

2023

Organizational Continuity Planning for Small Nonprofit Organizations

Lucy Castro
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Health Sciences & Public Policy

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Lucy Castro

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Organizational Continuity Planning for Small Nonprofit Organizations

by

Lucy Castro

MPA, Strayer University, 2016

BPS, Metropolitan College of New York, 2008

Professional Administrative Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Public Administration

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November 2023

Abstract

Natural and manufactured disasters may negatively affect a nonprofit organization's ability to meet its mission. Organizational continuity planning is one tool to help an organization remain practical and mission focused when faced with a natural or manufactured disaster. This qualitative case study explored the essential elements of organizational continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations. Disaster management theory and emergency management theory were used to frame the study. Three research questions guided the study exploring the internal organizational infrastructure challenges organizational leaders face during natural or manufactured disasters; the ways organizational continuity planning assisted nonprofit leaders in providing needed services during times of natural and manufactured disasters; and the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan. Eight nonprofit organization leaders who had successfully implemented continuity planning took part in case study interviews. Interview results were inductively analyzed for themes, which were effective communication, resources, and safety. Findings may be used to improve positive social change through strategies small nonprofit organizational leaders utilize to address internal organizational infrastructure issues and the challenges of supplying needed services to their constituents when natural and manufactured disasters occur.

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Dedication

This entire journey is dedicated to my beautiful mother, Sonia Luz Castro! Thank you for believing in me when I did not believe in myself. I thank you for all the years that we had together as mother and daughter to form the most complex relationships one can ever have in life. Being so young when you started having children must have been incredibly challenging for you, I know, because I followed in your footsteps. I thank God that I was born to aid you in all that life would throw your way. I thank YOU for all those lessons you taught me; I did not think I would need them but true to form, they enabled me to deal with dysfunctional situations and helped me navigate unkind prejudices.

I thank God that I stayed with you, worked with you as you said goodbye to all the demons and drugs. I sincerely loved and love you. Thank you, my beautiful butterfly; you transformed and evolved into a beautiful, kind, loving mom, and I am grateful for all the struggles and all the victories. Thank you for showing me that I am my mother's daughter! I am you with an education! An education that was not afforded to you.

Thank you for loving both of your granddaughters with all your heart. You showed up every time no matter what event it was. Whether a childhood race around the school yard or a concert at a famous church, you showed up for them with pride and joy and a big smile! You always told anyone and everyone who would listen that I was your sunset and sunrise, and now I live every day to see sunsets and sunrises without you. Every sunset and every sunrise remind me of your unconditional crazy love for me, your laughter and high fives, your smile, your beautiful singing voice, and your zest for life. Thank you for everything, Mom. I absolutely love you with all my heart! Remember our

pinky promise. I become the first Dr. Castro in all the generations, and you will call me Dr. Daughter for a week straight. I know that God will allow me to hear your beautiful voice in the wind whispering Dr. Daughter, and I look so forward to hearing your beautiful happy loving voice once again. I love you more than words could ever say, and I miss you everyday of my life.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Problem

Located in the Eastern United States, Disaster Assistance Organization ABC (pseudonym) is a thriving nonprofit organization receiving awards and funding from the government for its ability to help local communities. ABC supplies nutritional aid, voucher checks, and housing options and services to its older citizens and supports youths in the community. ABC also offers employment and computer training to young adults 18–25 years old. ABC employs seven people, including a director, an assistant director, and four case managers. Due to the increasing number of natural and manufactured disasters and the lack of an organizational continuity plan, ABC had struggled to supply services to its constituents and address its internal infrastructure. This qualitative case study examined the effects of natural and manufactured disasters on nonprofit organizations that do not have organizational continuity planning and documented the essential elements of a plan from other existing nonprofits that employ a continuity plan.

Organizational continuity planning maximizes the probability that small nonprofits continue to offer needed services to their communities, protects internal organizational infrastructure, protects assets, and supplies resilience in natural and manufactured disasters. In 2012, The Southeast United States experienced Hurricane Sandy, which left hundreds of millions of dollars of damages in its path. A succession of natural and manufactured disasters followed in the ensuing years, forcing the small nonprofit to close its doors for months, leaving its constituents without critical services. In part, this might have been due to the lack of an organizational continuity plan. This organization was not the only nonprofit to experience setbacks during natural or

manufactured disasters. In the wake of a disaster, nonprofits find it challenging to supply services to their community, leaving constituents scrambling to find help.

Having a plan for organizational continuity is critical for small nonprofit organizations because they supply essential services to their constituents, enhancing the economy, producing healthier communities, and enabling vocational services to be offered (Ono & Watanabe, 2017). In addition to documenting the service gaps that occurred when an organization faced natural or manufactured disaster, this qualitative case study outlined the essential elements senior leadership needed to create a continuity plan. Organizational continuity planning may prevent small nonprofits from permanent closure and help others from experiencing setbacks due to these recurring disasters. Findings of the study supplied the elements necessary to create a practical organizational continuity plan for ABC. This may enable ABC leadership to develop and support the required infrastructure during a disaster to maximize its ability to provide needed services.

Organization Background and Problem Statement

ABC is one of the highest-ranking organizations among other nonprofit organizations in New York for supplying nutritional aid, voucher checks, and housing options services to its older citizens and supporting its youths in the community. However, after facing challenges due to a series of natural and manufactured disasters due to the lack of a continuity plan, its ability to meet its mission suffered. In 2012, ABC experienced issues with natural disasters and realized that organizational continuity planning might be a way to address its challenges. ABC reported that Hurricane Sandy

laid bare the shortcomings of its internal organizational infrastructure, making services challenging to provide for its constituents.

ABC and thousands of other small nonprofits do not have organizational continuity plans to aid when natural and manufactured disasters strike. This qualitative case study investigated their problems without such a plan by gathering data from other nonprofit organizations that have a continuity plan and preparing a report on essential elements of an organizational continuity plan. According to the literature, small nonprofit organizations without organizational continuity plans are vulnerable and unprepared to recover from natural and manufactured disasters, and this has an impact on needed services to the community. The organizations are restricted in managing the proper responses when disasters strike, creating a significant disturbance to their internal organizational infrastructure and their ability to provide needed services to their constituents. Without this plan, they face a severe disadvantage when they need to react quickly to events that could cause permanent closure. The first 2 days following a disaster are critical in figuring out whether the organization will survive (Gin et al., 2018).

Organizational continuity plans can be developed by examining any existing plans, procedures, and provisional challenges within the organization. By gathering data and expounding on the essential elements that detail a practical organizational continuity plan, ABC and other small nonprofits can better address internal infrastructure challenges with the goal of decreasing the number of permanent closures of such organizations in the future. This qualitative case study examined the effects that natural and manufactured

disasters had on nonprofit organizations that do not have organizational continuity planning and explored the essential elements of a plan from other existing nonprofits that employ continuity planning by gathering data and formulating a report on the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan.

Purpose

This qualitative case study addressed the issues that arise when nonprofit organizations do not have organizational continuity planning. Like thousands of other small nonprofit organizations, ABC had yet to explore the opportunity of organizational continuity planning. Organizational continuity planning may help ABC meet its mission statement by providing needed services to its constituents.

Organizational continuity plans are strategic procedures that identify the four Ps in organizational continuity: plans, processes, procedures, and policies. They ensure the continuity of all organizational functions when natural and manufactured disasters occur (Tucker, 2015). Current study findings may allow ABC and other nonprofits in the Eastern United States address internal organizational infrastructure issues and supply needed support to continue their critical work by supplying needed services to their constituents after natural or manufactured disasters. A practical organizational continuity plan for small nonprofit organizations such as ABC identifies the risks, and current findings will be shared with stakeholders and leaders to mitigate damages. A cost-effective organizational continuity plan may boost financial performance and protect the value of the organization. I collected data on the essential elements needed to develop a sustainable organizational continuity plan for ABC.

Research Questions

RQ1: What internal organizational infrastructure challenges do organizational leaders face during natural or manufactured disasters?

RQ2: In what ways can organizational continuity planning assist nonprofit leaders in providing needed services during times of natural and manufactured disasters?

RQ3: What are the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan?

Summary of Data Sources and Analysis

To answer the research questions in this qualitative administrative case study, I gathered and analyzed interview data on the essential elements needed to develop a practical organizational continuity plan. Qualitative methodology assists researchers when intense research and understanding are needed regarding phenomena without using numerical data (Feng & Behar-Horenstein, 2019). This administrative case study included interviews with eight leaders of nonprofit organizations with an organizational continuity plan to understand how to help those without an organizational continuity plan. Findings may help nonprofit leaders at ABC understand the need for organizational continuity planning and the essential elements in a continuity plan.

Definitions

Organizational continuity planning has evolved from thoughts of a threat that could affect technology and data to a shutdown of nonprofit organizations and their daily operations. During the 1970s, when organizational continuity planning was determined to be a necessary procedure for a nonprofit's success, the questions were simple: Should

nonprofit owners create organizational continuity plans to prevent future events? Do preexisting threats justify the need for strategic investments?

During the 1990s, organizational continuity planning was considered by owners to be stealthy in action. However, from 1990 to 2001, broader influences were associated with organizational continuity planning, with most small business owners implementing a business plan. However, small nonprofit organizations did not follow suit by adding organizational continuity planning.

After the World Trade Center bombing in 2001, an organizational continuity plan was an element policymakers demanded of small nonprofit owners. From 2002 to 2005, internationalization took hold along with organizational continuity planning with specific policies to promote resilience worldwide. However, from 2006 to 2010, thousands of small nonprofit owners complained about the lack of certainty that organizational continuity plans had, and the amount of money spent each year to protect against unforeseen events. Owners argued that although organizational continuity planning supplied resilience, predicting natural and manufactured disasters was expensive.

Most small nonprofit organizations thought the chances of a natural or manufactured disaster affecting their organization were low; therefore, organizational continuity plans were discussed but not prioritized Josephson et al. (2017) found that having an organizational continuity plan supplies small nonprofit organizations with resilience. Resilience is the ability of organizations to absorb stressors and return to the state they were in before disruptions occurred. It was not until 2011 that continuity planning changed, and the reengineering began to include how planning could address

issues facing small nonprofits during natural and manufactured disasters. This combination was a momentous change; it added to the American people's protection, addressed natural and manufactured disasters and terrorism, reduced permanent closures, and enabled small nonprofit owners to continue helping their constituents. Organizational continuity planning succeeded in articulating the organization's needs during disasters instead of reacting after unforeseen events, which helped end permanent closures.

Significance

This administrative case study may help ABC and other small nonprofits understand organizational continuity planning along with the essential elements of organizational continuity planning, internal organizational infrastructure, and how to provide needed services after natural and manufactured disasters. The findings may change how small nonprofit organizational leaders think about organizational continuity planning and how such planning can alleviate internal organizational infrastructure issues and needed services during natural and manufactured disasters. The administrative case study may allow small nonprofit organizations, leaders, and stakeholders understand the influence such planning has on small nonprofit organizations and how such plans help organizations support the community and supply the services needed when disaster strikes. This study may also help leaders and stakeholders think creatively as they prepare for disasters.

Key Stakeholders

The key stakeholders of the administrative case study included the leaders of ABC. ABC had one senior director, one assistant director, and four case managers

working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The leaders had been members of the organization for more than 15 years and had firsthand knowledge of organizational continuity planning.

Implications for Public Administration

This qualitative case study and its recommendations may help small nonprofit organizations, stakeholders, and leaders understand the need for an organizational continuity plan and how to address the challenges faced during natural and manufactured disasters that prevent the organization from supplying needed services to its constituents. The findings may support approaches that add to existing services and create positive social change.

Summary

Section 1 detailed the problems small nonprofit organizations face without an organizational continuity plan and the internal infrastructure issues that plague small nonprofits when a natural and manufactured disaster occurs. In Section 2, a literature review addresses strategies to prevent internal infrastructure challenges and what can be done to avoid delays in needed services during natural and manufactured disasters. This literature review was aligned with the qualitative organizational continuity planning case study and its benefits for small nonprofit organizations.

Section 2: Conceptual Approach and Background

ABC is a thriving nonprofit organization receiving awards and funding from the government for its ability to help communities. However, 2012 was the first time that ABC realized that supplying needed services had become problematic due to Hurricane Sandy and the lack of a continuity plan. The agency's ability to supply needed services declined during Hurricane Sandy, leaving the small nonprofit vulnerable and delaying the work it does so well. The current study may serve as a model for other small nonprofit organizations that face such challenges. Organizations that do not have an organizational continuity plan are vulnerable to disasters, including internal organizational issues, delays in services, and chances of survival. This qualitative case study investigated the problems small nonprofits face without such a plan. I collected data and prepared a report on the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan for ABC. I answered the research questions through qualitative interview with eight leaders of local organizations with organizational continuity plans.

Literature Search Strategy

I explored research that included organizational continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations. I also explored business continuity planning and management to gauge how other industries protect their business with continuity planning when natural and manufactured disasters occur. I evaluated data found in published books, peer-reviewed journals, and government websites. To identify relevant literature, I searched the following databases: ProQuest Central, EBSCOhost, and Google Scholar in the Walden University Library, which helped me frame my case study. Some of the key

terms and phrases that I used in the search included *nonprofit organizations, small businesses, organizational continuity plans, the principle of emergency management theory, disaster management theory, knowledge management, and natural and manufactured disasters*. Recent studies addressed the devastation of small nonprofit organizations and the communities they served. Keywords such as *communication, resources, training, and safety* were added to enrich the literature search outcomes and provide the main concepts of organizational continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations. The literature review contained material from 80 peer-reviewed journal articles; however, 43 peer-reviewed journal articles were used in this qualitative case study. I also used one book, two web pages, and one governmental agency (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA]). Ninety-five percent of referenced literature sources were published within the past 6 years, from 2017 to 2023, and 5% of referenced literature reviews were published from 2015 to 2017. The publication dates for the literature used ranged from 2015 to 2023.

Conceptual Framework

Disaster Management Theory

Disaster management theory and emergency management theory are used to analyze potential threats and implement preventive strategies to protect against property damage and deaths during natural and manufactured disasters. Disaster management theory is used to alleviate threats and safeguard lives from the aftermath of a disaster. Disaster management theory is a modification strategy used to analyze potential hazards and protect against those threats with contingency plans (Seaberg et al., 2017).

Disaster management was created during the Carter administration in the 1970s after four hurricanes: Agnes, Eloise, David, and Frederick. These natural disasters affected the East Coast, the Caribbean, and other areas of the United States. Some agencies helped during and after these disasters and in emergency and disaster relief; however, President Carter realized the agencies needed to be equipped to supply mass relief and created FEMA. At the time, the agency used the principles of disaster management to address all incidents. Over time, other theories were developed to address specific areas of concern because disasters happen in four categories: natural, manufactured, accidental, and deliberate.

The importance of understanding this concept helps nonprofit leaders plan for disaster. Because most disasters are natural, it is easier to prepare for natural disasters, although this can be difficult. When manufactured disasters occur, there are hundreds of reasons for their creation. Thompson et al. (2016) noted that natural disasters can be predicted and addressed, and the area in which they will occur can determine what action organizational leaders take. For instance, humid, warm climates have higher chances for hurricanes, while colder climates are more likely to experience blizzards, extreme and deadly temperatures, and avalanches. Disaster management theory and emergency management theory address all four categories by analyzing potential threats, implementing preventive strategies, mitigating property damage, and securing lives. However, disaster management and emergency management are not organizational continuity plans. I used these theories to explore the origins of continuity planning and its evolution over time.

Principles of Emergency Management Theory

Emergency management theory has been around for decades; however, the concepts have changed. Emergency management theory started as a subdiscipline of public administration and public safety and, over the years, evolved to take on an identity of its own. Emergency management has evolved and is characterized by the attempt to identify and deal with potential hazards, threats, and disasters. Emergency management is a responsive action with strategic ideas to aid in the aftermath of a disaster or crisis. Emergency management's primary strategy is distributing resources to a community after disasters (Bodrožić & Adler, 2017). Although public administrators understand that large-scale emergencies can happen, the theory is applied after an entity has been affected.

According to this theory, disaster plus provocation equals vulnerability. Vulnerability happens when provoked threats create disasters in small nonprofit organizations that lack organizational continuity plans. This paradigm helps researchers understand why problems arise and how they can be resolved (Klijn et al., 2015). The current case study included a historical look into how government agencies addressed natural and manufactured disasters. However, due to evolutionary periods, concepts, and theories, other strategies are often included for individual entities. Organizational continuity plans are strategic tools that enable nonprofit organizations to deal with natural and manufactured disasters. Organizational continuity planning is the opposite of emergency management techniques in that it is initiative taking, not reactive. Disaster management theory is used to organize resources and distribute tasks to deal with issues

that affect humanity; organizational continuity planning addresses all matters that concern nonprofit organizations. Organizational continuity planning can address provisional issues and internal organizational infrastructure challenges and protect the health of a small nonprofit organization so that it can continue to supply needed services to its constituents.

Organizational Continuity Planning Defined

Organizational continuity planning is a strategy proven to protect nonprofit organizations from experiencing setbacks when natural and manufactured disasters occur. Experience has shown that contingency planning helps nonprofit organizations cope with catastrophes and enables them to continue supplying needed services while keeping their reputation intact and staff members safe. Contingency planning also allows the organization to protect its daily operations and be resilient during natural and manufactured disasters. Resilience is a vital part of organizational continuity planning. Resilience allows the organization to absorb the pressures associated with natural or manufactured disasters and allows the organization to resume operational services after a disruption.

The disruptions that occur during disasters affect the core functions and restrict areas of operation. The first 2 hours of trouble are crucial to any organization during this period. This is when recovery should begin; with organizational continuity planning, the organization should be able to start operational functions at once. During this phase, an organizational continuity plan's recovery strategies enable leaders to restore core functions affected by natural or manufactured disasters. Within the next 12 hours, the

organization should be running at a moderate level, and within 5 days the organization will be at total capacity.

Organizational continuity planning allows a nonprofit organization to recover after 5 days of a disaster when the business impact analysis in the plan is used. The business impact analysis provides time-sensitive solutions to prevent gaps in daily operations and allow a nonprofit organization to recover when an unexpected incident occurs. The recovery strategy is a significant part of organizational continuity planning; it helps leaders find internal organizational infrastructure issues, mitigate financial risk, and supply needed services to small nonprofit organizations. Chikoto et al. (2012) noted that the most critical components of organizational continuity planning are its strategic planning. Păunescu and Argatu (2020) agreed that initiative-taking approaches to disaster preparation, rather than reactive approaches, will end the high percentage of internal organizational issues. Strategic planning can predetermine and target recovery to achieve complete restoration of operations.

The current study addressed organizational continuity planning and internal organizational infrastructure challenges in supplying needed services to constituents. I also highlighted the acceptance of recovery strategies that small nonprofits need to educate themselves. The literature showed that implementing organizational continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations can reduce permanent closure after disasters. If small nonprofit organizations are concerned about such tragedies, it is not clear why thousands do not have an organizational continuity plan. Organizational continuity plans are tools nonprofit organizations and social service agencies use to prevent threats to the

organization. The recovery strategies measure interruptions when operational procedures have been affected. The operating systems involved can range from power outages to internal infrastructure damage. Organizational continuity planning allows an organization to protect its core functions, continue supplying needed services, and become resilient during disasters. Organizational continuity planning for nonprofit organizations is needed because natural and manufactured disasters are increasing, and government financial aid is decreasing.

In 2020, nonprofit organizations suffered financial losses due to a lack of organizational continuity planning. The COVID-19 pandemic forced organizations worldwide to reevaluate how operational procedures would continue after the mandates from the government. Nonprofit organizational leaders and employees began working remotely. Leaders found that nonprofit organizations suffered losses due to a lack of organizational continuity planning and knowledge management. Leaders now understand that organizational continuity planning is needed to sustain organizational operations before, during, and after disasters and disruptions. Sydnor et al. (2016) found that continuity planning requires training and applying policies and techniques to diminish the consequences of operational disruptions. Organizations that implement continuity plans are more likely to succeed.

History of Organizational Continuity Planning

Organizational continuity planning addresses how natural and manufactured disasters affected organizations. The scenarios of applying a practical organizational continuity plan for a nonprofit organization were how leaders viewed organizational

continuity planning, including strategies to ensure that the nonprofit organization would avoid permanent closure. However, due to the rate of natural and manufactured disasters, organizational leaders are now focused on the impact instead of the potential scenario, implying that the potential scenarios could have been more effective, time-consuming, and expensive. However, understanding the phenomenon was better with the utilization of developing theories (Penta et al., 2017). It was also vital to look at the organization's resources and its personnel's skills and how they can be used to develop a response to disasters. The three vital areas to analyze are people, technology, and operational process. By studying people, technology, and operational processes, leaders can summarize disturbances in crucial areas of the organization and address measures to mitigate damages by implementing business impact assessments in their organizational continuity plans.

Due to the increasing occurrences of natural and manufactured disasters, ideas once considered ineffective are now considered feasible. The increasing complexity of natural disasters included a crippling COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This natural disaster killed over 800,000 U.S. citizens (about half the population of Idaho) and shut down the economy. The pandemic forced all organizational leaders to rethink business continuity planning and reevaluate their strategic plans because a pandemic of this proportion had not been seen here since 1918 (the Spanish influenza). However, potential scenarios in most organizational continuity plans did not factor in viral pandemic challenges. The historical assessment of policy and procedures changed with organizational employees and leaders working from home. During this time, leaders looked at the parts of the

organizational continuity plan that did not work and focused on those that did. Employees could supply services to their constituents via the internet but calls for physically needed services went unanswered. Leaders are now scrutinizing internal audits to determine what organizational continuity planning areas worked during the pandemic. Analyzing data may enable nonprofit organizations to examine where there were prosperous areas and what avenues were less so, thereby indicating better solutions to internal organizational infrastructure issues.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is capturing, distributing, and using the available knowledge and collectively sharing that knowledge. Sanders (2016) noted that data information and knowledge, such as knowledge management, allow nonprofit organizations to share vital information through collective learning. Although knowledge management is used globally among other industries, integrating it into nonprofit organizations is complex due to nonprofit leaders' lackadaisical approach to educating staff members. In one survey, 50% of nonprofit organizations knew about or had experienced training in knowledge management, but only 20% knew how to use it. However, this affected the other 50% of all nonprofit organizations that lacked organizational continuity plans due to the lack of knowledge in both organizational continuity planning and knowledge management.

Knowledge management promotes effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency. If used appropriately, other nonprofit organizations can share and learn from each other. A perfect example is when a worker either retires or leaves the organization, and although

everyone sees the work every day, no one knows what they did in their job ability. This is a disadvantage to the organization because of the historical knowledge left after the employee's departure. Training staff in knowledge management can be done via Skype and Zoom with other nonprofit organizational leaders and employees nationwide and is particularly helpful when organizations work remotely, as during the Covid-19 pandemic. The excitement of learning and sharing vital information with other nonprofit organizations can help all involved by taking the guesswork out of what is needed in large organizations and what is needed for small nonprofit organizations, thus, helping to keep the procedure simple. The thought that organizations are different and, thus, organizational continuity planning must be different is invalid. State Chang and Lin (2015) note that the three crucial areas of concern should be people, technology, and operational processes, and accomplish fundamental objectives, which will, in turn, help knowledge management and create internal organizational infrastructure challenges, and supply needed services to constituents.

Natural and Manufactured Disasters

Hurricane Sandy and its effects on New York City: October 2012 was the deadliest hurricane to hit New York City, with winds raging at 100 mph. Hurricane Sandy killed 160 people, destroyed thousands of homes and businesses, left 9 million people (about half of the population of New York City) without power, and shut down its extensive transportation system, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Communications were a significant issue, forcing the Federal Communication Commissioner to rethink its communication strategies for future disasters. Since then,

Hurricane Sandy policy and procedures changed, new methods for small nonprofit organizations were added, and a mandate was issued to all small nonprofit organizations to implement organizational continuity planning and recovery strategies by the government. The realization that organizational continuity planning could prevent issues the city faced was a meaningful change. However, the need for more resources for small nonprofit owners to implement organizational continuity plans in their establishment was a significant issue. Small nonprofit organizations throughout the United States, especially in low-income communities, needed more resources to implement such plans. However, the knowledge that small nonprofit organizations in low-income communities are vital to the community because they offer immediate relief to their community is well known, but finding resources is still a struggle (Nickels & Clark, 2019). The Small Business Administration supplied a grant of \$8 million to 92 small nonprofit organizations, including assistance in developing organizational continuity plans, training, and technical assistance for low-income owners. (United States Small Business Administration, n.d.). However, there are more than 1.54 million nonprofit organizations in the United States, with 92 receiving grants, leaving millions needing more resources to develop a viable plan for their establishments or provide their families with necessities. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, if people's basic needs or those of organizations are not met, meeting the needs of their constituents will also be difficult, often resulting in both the inability to help them, forcing them to close and adding to economic destruction in the communities they serve. Developing an organizational continuity plan that offers smaller nonprofit organizations strategies to resolve internal organizational infrastructure

challenges is crucial. It can aid in supplying needed services to the community after natural and manufactured disasters. It will also help with resources left for small nonprofit owners to give to their families, showing an exact picture and understanding of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory.

Global Warming

Since the 1970s, scientists have warned against global warming. An article in Time magazine expressed the concerns of oil companies causing damage to the Earth's climate. 1977 Time magazine wrote about the "coming of a new ice age and how to survive it." At that time, Dr. Murray Mitchell warned the world that the beginning of global cooling could become problematic due to the destruction of the Earth's climate. Dr. Mitchell spoke about the need to rescue the Earth and how the destruction of the Earth's climate three or four decades on could create natural disasters due to the Earth's atmosphere decreasing about 20 degrees Fahrenheit. PR Newswire. (2017, August 8). In the 43 years since that scientific prediction of global cooling and warming, human beings and wildlife are now experiencing the results of mass hurricanes, wildfires, cyclones, rising tides, and floods. In the past 43 years, New York City has experienced more than ten hurricanes, each more deadly in its wake, destroying homes, businesses, infrastructure, small nonprofit organizations, and the economy.

The need for organizational continuity planning for all nonprofit organizations is vital since governmental aid from Federal Emergency Management Agency is declining due to the increased demand due to more of these disasters across the nation. Federal Emergency Management Agency, on May 1, 2018, FEMA discussed natural and

manufactured disaster issues. The concern was that Americans needed to be financially prepared and emotionally aware of the consequences of such disasters. A significant problem FEMA speaker Dr. Daniel Kaniewski had was that 40 percent of Americans did not have \$500 in savings and could not obtain any money in a natural or manufactured disaster. Mr. Kaniewski said that the average American would be out of luck during a disaster and that preparation is the best recovery choice. (Federal Emergency Management, n.d.). When comparing the cost of hurricane damage, data shows that Hurricane Harvey caused the most damage in dollars in 2017, costing the government \$125 billion (about \$380 per person in the US) in aid. Although FEMA aided individuals with \$4,000 grants, only certain people received the total amount offered by the National Flood Insurance Program, and this program was not intended for small nonprofit organizations. Due to the many emergencies the United States faces each year, from hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes, cyclones, rising seas, and floods, FEMA relief funds are strained, and resources to aid small nonprofit organizations have become daunting. The first two days after a natural disaster are critical for small nonprofit organizations; this is the first stage of assessing whether the small nonprofit organizations will even survive. Organizational continuity planning can protect small nonprofit organizations and resolve internal organizational infrastructure issues to address all problems in supplying services to their constituents when natural and manufactured disasters occur. This research correlates with the administrative case study and the direct effects disasters have on small nonprofit organizations due to the lack of organizational continuity plans and disruption of services.

Disruption of Services

Service disruptions caused by disasters negatively affect small nonprofit organizations, preventing them from getting needed services to their constituents and causing internal organizational infrastructure issues. Since September 11, 2001, the United States and parts of the world have experienced a new era that consists of adjusting behaviors in how relationships among suppliers and daily operations progress.

The new actions help with provisional issues and managing response times during natural and manufactured disasters. These ideas were implemented to secure services during disruption and secure relationships with different vendors to ensure a consistent flow of services. However, small nonprofit organizations did not begin implementing organizational continuity planning until after the 2001 terrorist attacks, with nonprofit organizations assuming the chances of it happening again were slim to none.

Manufactured disasters are not the only ones that can negatively affect an organization, as natural disasters still are the most significant cause of an organization's permanent closure. Throughout the years, small nonprofit organizations have closed permanently after disasters. Because mandates were not officially in place and small nonprofits needed to understand that the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan could prevent issues, small nonprofit organizations opted out of developing and implementing them. Nonprofit owners had since regretted operating without organizational continuity plans that would have protected their establishments when disasters occurred. Thousands of small nonprofit owners are permanently closed but still face repayment of loans and property taxes. The thoughts of 'What if...' enter the minds of failed small nonprofit

owners, knowing that their small nonprofit organization might still be around to service their communities if they implemented organizational continuity plans.

Experts state that the response time between a disaster strike and the ensuing response of management is crucial to a small nonprofit organization's survival. Experts note that disruption's first 48 hours (about two days) can predict survival or permanent closure. The need to develop an organizational continuity plan will prevent permanent closures and address significant issues associated with natural and manufactured disasters. Forty-three percent of small nonprofit organizations and companies without organizational continuity plans are also susceptible to permanent closure. (Cerullo & Cerullo, 2014). A significant concern is that small nonprofit owners believe they need more financial resources to implement such strategies. The need to work with larger organizations was not seen as a possibility since larger organizations have the income to develop and implement organization continuity plans, and most do. Smaller nonprofit organizations need help with revenue, donors, and knowledge when continuity planning is involved, which creates an imbalance in the low-income communities these small nonprofit organizations serve. There have been bad examples of larger businesses needing to implement continuity planning. The Dole Corporation is the best example of a major company's mistake in excluding continuity planning. It was near bankruptcy due to a lack of continuity planning for its Costa Rica business and realized how critical strategic planning is when natural disasters strike. The owner of Dole Corp. and its stakeholders regretted not creating a business continuity plan in case of a natural disaster, which left it suffering for weeks without any recovery strategies after the natural disaster

occurred in Costa Rica. The natural disaster created a significant blockage in the supply chain to Costa Rica due to flooding and blocked highways that usually transported products to their warehouse. Dole was out of service for three weeks, bringing all productivity to a halt and, in turn, affecting their income and bringing it to the brink of bankruptcy. The Dole Corporation is mentioned to show the effects of not having continuity planning in a company. Small nonprofit organizations that suffer natural and manufactured disasters do not affect the economy on such a large scale. However, minor disasters can affect the communities, the organizations they serve, suppliers, and their local economy.

Disasters Assistance Organization ABC in the Eastern United States knows this first-hand. The organization serves senior citizens who rely on food pantries to minimize food costs and obtain healthier food options (Disaster et al.). However, hundreds of senior citizens found themselves without food due to the closures of local nonprofit organizations in the aftermath of disasters. Disasters Assistance Organization ABC in the Eastern United States helps an estimated 6,975 senior citizens who need food services each year. Still, due to the last natural disaster, the disruption of continued needed services negatively affected the seniors due to the lack of an organizational continuity plan. This resulted in 2,775 seniors obtaining food and an estimated 4,200 going without food or services. The lack of food devastated those citizens' mental, emotional, and physical health. Organizational continuity planning supplies steps to minimize internal organizational infrastructure issues and aid in challenges when natural and manufactured disasters occur. It can also reduce small nonprofit owners' economic effects after natural

or manufactured disasters, including permanent closures that cost them thousands of dollars. The destruction of small nonprofit organizations is due to the need for organizational continuity planning, those further delays nonprofit organizations in addressing internal organizational infrastructure issues and causes delays in needed services to their constituents. Research has found that 78 percent of small nonprofit organizations could not reopen after natural or manufactured disasters due to a lack of proactiveness in creating an organizational continuity plan. In comparison, 22 percent of small nonprofit organizations did reopen, and 15% functioned at the level of a disaster-ridden business. Many other industries are suffering the same fate. According to Cummings, Haag & McCoubrey found that 43% of all firms that needed a continuity plan never reopened, and 51% failed after two years. The need for continuity planning for all industries is vital and can prevent permanent closure. Muflihah and Subriadi (2019) found that businesses that incorporate business continuity planning have the same coverage as nonprofit organizations that use organizational continuity planning. Historical data shows that natural and manufactured disasters can strike at any moment; the disaster caused by Hurricanes Sandy, Ike, and Rita caused small nonprofit organizations to fail due to loss of downtime, damage to internal infrastructure, and the inability to supply needed services to the community. However, small nonprofit organizations failed simply because there needed to be an organizational continuity plan to protect them against downtime when disaster strikes. The downtime calculations for small nonprofit organizations after Hurricanes Sandy, Ike, and Rita were investigated to understand the total impact on small nonprofit organizations. The interruption reported

downtime hours of 337, or two weeks after Hurricane Sandy; 336 hours (about two weeks) after Hurricane Ike; and 384 hours (about two and a half weeks) after Hurricane Rita. Downtimes cost small nonprofit organizations \$137 to \$17,244.00 per minute. The above-listed hurricanes cost the most damage and lost revenue, costing the government 60 billion dollars in emergency funding. The total impact to small nonprofit organizations in average productivity loss and employees affected, including loss of annual revenues, was an estimated \$2,770,140 per minute, significantly showing how necessary government assistance in organizational continuity plans is for small nonprofit organizations. Small nonprofit owners need to be informed of the positive effects of organizational continuity planning on their organizations. Small nonprofit owners must understand that controlling natural and manufactured disasters might be almost impossible, but positioning themselves with strategies can enable them to survive. Organizational continuity plans allow systems to begin after disaster strikes, thus decreasing the number of internal organizational infrastructure issues and allowing the nonprofits to at once supply needed services in their community. Kato and Charoenrat (2018) described that if small business owners applied business continuity management, they would be better prepared during and after disasters and, inversely, noted that a lack of preparation affected organizational infrastructure and service distribution in disaster-prone areas for small nonprofits and small businesses. Small nonprofit owners sometimes make the same mistake before and after natural and manufactured disasters. This is due to the need for more training and understanding of continuity planning. The need for level-headed, trained, and prepared owners to react after disasters is vital. Organizational

continuity planning ensures that small nonprofit owners will be prepared and qualified when the time comes. A common misperception among owners is that organizational continuity plans are expensive, and if something happens, the chance of governmental aid is excellent. Since 1980, the damages from natural and manufactured disasters have cost the government trillions of dollars and left governmental agencies strained and depleted. Therefore, small nonprofit organizations must develop and implement an organizational continuity plan to decrease their challenges in internal organizational infrastructure issues so they can continue to supply needed services to their constituents and protect the organization's life span.

Internal Organization Infrastructure

Internal organization infrastructure consists of components inside an organization, such as systems training, and methods provided by administrators to achieve its operational goals; it is the foundation and critical basis upon which performance is shown and improved. Kivila and Vuorinen, (2017) noted that developing a sustainable infrastructure would help deliver needed services to its constituents.

Essential Elements of Continuity Plans

The essential elements of continuity planning include assessment, preparedness, response, and recovery. Tracey et al. (2017) described that these fundamental elements enhance organizational or business resilience for a sustainable organization. It allows for critical systems to function, thus, preventing internal organizational infrastructure issues, continually needing services to constituents, and ending permanent closure. Leadership

and owners that abandon the idea of organizational continuity planning impact the community they serve, stakeholders, and employees.

Relevance to Public Organizations

Bennett (2016) described a study to understand why nonprofit organizations fail. The study examined small nonprofits that failed and were unsuccessful in the first few years due to a lack of funding. However, there were other reasons besides the lack of funding. Another reason was the need for an organizational continuity plan and the ability of small nonprofit leaders to understand organizational continuity planning, internal organizational infrastructure, and how that can affect their delivery systems have found periodic gaps in the literature. The information gathered helps show the lack of organizational continuity plans in small nonprofit organizations, the struggles small nonprofit organizations face without organizational continuity plans, and the adverse effects of natural and manufactured disasters. This case study's findings show the positive impacts of organizational continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations and the economic benefits.

Literature Review for the Study

According to the related literature, the primary step in addressing ABC's issues was understanding organizational continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations. Organizational continuity planning can help small nonprofit organizations prepare for natural and manufactured disasters and address systems failures. Ebneyamin et al. (2018) described understanding what, why, and how can effectively supply unknown answers about phenomena through qualitative research. The authors specifically explain that

social, institutional, cultural, and environmental conditions can affect human affairs.

Qualitative research is the only science that can address these issues; it is driven to explain the behavior and thinking of human beings. Through qualitative research, ABC understands how to better prepare for natural and manufactured disasters and supply needed services to its community.

Furthermore, changing its circumstances could improve its internal operational infrastructure. ABC has seen that during the Pandemic, while they were closed, many small nonprofit organizations continued servicing its communities. The strategies used were to implement van deliveries to specific locations in the Bronx to help with needed food service. ABC said that closing their doors to the community was a state decision because of Covid 19.

Organization Background and Context

ABC has supplied services for ten years. Over the years, more services were added as the community needs changed. Paid organization staff comprises one senior director, one assistant director, four case managers, and an office manager in the Eastern United States. All have about 15 years of experience in the human service field. However, in 2012, the organization experienced a natural disaster that threatened its stability and affected how needed service was given. In the years following, the response to disastrous weather was to close the facilities and leave the community without needed services. Developing an organizational continuity plan can help protect internal organizational infrastructure so that needed services are not disrupted after natural and manufactured disasters.

Summary

The related literature on organizational continuity planning incorporates disaster and emergency management theory principles. The literature enabled leaders to understand organizational continuity planning, natural and manufactured disasters, and internal infrastructure. The information gathered enables small nonprofit organizations to create and implement an organizational continuity plan and prevent internal organizational infrastructure challenges and provision issues during natural and manufactured disasters.

Section 3: Data Collection Process and Analysis

Internal organizational infrastructure issues plague small nonprofit organizations that do not have organizational continuity plans. Understanding the essential elements of organizational continuity planning allows leaders to provide needed services to their constituents during natural and manufactured disasters. This qualitative case study provided insight into the essential elements of continuity planning and how to create an organizational continuity plan for ABC. I answered the following research questions through qualitative interviews with local leaders who had worked in small nonprofit organizations:

RQ1: What internal organizational infrastructure challenges do organizational leaders face during natural or manufactured disasters?

RQ2: In what ways can organizational continuity planning assist nonprofit leaders in providing needed services during times of natural and manufactured disasters?

RQ3: What are the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan?

Research Design

I sought to assist ABC in identifying the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan. Findings may help ABC understand the need for organizational continuity planning. This case study provided ABC with data and a report on the essential elements of organizational continuity planning that may aid in the challenges of internal infrastructure issues and provide needed services during natural and manufactured disasters.

I gathered data on the issues that arise when nonprofit organizations do not have organizational continuity planning and prepared a report on the essential elements of a viable organizational continuity plan. Also, by learning from leaders of other small nonprofit organizations that employ organizational continuity planning, I sought to help ABC be better prepared to work through natural and manufactured disasters. In Section 3, I describe the case study research method and procedures.

Roles of the Researcher and Client Organization

The qualitative case study focused on ABC, a small nonprofit organization facing natural and manufactured disaster challenges. The need was to incorporate an organizational continuity plan to resolve internal organizational infrastructure issues and continue to supply needed services to its constituents after natural and manufactured disasters occur. This research was possible due to the consulting position given by ABC. My belief in helping the community and volunteering with different organizations to find older citizens resources led me to this agency years ago. However, although I had become familiar with ABC's staff members and leaders, I maintained an unbiased approach to collecting and analyzing data.

Small nonprofit organizations can better serve their communities when natural and manufactured disasters occur by implementing organizational continuity planning. In researching organizational continuity planning, I found that small nonprofit organizations that did not have organizational continuity planning experienced internal organizational infrastructure challenges, provisional challenges, and permanent closure. I had yet to determine whether organizational continuity planning works for all small nonprofit

organizations that have experienced natural and manufactured disasters; however, the literature reviewed in Section 2 indicated that small nonprofit organizations with organizational continuity planning are more likely to succeed. To alleviate bias, I posed the interview questions (see Appendix B) to leaders of small nonprofit organizations with continuity planning in an open-ended manner to allow the participants to answer the questions without being led by me.

Methodology

When first researching evidence for this qualitative case study, I planned to use a combination of scholarly journals and semi-structured interviews that included open-ended questions to engage leaders and key stakeholders outside of ABC who had experience with nonprofit organizational continuity planning. I planned to document the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan so I could provide ABC with ways to address internal organizational infrastructure challenges and provisional challenges when natural and manufactured disasters occurred. A semi structured interview can be used to create rapport with the participant and elicit innovative ideas, whether by phone or in person (Harrell & Bradley, 2022). The participants in the current study were eight leaders from eight small nonprofit organizations in the Bronx, New York; all organizations had organizational continuity planning. I advised all participants in advance of the interview. All participants understood that their participation was confidential and voluntary.

Protections

ABC leaders and other small nonprofit organizational leaders who participated in this case study remained confidential. All information gathered, including locations, emails, and interview responses, was compiled on my computer, and only I had access to the data. To ensure participants' confidentiality, surnames, first names, and nicknames were not used. All research findings were shared only with Walden University and my committee members.

Participants

Participants included eight leaders from eight local small nonprofit organizations in the Bronx, New York, with organizational continuity planning. Interviews addressed the essential elements of organizational continuity planning. Interviews allowed me to understand how ABC had been affected by natural and manufactured disasters and how they challenged the organization to provide needed services and mitigate internal organizational infrastructure issues. Exploratory interviews allow for open-ended questioning and focus on why and how; because this was a qualitative case study, exploratory interviews allow participants to engage with the research. Wells et al. (2014) found that using an exploratory interview on health care and healthcare-related issues could identify organizational strategies. I used the same approach to understand the strategy of organizational continuity planning for ABC.

Procedures

In March 2023, I began my search for case study participants via LinkedIn, and eight case study participants agreed to participate in the case study. I created open-ended

interview questions to address the research questions based on associated concepts in Section 2. The open-ended questions were used to answer all research questions. All participants were emailed to ensure participation before the interview began. All participants outlined their leadership position and knowledge of organizational continuity planning, provisional issues in needed services, natural and manufactured disasters, and internal organizational infrastructure via phone call. Each participant signed an informed consent form to document participation. The interviews took place via phone conversation and were recorded and transcribed on the Otter.ai app. Each participant reviewed their transcript within 3 months to correct errors and allow the analysis to proceed. Each interview was allotted up to 30 minutes. However, each interview was 4–11 minutes long. Furthermore, participants were advised that the transcript review process would take 5–10 minutes.

Walden University's Institutional Review Board approved the case study, and eight leaders from local organizations were informed of their participation rights. All participants' consent forms were emailed, and an informed consent to advance was discussed and documented. I did not share the location of ABC and did not share any participant's information other than for the sole purpose of this administrative case study. All data compiled for this administrative case study, including names of the leaders' location and the name of the nonprofit organizations, remained confidential. All information gathered for this administrative case study was confidential and only shared with Walden University.

I completed transcription and coding using qualitative data analysis software. Many tools can be used to transcribe qualitative studies that require coding and analysis. Hopper et al. (2021) found that cloud-based tools are becoming more prevalent in research, which helps in data sharing. Before the interviews, all case study participants were asked if they had any questions about organizational continuity planning and natural and manufactured disasters; all case study participants stated no, and the interview began. The interview data were analyzed for keywords and patterns to identify themes that emerged. The findings will be shared with ABC in a PowerPoint presentation to document the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan.

Timeline

Following approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board, I conducted eight interviews with eight leaders from eight nonprofit organizations in The Bronx, New York. Interviews were conducted over 3 months due to the leaders' schedules and cancellations. Interviews took 4–11 minutes.

Protections

The identities of ABC leaders and other small nonprofit organizational leaders who participated in this case study will remain confidential. All information gathered, including locations, emails, and interview responses, was compiled on my computer, with only me accessing the data. Participants are anonymous surnames, first names, and nicknames were not used. All research findings were shared only with Walden University and my committee members. All data was kept confidential, and all information was kept on my computer with a password that only I had. No identifiers were used for data

collection to keep all case study participants' identities confidential, and data collected will be kept for 5 years as required by Walden University. All case study participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the case study at any time. All participants agreed to audio-recorded interviews and to finish the case study interview.

Strategy for Data Analysis

Data collection for this administrative case study was collected via interviews with eight leaders from eight small nonprofit organizations. After obtaining Walden University's Institutional Review Board approval (# 01-27-23-0724593), I analyzed the interview answers from the eight nonprofit leaders who participated. The assessment of all data was conducted without bias, and the completion of a report on organizational continuity plan for ABC included the areas of research and their connections to provisional challenges, internal organizational infrastructure issues, and natural and manufactured disasters.

Data is collected in qualitative research via interviews, focus groups, and field notes (Nassaj, 2015). Qualitative data analysis focused on transcripts from interviews. Transcripts are raw data, and transcript data must be coded. Coding is a process in which qualitative researchers analyze data by remodeling all data in a meaningful way (Creswell, 2015). All eight interviews were analyzed, and data coding methods were used to identify patterns and themes. Findings will be presented to ABC via a PowerPoint presentation.

Issues of Trustworthiness

There are many issues of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Dutta and Ranjan (2019) found that although journal articles and qualitative data can enhance life experiences, one of the downfalls of qualitative research is that there needs to be replicability. Researchers take many steps to authenticate their case study findings, such as using member checking to add credibility to the findings. I ensured reliability and dependability of the case study findings by crisscrossing patterns and checking for themes. However, this does not ensure trustworthiness in qualitative data because no one is recreating the study. Many people may read the case study findings and assume a level of trustworthiness; however, the question remains. Before interviewing my participants, I used reflexivity to center myself and acknowledge my role as a researcher. After collecting interview data, I used transcript review and triangulation to add confirmability to the case study results. I also ensured data saturation before identifying patterns and themes.

Ethical Procedures

All case study participants were treated with respect, beneficence, and justice. The ethical training from the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research allowed me to understand that ethical behavior in research is imperative. Furthermore, although there can be potential harm in qualitative research and interviewing case study participants, the risk was low. All case study participants were informed about the risk, and an informed consent was emailed to all participants for acknowledgement. Research has changed in the past 20 years, so case

study participants' treatment must change to meet ethical practices. Oswaldo (2021) found that the intricacies of qualitative research mixed with ethical behavior can sometimes be challenging to ethical principles due to the interactive nature of the researcher working with case study participants. However, I understood and treated everyone with respect, beneficence, and justice; all data were kept confidential and in a computer that I own with a passcode only I had. Data will be kept for 5 years per Walden University requirements. Walden University and my committee members were the only ones to see data collected; all participants found on LinkedIn will remain confidential. There were no ethical concerns related to recruitment due to using LinkedIn. All participants emailed their informed consent to me.

Summary

This administrative case study focused on ABC. I gathered data on the essential elements of organizational continuity planning and informed the organization on developing a viable organizational continuity plan. This information given to ABC may address provisional and internal organizational infrastructure issues when natural and manufactured disasters occur.

Section 4: Evaluation and Recommendations

This qualitative case study was conducted to gather data on the issues that arise when nonprofit organizations do not have organizational continuity planning and data on the essential elements of a continuity plan. I sought to understand the negative effects that ABC and other nonprofit organizations face without continuity planning when natural and manufactured disasters occur. The essential elements of continuity planning were crucial in this qualitative case study. The literature demonstrated that the critical aspects of organizational continuity planning play a vital role in mitigating internal organizational infrastructure challenges during natural and manufactured disasters for small nonprofit organizations, making them resilient (De la Rosa Galey & Marie, 2019).

Eight case study participants from the Bronx, New York were interviewed via telephone within 3 months. The Otter.ai app was used for coding and inductive analysis. Inductive analysis identified patterns and themes to understand the essential elements of organizational continuity planning, which was the purpose of the case study. Inductive analysis is used in qualitative research to address unanswered questions. Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019) found that many students are novices and are (pseudonym) often exasperated in searching for patterns and themes. Nevertheless, finding the patterns and themes can tell the story of qualitative research. The patterns and themes often mentioned in the current study were communication, training, safety, and resources. Key patterns from the data should connect to the case study conceptual framework and the research questions. Johnson et al. (2019) found that in nonprofit organizations or the health field, a

research case study must have a clear focus and be supported by a firm conceptual framework to promote trustworthiness and diminish research bias.

Data Collection

In this qualitative case study, semi structured interviews were conducted via recorded telephone calls with eight leaders from eight nonprofit organizations throughout the Bronx, New York. All case study participants were found on a LinkedIn online professional platform. I sent 159 connection requests via LinkedIn. Seventy-one individuals accepted the connections. Sixty-three individuals did not qualify due to not working in the Bronx, New York. Twenty-five prospective participants answered the case study invitation (see Appendix A). Individuals interested in participating in the study were required to provide email addresses to establish consent.

Of the 25 participants who answered the case study invitation, eight provided email addresses. They read and signed the informed consent, returning it to me for finalizing the study sample. I interviewed eight leaders from eight nonprofit organizations in The Bronx, New York. Interviews with participants were scheduled over 3 months due to the leaders' schedules and cancellations. Thirty minutes were allotted for each interview. All case study participants agreed to the audio-recorded interview, which was done with my audio recorder.

The invitation for case study participants included the purpose of the case study and participant selection criteria; eight confirmed case study participants were asked three interview questions on organizational continuity planning during their audio-recorded telephone calls. I intended to conduct interviews via Zoom meetings, in-person

meetings, and telephone; however, due to scheduling, the eight participants elected to be interviewed via telephone. I coded the transcripts of the eight interviews to identify patterns and themes to determine the essential elements of organizational continuity planning. The insights provided by the case study participants in the interviews may help ABC leaders understand how organizational continuity planning is acceptable for the organization in addressing internal organizational infrastructure challenges while providing services to the community. I completed all interviews and shared the transcripts with the participants via email.

Data Analysis

Inductive coding was used to develop codes based on semi structured interviews with the eight participants. I used inductive coding to find common patterns and themes. Inductive coding enabled me to detect patterns and themes in the data and helped me produce the final report (see Terry & Hayfield, 2020). When analyzing data from eight interviewed participants in this qualitative case study, I used inductive analysis to identify repeated patterns of words such as “communication,” “resources,” “safety,” and “training.” This information added knowledge to the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan for small nonprofit organizations. I interpreted the data in the context of the theory and the literature to safeguard the based on the interviews with eight nonprofit leaders to determine the essential elements of continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations.

Findings

The critical themes are presented in this section. The three themes from this qualitative case study that ABC leaders should consider when creating an organizational continuity plan were effective communication, resources, and safety. Many small nonprofit organizations can avoid internal organizational infrastructure challenges if clear communication during natural and manufactured disasters is used. When assessing the challenges in small nonprofit organizations, six participants expressed that the lack of communication was a significant issue when daily operational procedures were affected during natural and manufactured disasters. Six participants reported that small nonprofit leaders need to express clear directives to employees regarding the procedures and whom to report to if they had a question. One case study participant stated that “although the procedures are written on paper, the processes during natural and manufactured disasters appeared different.”

Four participants stated that resources assist leaders in providing needed services. However, one of the participants said that resources needed to be improved during COVID-19 due to the need for a forward-thinking approach. Buchholz et al. (2020) described leaders who use a forward-thinking approach to increase economic, environmental, and social performance during disasters. Current participants’ consensus was that effective communication by leadership during a disaster will assist staff members. The impact of effective communication was an essential theme of the interview participants. One participant expressed the need for organizational continuity planning to

become a universal practice for small nonprofit organizations with leadership expressing clear directives and employees trained in advance for natural and manufactured disasters.

Deliverables and Recommendations

Findings may encourage ABC to explore organizational continuity planning to resolve internal organizational infrastructure and provisional challenges when natural and manufactured disasters occur. The results will be presented as a PowerPoint presentation to ABC to help ABC consider the value of organizational continuity planning and the possibility of a successful outcome. Further research could consider the applicability of organizational continuity planning to understand the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan and the positive impact that it can have on communities needing services during times of natural and manufactured disasters and for small nonprofit organizations that struggle with internal organizational infrastructure challenges during times of crisis. The current study was conducted for the sole purpose of addressing one client organization in making a change to their community.

Organizational Continuity Planning

Participants expressed the need for effective communication from organizational leaders during natural and manufactured disasters and noted that training could add value to organizational continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations. The organization should consider its financial resources and train workers who can effectively communicate during natural and manufactured disasters to manage response times and eliminate infrastructure challenges that impede delivery of needed services during disasters. Current findings may promote confidence in the nonprofit world when disaster

strikes and add to the understanding of essential elements needed to protect organizations by communication from authorities. Doing so may help ABC and other small nonprofits reduce fear and risk and produce stability for the organization and the workers in addressing internal organizational infrastructure challenges and provisional issues during natural and manufactured disasters. After the PowerPoint presentation is presented to ABC via email, ABC should create a proposal analyzing the costs associated with the organizational continuity plans that best fit their organization's needs that incorporate city, state, and federal laws.

This case study did not address how many nonprofit organizations in the Bronx, New York do not have organizational continuity planning, which may affect the outcome of small nonprofit organizations' health in the survival of natural and manufactured disasters. Although there was an interest in creating a universal plan with effective communication and training for all small nonprofit organizations, the data was collected for academic research. It is unknown whether small nonprofit organizations in the Bronx, New York would be interested in organizational continuity planning if all expressed questions were addressed.

Interview Question 1

What internal organizational infrastructure challenges do organizational leaders face during natural or manufactured disasters? I analyzed data from the eight interviewees to determine significant themes. Five out of eight participants stated that communication was a challenge. One participant stated that nonprofit organizations have a plan in place. However, one of the barriers is that staff need to understand it. Another

participant stated that proactive planning was an issue because nonprofits are reactionary, not proactive, planners. The other participants stated that safety was challenging due to a lack of resources, while one stated that not having flexibility within a continuity plan was a challenge.

Interview Question 2

In what ways can organizational continuity planning assist nonprofit leaders in providing needed services during times of natural and manufactured disasters. Five out of eight participants stated that resources would assist nonprofit leaders, while one participant felt that training would help leaders. One participant stated that improving overall competence and in-house training would assist leaders in providing needed services. Another participant said relationships with other organizations and agencies in their community would assist nonprofit leaders in providing needed services during natural and manufactured disasters. A third participant stated that knowledge could help in anticipating what can happen, allowing for preparations.

Interview Question 3

What are the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan? One participant stated that distributing information to all staff members and using strong communication is essential to organizational continuity planning. Another participant agreed on communication but stated that having a well-equipped staff to understand continuity planning is essential. Two participants specified safety as the essential element of continuity planning.

Practical communication skills include listening to others rather than responding; with effective communication, listening skills enable communication in all work and life areas. However, in the medical field and after COVID-19, many clinicians changed how they communicated with patients. Many clinicians had training and could help clients understand their medical procedures and diagnoses, while those who needed proper training could not (Back et al., 2020). Although there were other answers to these questions, such as resources and training, the consensus of the current participants was that communication was the essential element of a continuity plan.

All eight participants work in the Bronx, New York, one of the poorest boroughs in the five boroughs of New York City. The participants included four men and four women from different ethnicities, ages, genders, cultural backgrounds, and educational attainments. The support that participants expressed for training to provide needed services to constituents and to share effective communication with leadership during disasters was considered a critical factor in resolving issues in how some constituents received needed service and how leadership communicated directives. The answers to the research questions will be presented to ABC in a PowerPoint Presentation.

One participant summed up effective communication by saying there is a “sense of safety when there is effective communication. A work environment where leaders institute effective communication permits all workers to feel safe and loved in their spaces.” Providing data to ABC on organizational continuity planning and using the methods that case study participants expressed in the case study may result in small nonprofit organizations’ abilities to perform daily operations and remain open when a

disaster occurs, which will resolve internal organizational infrastructure challenges and provisional challenges that small nonprofit organizations face during natural and manufactured disasters. Findings may address the essential elements of organizational continuity planning, thereby enhancing the organization's ability to carry out its mission and positively impact social change.

Interview Themes

Effective communication was a significant finding in this qualitative case study that ABC leaders should consider when evaluating the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan. Many small nonprofit organizations can avoid internal organizational infrastructure challenges if organizational leaders use clear communication during natural and manufactured disasters. When assessing the challenges in small nonprofit organizations, 6 interviewed participants expressed that the lack of communication was a significant issue when daily operational procedures were affected during natural and manufactured disasters. 6 interviewed participants believed that small nonprofit leaders needed to express clear directives to employees on what the procedures are and who is the one that they come to if they had a question. One case study participant stated, "The procedures written on paper from leadership are different in real-time, which is confusing to me.

Nevertheless, the participant's consensus in this case study is that effective communication by leadership during a disaster will help assistant leaders during natural and manufactured disasters. The impact of effective communication was an essential theme of the interview participants. The need for organizational continuity planning to

become a universal practice for small nonprofit organizations with leadership expressing clear directives and with employees trained in advance for natural and manufactured disasters was imperative. Effective communication for ABC and small nonprofit organizations help to develop an understanding between employees and their leaders when natural and manufactured disasters occur. Effective communication permits employees to exchange ideas in a way that promotes positive interactions and allows for clear directives. The thought of effective communication has been a staple in the workforce for years. It is a supportive tool used by hospitals, the private, and the public sectors. (Gluyas, 2015).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research seeks practical standards: validity, credibility, and generalizability. These three ingredients are vital in qualitative research due to the measurements of trustworthiness in qualitative analysis. Qualitative research aims to answer who, where, when, why, and how to explain or negate a theory. To perform an analysis that equates to trustworthiness requires a logical measure of reliability which equates to the consistency of measured data, and validity, which equates to the accuracy of data collected. Validity is the estimation of consistent data with no bias in collecting data from the study's outcome. Reliability produces a consistent result that generates accuracy. When both are factored in, it produces trustworthiness. Reliability for qualitative research will provide the case study with the same results when the circumstance is the same for anyone performing the analysis (Belotto, 2018). I ensured the quality and reliability of the information obtained for this case study by performing

professional interviews, member checking, and document reviews. The targeted audience for the case study research was nonprofit organizational leaders in the Bronx, New York, with eight members from small nonprofit organizations participating in this case study. In evaluating the credibility of data collection, the researcher emailed case study participants transcripts of their interviews after audio-recorded data was transcribed. The case study members were asked via email if this was an authentic account of what each case study participant said.

Member-checking is a tool that applies accuracy to data collected from interviewed case study participants. Although few published articles on the tangible outcomes of member-checking, many consider this a trustworthy process for identifying accurate data in qualitative research. (Candela, 2019). The conclusions of the value of the study are only credible when data has been effectively transcribed and approved by the individual case study participants. Different viewpoints can influence the researcher's interpretation, so member-checking aids in accurate information from case study participants' statements during interviews. (Motulsky, 2021). The case study participants are the only ones that can authenticate the credibility of the results because they are the individuals that participated in the interview; all eight case study participants confirmed credibility. Keep in mind that, at times, the case study participants and the interviewer can interact in a manner that can be considered a relationship of closeness, raising concerns about internal validity and reliability. To prevent that, with the case study found, the internal validity of data must accurately match the data collected and show that the analysis answers the research question without discriminatory intent. In comparison,

they allow the external validity to examine the case study findings to be used in worldwide circumstances using the same data. The transferability of the research findings is the principle for evaluating external validity. A study meets the applicability standard when the qualitative results can fit into circumstances outside the study situation and can find a detailed description of the case study participant's responses. Transferability in qualitative research enables the researcher to determine if the findings are meaningful and relevant to their experiences. Hammarberg et al. (2016) note that more times than none, quantitative research is viewed as shallow and thoughtless. The main ingredient must be consistent logical patterns, or the data findings should be kept from being published. I ensured transferability by transcribing all audio-recorded interviews to the Otter app ai. The Otter app is an application that allows interviews with case study participants to provide an accurate collection of qualitative data. Confirmability in qualitative research is an effective model that enables the results of the case study through the collaboration of the participants. It ensures that qualitative data are analyzed for patterns that can repeat themselves to find the same outcome by other researchers.

Clear coding was identified when analyzing patterns and themes, allowing the researcher to identify schematic findings. I also asked case study participants direct questions during the interview and ensured that their viewpoints were accurate accounts of what they said, not what I perceived them to say. Interviewing all case study participants in this approach allowed for the precision of data collected and accounts for any preconceived perceptions or feelings that I may have that are due to my personal beliefs. Dependability in qualitative research allows for the reliability of the findings. A

perfect example is if a researcher can no longer participate in a case study, could other researchers find the exact outcome of the case study? Triangulations help case studies find dependability which then creates trustworthiness. Auditing is implemented in data to help with the Audit trail. The audit trail records information about the notes gathered and the procedure and developments involved in the project to determine processes and procedures. Carcary (2020) described the audit trail as a process that should be analyzed while writing the case study to help the researchers process their feelings. An audit trail is an acknowledgment of transactions and procedures made to record the steps taken in collecting materials to prevent fraud, which aids in the authentication of data collected; I used email and the Otter app ai to document transactions of interviews from case study participants.

Reflexivity in qualitative research allows the researcher to understand that feelings and thoughts are factored into the research due to preconceived notions and experiences. These experiences can affect the outcome of the case study due to the researcher's viewpoint. Researchers must be honest and ask themselves, do their assumptions, ideas, and experiences affect the outcome of the case study. Using prospective and retrospective speech can help the researcher determine the effects of the case study or the effects that the case study has on the researcher. When all procedures in qualitative analysis, including credibility, transferability, dependability, audit trail, and reflexivity in case study research, are used, the researchers have established the necessary protocols to determine trustworthiness in the research studied. (Adler, 2022).

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

This qualitative case study bridges the gap between small nonprofit organizations and the community they serve. The data shows that small nonprofit organizations with organizational continuity planning have a higher success rate in helping their communities during natural and manufactured disasters. The data collected helped ABC and other small nonprofit organizations in the Bronx, New York establish and value organizational continuity planning to prevent internal infrastructure challenges and provisional challenges for the community and aid in understanding the essential elements of organizational continuity planning. One of the limitations of this case study was that very few leaders from the Bronx, New York, agreed to participate in the case study. The data collected is a small fraction of what other nonprofit organizations in the Bronx, New York, might experience when natural and manufactured disasters occur. However, the findings demonstrated that organizational continuity planning empowers small nonprofit organizations to provide for their communities during natural and manufactured disasters. This case study can help the nonprofit world for all five boroughs of New York City. It can increase the likelihood of a prosperous future for ABC and small nonprofit organizations throughout New York City. Individuals interested in owning a small nonprofit organization may also be interested in the findings of this report, specifically the role that organizational continuity planning plays in aiding small nonprofits when natural and manufactured disasters occur. The product of this study might be shared in strategic planning or the context of academic research or references in natural and manufactured disasters.

Summary

Section 4 presented the study's findings and identified themes by integrating, synthesizing, and evaluating the eight interviews. Section 4 also suggested the steps to support the need for organizational continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations and conducted a case study on the infrastructure and provisional challenges to identify the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan. Section 5 describes the study conclusions and dissemination plan and recommended audiences for this research.

Section 5: Dissemination Plan

Dissemination Plan

I will present the case study findings to the leadership at ABC in a PowerPoint presentation. This presentation will convey the importance of organizational continuity planning and its positive effect on small nonprofit organizations and their communities. The essential elements of a continuity plan were to minimize internal organizational infrastructure challenges and to provide needed services to constituents when natural and manufactured disasters occur. Leaders in the Bronx, New York must recognize that effective communication in times of crisis is vital in protecting the organization and its staff members. This qualitative case study's outcomes may change ABC leadership's behavior by encouraging them to implement organizational continuity planning to address infrastructure challenges that will improve the community's health by receiving needed services when natural and manufactured disasters occur.

Organizational continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations adds to the safety and health of the community and the organization. An effective response to the destruction from natural and manufactured disasters promotes healthier generations and establishes wealth in communities affected by the damage. Effective communication by small nonprofit organizational leaders helps the communities they serve feel safe during natural and manufactured disasters. Communities that trust their local organizations to provide needed services when disasters strike provide a sense of peace and improve quality of life. Bronx, New York has been described as the poorest of the five boroughs of New York City, with children suffering from lack of food and poor education. Small

nonprofit organizations that provide needed services can reduce starvation and improve grades. Small nonprofit organizations that implement organizational continuity planning are essential in the health of both the organization and their communities.

Summary

This case study indicated that organizational continuity plans are positive tools for small nonprofit organizations and their survival against natural and manufactured disasters. Some small nonprofit organizations in the Bronx, New York may consider introducing organizational continuity planning to avoid internal organizational infrastructure challenges and to avoid provisional challenges that undermine the mission of nonprofit organizations. A systematic protocol of organizational continuity plans can be used as a guideline for all nonprofits that do not have organizational continuity planning in place to avoid shutdowns and permanent closure. This additional protection for small nonprofit organizations may increase its impact on social change, allowing low-income communities to continue to benefit from the resources that small nonprofit organizations provide. This case study illustrated that small nonprofit organizations are looking to understand the implications of organizational continuity planning for consistency in purpose. There are conditions in which this case study may be suitable for small nonprofits, but financial planning must be considered. In the appropriate circumstances, organizational continuity planning may help small nonprofit organizations fulfill their mission and continue to help their constituents.

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation

Dear Sir,

I invite you to participate in a research study that relates to organizational continuity planning for small nonprofit organizations. My name is Lucy Castro, and I am a Doctoral Candidate at Walden University. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Doctor of Public Administration degree, I am conducting a research study on organizational continuity planning. I am inviting 10-15 Leaders from five local small nonprofit organizations in the Bronx, New York that have experience in organizational continuity planning. I am asking for your participation in this study. I will conduct one on one interviews that may take up to 30 minutes of your time, on a date and time selected by you and in person.

The interview process will also include a follow-up meeting over the phone to share the initial study findings, and seek your opinion about the data collection analysis, and findings.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via telephone or e-mail. This invitation is to stimulate your interest in participating in the research. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Lucy Castro

Appendix B: Interview Questions

I will present the following interview questions to each interview participant.

IQ1: What internal organizational infrastructure challenges do organizational leaders face during natural or manufactured disasters?

IQ2: In what ways can organizational continuity planning assist nonprofit leaders in providing needed services during times of natural and manufactured disasters.

IQ3: What are the essential elements of an organizational continuity plan?