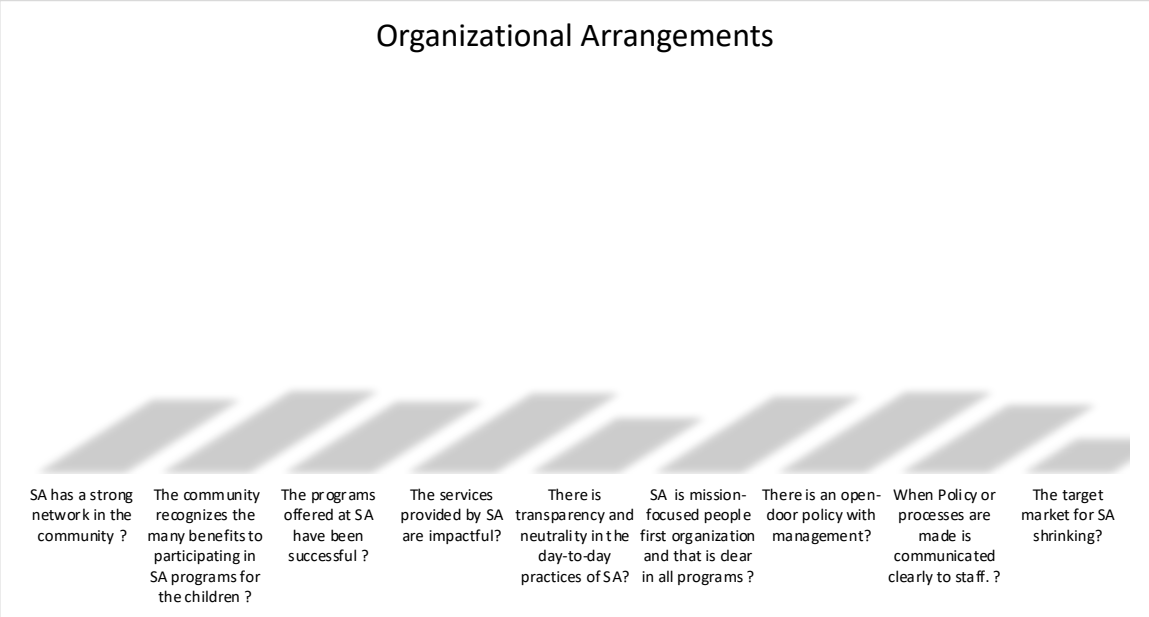


Figure 4 summarizes the findings the organization may need to properly engage and educate stakeholders during company town halls addressing financial capacity and pursuits and providing coaching for process or procedural changes pertaining to their respective roles. After identifying the financial understanding and process management theme, the data reflected that other framework areas operate well and positively correlated with the dimensions. Data revealed that there is a strong sense of collaborative ability within the organization, good working relationships internally, and high visibility within the community of service.

Figure 4

Identify Opportunities of Improvement

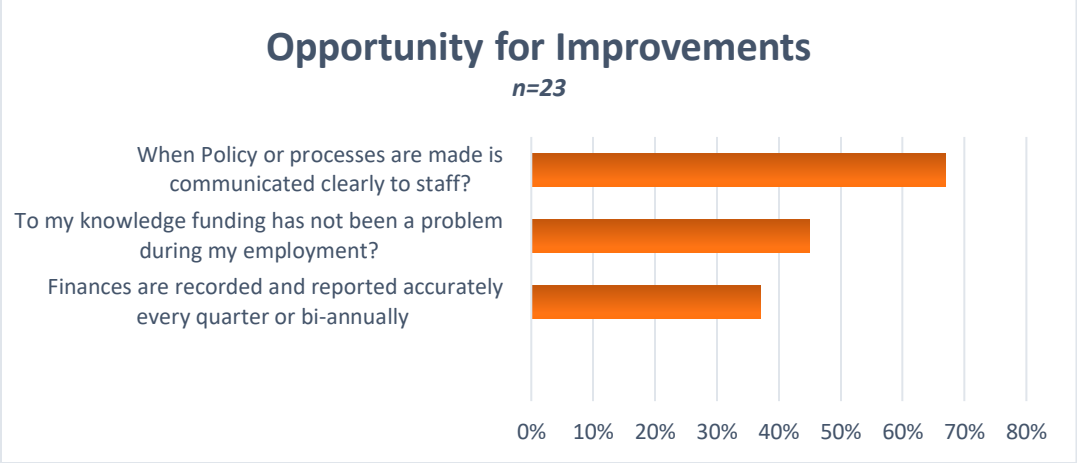
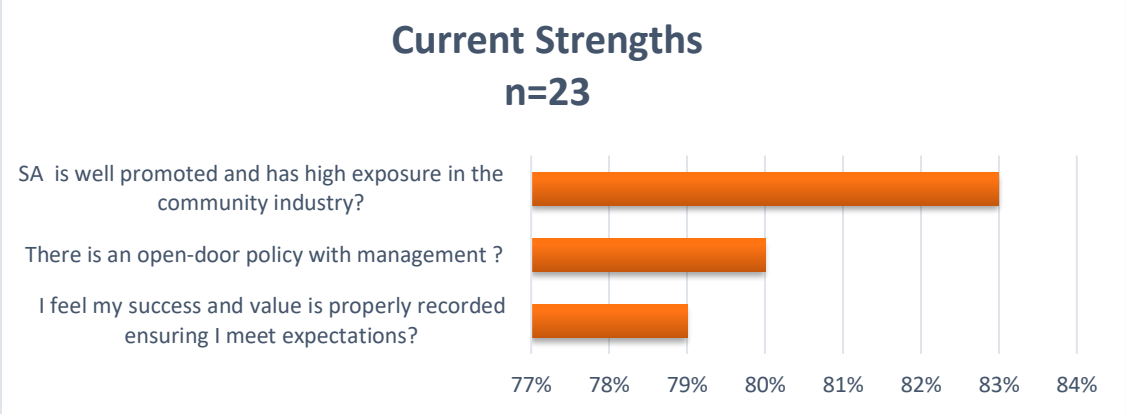


Figure 5 shows that 83% of the responders believed the organization was highly visible in the community. High visibility was identified as a main strength but it was also recorded that responders feel their value and success are properly recorded, and there is an open-door policy speaking to the culture of the organization's impact on responders.

Figure 5

Identify Current Strengths



Interpretation of Findings

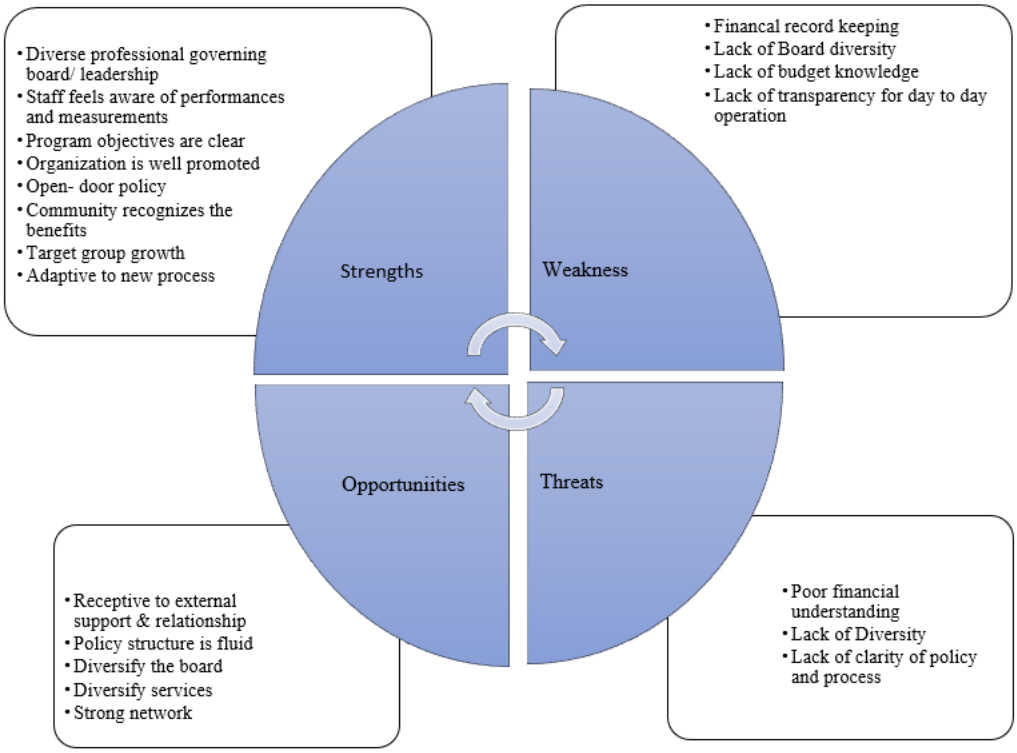
Strength Weakness, Opportunity, & Threats

The program governance average suggested some opportunities for improvement; however, the strength and positive appeal for partnerships to consider regarding successful indicators were identified. Lastly, the organizational arrangement having an average score of 68% showed this to be an opportunity to redevelop structure and best practices for the organization while encouraging the current culture of community first approach.

Furthermore, the findings revealed a significant weakness in financial transparency. One concern expressed through the survey is the need for more conversation around grant funding opportunities from the board of directors; only 23% of responders believe the board is doing an adequate job at sharing grant funding opportunities. Grant funding and securing are significant for organizational growth and development. Outlined in Figure 6 is a SWOT analysis indicating the features identified through the survey in their respective category. The overall conclusion of the survey indicates that financial transparency scored the least indicating an opportunity for improvements and to reduce risks as an agency.

Figure 6

SWOT Analysis



Unanticipated Limitations or Outcomes

The purpose of this professional administrative study is to identify and address the barriers and identify opportunities to improve the availability of collaborations and effective partnerships for this organization. The following questions guided this study: How do stakeholders of the organization perceive the role of financial structuring/funding in sustaining a partnership? Based on the perceptions of stakeholders of the organization, what are the organizational processes that are important to successful partnerships? Based on the perceptions of stakeholders of the organization, what elements of program governance would be critical to ensure successful partnerships? Stakeholders find there is

a need to improve financial controls and communications to encourage its readiness for private-public partnership. With the proper structuring and support that could directly influence the progress of financial capacity, the organizational structure could use more clarity and identify project/program ownership and roles and responsibilities delegated to departments. The stakeholders identify the organization is well connected to the mission and values of the organization, but there needs to for more clarity and transparency regarding decision-making.

Unanticipated limitations occurred due to the number of responders that participated. The initial desired responder amount was 20; the researcher received 23 participants to complete the survey. Data saturation was reached with increased participation. Additionally, a majority of participants were able to complete the survey within 72 hours of receiving it.

Implications Resulting from Findings for the Client Organization

Commitment to removing barriers to private-public partnerships for nonprofits remains the study's objective. Increased financial transparency and management, diversity of programming and Board representations, and clear programmatic expectations increase the organization's benefits and appeal for effective partnerships.

Positive Social Change

The positive social change includes improving a community organization offering high-quality educational programs promoting the growth and advancement of a marginalized community. The impact also aligns with improving highly desired skills in the workforce.

Recommendations

With the completion of the research, there are a few recommendations for the organization to consider encouraging and secure private-public partnerships.

Recommendation I

Establishing a financial department helps with the maturity and structure needed for the organization. A benefit of having a financial department includes checks and balances of standardized business practices for procurement but also financial projections or forecasting. Though the organization is not for profit, the recommendation would be if proper forecasting and controlling are secure; it could stabilize the organization. This would also speak to potential partners the risk sharing and allocation management. Finance and access to additional finances are significant contributions from partnerships. PPPs bring private sector finance to the project; and introduce access to a funding pool the organization does not currently possess (Fabbri & Dapit, 2020). Literature review informs the lack of financial sustainability in nonprofit organizations is common. Due to changes in the funding climate and the financial challenges many nonprofit organizations face during economic challenges, nonprofits have begun to consider formalized collaborations like partnerships as mitigation toward securing funding sources (Connolly & York, 2002; Renz et al., 2010). This includes nonprofit leaders exploring collaborative partnerships and shared service models; funders also see this as an opportunity to maximize impact with limited resources (Renz et al., 2010). The recommendations align with demonstrating value and accountability to funders to encourage trust building. Donors and Grant funding organizations increasingly want access to current information

about an organization's operations and finances to ensure a positive return on their investment (Bray, 2010). Evaluating financial and programmatic outcomes resulting from funding demonstrates the value of a nonprofit's operations and helps gauge the potential mission impact.

Recommendation II

The program governance framework outlines the process and functions by which programs are monitored, managed, and supported (Fabbri & Dapit,2020). The organization's maturation can be developed with thought partnering and internal control access provisions to improve current standards and enhance them moving forwards. The governance of a nonprofit is generally a product of its purpose. The complexity of the roles and procedures are defined according to the laws and tax regulations associated with the funding source. The effectiveness of good governance allows the development and maintenance of sustainable value for the organization and its stakeholders. The governance system defines how the organization's structures are used, identifies the rights and responsibilities within those structures, and assures that management is operating effectively and adequately within the structures. The role of leadership is to manage the organization within the framework defined by the governance system; this applies particularly to the governance and management of projects or programs (Too & Weaver, 2014).

Recommendation III

Seek consultation from professionals that can improve the framework of the organization. The organization should seek a third party for expertise in the restructuring

or enhancement of the current organizational framework. A robust framework provides a straightforward program, business objectives, and internal and external transparency. Framework will allow for longevity and can be beneficial to have established as the organization may shift. Organizations' complexity and chaotic natures require tools and constant guidance to assist with organizational analysis and evaluation. The key to success and sustainability is emphasizing organizational strengths while addressing weaknesses. Prioritizing the strengths and mitigating the weaknesses leads to progressive organizational improvement, with everyone working toward common goals and mission (Henry, 2018).

Strength and Limitations

The quantitative. study was to remove the barriers to Private-public partnerships for the organization. Research has previously supported the benefits of this kind of partnership and its advancements in education, critical infrastructures, and other areas of the world. The recommendation of improving the program governance, establishing a financial department to increase transparency, and developing the organizational arrangements are essential for the organization's sustainability and growth.

Section 5: Dissemination Plan

Dissemination Plan

Technology comprising of the use of the Likert Scale, charts, and data was instrumental in the curating of this research. The data compiled consists of feedback from 32 participants that ranged from current mentors or staff to members of the board of directors, committee leaders, members of the advisory committee, staff of another organization, and parents of student participants. The feedback was used to analyze the strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the organization. The research findings have been compiled in the form of charts, data, and associated written text.

The findings encourages STEM education and communicates its ability to enhance the problem solving skill of students. It also encourages PPP for organizations like SA. The research will be shared with other academic researchers and community members within the community, where SA promotes STEM education. It will also be disseminated through presentations, writing a report and publishing it in a peer-reviewed journal, and statewide publications. Trust Source credibility may pose as a hindrance to dissemination, however the results of the survey conducted on participants and stakeholders of the organization, combined with educating the community of the benefits of PPP and STEM education will be used to address this barrier.

To ensure sustainability of this research over time key stakeholders within the organization will be instrumental in communicating with community members about the benefits of STEM education. Also, finances will be provided by donors to promote the publishing of the research in relevant publications. Presentations will also be held and the

success of these will be analyzed to the access of minority groups to STEM programs, the growth of the target market for organizations like SA that are focused on STEM education, and the ease of establishing PPP.

Summary

The time and resources needed to implement and evaluate the progress of improvement can be tasking for organizations to complete. With the additional support of consultants, the framework enhancements can assist in developing and restructuring their objectives and potentially expose new opportunities within the organization that may be appealing to new potential (Patel & Niranjan 2015). PPPs are a benefit to the community and offer a positive influence on social and economic development.

I aimed to identify the barriers to PPPs for a nonprofit organization. The following questions guided this study:

- How do stakeholders of the organization perceive the role of financial structuring/funding in sustaining a partnership?
- Based on the perceptions of stakeholders of the organization, what are the organizational processes that are important to successful partnerships? Based on the perceptions of stakeholders of the organization, what elements of program governance would be critical to ensure successful partnerships?

The results of the study reflect the organization's strengths and weaknesses that may have contributed as barriers to PPPs. The assessment of major contributing factors to the partnership's success concluded that strengthening financial

transparency should remain a priority for the organization. To better assess and execute action plans for improvement on behalf of the organization.

The organization will be given final dissemination in the form of a recommendation memo. This meme outlines the identified factors that need to be addressed to remove some barriers to private-public partnerships. (Appendix B)

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