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The Lived Experiences of Nonprofit Managers in Post-COVID Pandemic Recovery

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Alonzo Maurice Curry

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Abstract

The Lived Experiences of Nonprofit Managers in Post-COVID Pandemic Recovery

by

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MA, Walden University, 2023

BS, California State University, East Bay, 2019

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Nonprofit managers have been tasked with making difficult and creative decisions in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. Policymakers, donors, and sector stakeholders need to understand the specific challenges nonprofit managers face during crises. The purpose of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand the post-COVID-19 crisis management experiences of nonprofit managers in the United States and identify how nonprofit managers made meaning of such experiences. The research question for this qualitative exploration was based on the lived experiences of nonprofit managers with managing crises during the post-COVID-19 pandemic. This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study was developed with a multicultural theoretical foundation. The participants comprised 20 nonprofit managers. Data were collected using semistructured interviews until saturation was reached among 17 participants. This study's data analytic procedures included Saldana's three-cycle coding process. Seven themes emerged from the thematic analysis: (a) adaptation to remote work, (b) community and health concerns, (c) emotional burden, (d) operational challenges and resilience, (e) innovative strategies and solutions, (f) discrepant experiences, and (g) emotional and psychological impact. A key recommendation is to conduct research for a more comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of how nonprofit organizations navigated the pandemic and offer valuable insights into how they can build greater resilience and adaptability for future crises. The implications for positive social change include the potential for nonprofit managers to enhance their multicultural self-seeking behaviors and other conference competencies in management informational systems education for sustainability, especially during crises.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study	1
Background of the Study.....	2
Problem Statement.....	5
Purpose of the Study	6
Research Question	7
Theoretical Foundation	7
Conceptual Framework.....	10
Nature of the Study.....	13
Definitions.....	14
Assumptions	16
Scope and Delimitations	18
Limitations	19
Significance of the Study	21
Significance to Practice.....	23
Significance to Theory	23
Significance to Social Change.....	24
Summary and Transition.....	24
Chapter 2: Literature Review	26
Literature Search Strategy.....	27
Theoretical Foundation	29

Conceptual Framework.....	38
Literature Review	40
Summary and Conclusions.....	49
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	52
Research Design and Rationale	52
Role of the Researcher	54
Methodology	59
Participant Selection Logic.....	65
Instrumentation	67
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.....	70
Data Analysis Plan	74
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	78
Credibility.....	78
Transferability.....	79
Dependability.....	80
Confirmability.....	81
Ethical Procedures	82
Summary	86
Chapter 4: Results.....	88
Introduction	88
Research Setting	89
Demographics.....	91

Data Collection	985
Data Analysis	98
Evidence of Trustworthiness	102
Study Results	105
Adaptation to Remote Work.....	107
Community and Health Concerns.....	109
Emotional Burden	110
Operational Challenges and Resilience.....	111
Innovative Strategies and Solutions.....	111
Discrepant Experiences	112
Emotional and Psychological Impact.....	113
Summary	113
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	127
Introduction	127
Interpretation of Findings.....	127
Key Findings.....	127
Interpretation	128
Analysis in the Context of the Theoretical Framework	129
Limitations of the Study.....	131
Recommendations.....	133
Implications	135
Conclusions	139

References.....	141
Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire.....	146
Appendix B: Interview Questions	147

List of Tables

Table 1. Data Analysis Sample

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This research was based on the experience of nonprofit managers in the period of recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. Since non-profit organizations provide essential services and meet social needs, effective management is critical for societal well-being. This investigation examined nonprofit managers' problems, strategies, and experiences while navigating the complex rebuilding process during the COVID-19 outbreak. This research had several reasons as to why it is important.

First, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant and lasting impact on non-profit organizations, which affected financing, performance, and service operations. Understanding how nonprofit managers deal with these issues and how they guide an organization's recovery process is essential to assessing the durability and effectiveness of these key institutions. Moreover, those responsible for managing nonprofits must weigh practical resource constraints against evolving community needs and a shifting regulatory environment, but this has to be done alongside delivering on organizational goals. These challenges fall squarely on non-profit managers alone. Experiences with leadership styles can also offer insights into efficient ways of management and resilience in organizations vis-a-vis hardships faced. The implications of these findings are significant to policymakers, donors, and stakeholders who can better support these organizations in recovery efforts by learning from the experiences of non-profit managers. Also, capacity-building programs, financial policies, and strategies aim to improve the sector's ability to meet social obligations successfully.

This study contributes to formulating best practices in managing a non-profit organization, which is beneficial to both specific non-government organizations (NGOs) and the non-profit industry. This study identified effective techniques, innovative ideas, and improvement areas that improve nonprofit organizations' overall effectiveness, sustainability, and ability to serve communities and advance social issues. Finally, understanding opportunities and problems within the non-profit sector required inquiry into experiences of non-profit managers as they recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic, thus guiding policy measures and strengthening the sector to respond to social needs constructively while encouraging positive social change.

Background of the Study

Research literature highlighted the significance of comprehending organizational dynamics, managerial procedures, and strategic responses in promoting longevity and resilience in the nonprofit sector. The scholarly literature offered insightful information about the diverse challenges, tactics, and knowledge of nonprofit managers in navigating COVID pandemic recovery. The implications of geographic flexibility on productivity emphasized the possible advantages of outsourcing arrangements after the pandemic (Choudhury et al., 2023). The interpretative phenomenological analysis emphasized the importance of comprehending people's lived experiences and processes of creating meaning (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). Guided organizing qualitative research gives inexperienced researchers a head start on creating and conducting projects (Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

Aldaihani and Data (2022) and Hays and Singh's (2022) methodological justification studies offered insights into the rationale and practical implications of qualitative research procedures, including data analysis, sampling methods, and ethical concerns, which are crucial for conducting in-depth subject matter explorations. Techniques for data analysis, sample plans, and justifiable qualitative research methods were essential for a thorough investigation of the subject (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). Using Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology, Alsaigh and Coyne (2021) provided a paradigm for data analysis that offered direction for analyzing and interpreting lived experiences.

This research on hermeneutic phenomenology's philosophical ideas highlighted the significance of comprehending the philosophical foundations for analyzing lived experiences (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). It investigated how nonprofits managed issues following the COVID-19 pandemic. Fuller et al. (2023) emphasized the value of organizational traits, crisis management, and interaction in the recovery process. I studied the immediate consequences of COVID-19 on nonprofit organizations, with a focus on the role operating reserves and fiscal management play in reducing the crisis' repercussions (Kim & Mason, 2020).

Kim (2022) examined how procedural fairness and framing effects affect nonprofit managers' responses to job reductions during the pandemic, highlighting the significance of justice and organizational support in times of crisis. According to Kuenzi et al. (2023), COVID-19 was a pivotal event for nonprofit workers, emphasizing the difficulties and adjustments faced by staff members in the nonprofit sector. Gee and

Nahm (2023) examined nonprofit organizations from the standpoint of strategic management, emphasizing the special opportunities and problems that nonprofits encounter and the necessity for more study in this field of management strategy.

The post-pandemic marketing potential and difficulties for nonprofits highlight the significance of creative thinking and adaptability in response to emergencies (Kumar et al., 2022). Savin-Baden and Howell-Major (2022) gave researchers crucial tools, frameworks, and examples for planning and conducting studies in qualitative research assistance. Moreover, they provide practical advice for performing qualitative research. This investigation fills a gap in knowledge about the creative resilience tactics used by nonprofit organizations during emergencies like pandemics, emphasizing how managers oversee numerous difficulties like layoffs.

While there is a wealth of literature on organizational reactions to crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and crisis management, more research must be done to fully understand the special tactics and techniques nonprofit organizations use to navigate these situations successfully. According to the literature, there needs to be more research on the creative ways that nonprofit organizations have managed emergencies like pandemics and lessened the effects of layoffs on personnel, operations, and services. Comprehending these resilience tactics was essential for pinpointing optimal methodologies, assimilating productive solutions, and shaping forthcoming crisis readiness and mitigation endeavors within the nonprofit domain.

By concentrating on this knowledge gap, the study fostered a deeper understanding of nonprofit organizations' adaptability, resourcefulness, and resilience in

the face of crises. It offered insightful information about NGOs' tactics and systems to safeguard jobs, assist staff, maintain vital services, and continue missions in unpredictable and turbulent times. By highlighting successful resilience techniques, this study offers assistance with creating policies, capacity-building programs, and support measures to make it easier for the nonprofit sector to weather disasters and provide effective community services.

By thoroughly examining the creative resilience tactics used by nonprofit organizations in times of crisis, this study closed a significant gap in the literature, focusing on the difficulties posed by job layoffs during pandemics. This investigation furthers knowledge in crisis management, organizational resilience, and nonprofit leadership by comprehending and recording these tactics. Policymakers, funders, and nonprofit practitioners can use the study's practical implications to guide future crisis preparedness efforts, support initiatives, and capacity-building interventions to improve the sector's ability to cope with and recover from crises.

In summary, this research was crucial for advancing knowledge of how nonprofit organizations overcome obstacles to innovate, adapt, and prosper. Moreover, it provides information that strengthens the nonprofit sector's resilience, sustainability, and ability to meet social demands.

Problem Statement

The issue that prompted me to explore the literature is the COVID-19 pandemic presented unique stressors for management to make tough choices to increase adjusted revenue and other service demands for nonprofit organizations (Fuller et al., 2023; Kim

& Mason, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, talented nonprofit managers' commitment and careers were challenged and jeopardized. Moreover, the psychological impact of COVID-19 affected nonprofit workers (Kuenzi et al., 2023). The nonprofit sector is a fundamental part of the American structure, and the pandemic affected managers' ability to navigate this vital position (Gee & Nahm, 2023). This research investigated nonprofit managers' lived experiences at the end of the pandemic. Examining nonprofit sector manager's experiences during and after COVID-19 offered insight into the service and mission of committed managers (Kumar et al., 2022).

Min-Hyun Kim (2022) conducted qualitative research advocating for institutional nonprofit resources that are important for accessing and addressing necessary gaps that are engaging through scientific effects. Limited literature gaps on pandemics are associated with ameliorating innovative ways of various resilience that nonprofit organizations have put forward when coping with such crises as but not limited to job layoffs (Kim, 2022). Researchers recognized that nonprofit organizations during COVID-19 impacted the immediate reserve, operational reserves, and fiscal management. Moreover, they presented statistically significant in the direction of the relationship where doing services as a nonprofit navigates the economic shock of COVID-19 (Kim & Mason, 2020). This qualitative research considered the reproduction of accounts translating the authentic words and the spirit of nonprofit managers.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study aimed to describe the lived experiences and related meanings of a group of nonprofit managers in the United States post-COVID-19 era.

According to current literature, there was a gap in understanding nonprofit managers' post-COVID-19 experiences related to mitigating such crises as, but not limited to, job layoffs (Kim, 2022). This research increases social justice knowledge and awareness of nonprofit managers' needs in the management field. This research captured the phenomenological understanding of nonprofit managers' experiences and the meaning-making of such experiences. A qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological method was utilized to understand post-COVID-19 crisis management experiences of nonprofit managers in the United States and identify how nonprofit managers made meaning of such experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the lived experience of nonprofit managers in post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery and reviewed with existing literature to develop a deeper understanding of the data.

Research Question

What are the lived experiences of nonprofit managers' experiences with managing crises during the post-COVID-19 pandemic?

Theoretical Foundation

I sought to acquire the experience of nonprofit managers and use a theoretical framework work to understand the dynamics of nonprofit managers living in the United States. The theoretical framework of this investigation included multicultural theory to encourage diversity, respecting and observing the enrichment of society within the expression of coexistence. Haskell's (1941) seminal work expressed that people live differently and have different underlying assumptions about the world, emphasizing intersectionality and diverse identities of nonprofit managers as managers of diverse

people. Intersectionality represents a component that nonprofit managers experience as defined through multiple social identities.

The connections between hermeneutics and the research problem and the intended purpose were to explore the lived experiences of managers' experiences with crises during the post-COVID-19 pandemic through the lens of nonprofit managers. It was important to explore nonprofit managers' experiences without my biased input. The multicultural theory is inclusive, given that the nonprofit sector has a higher incidence of diverse administration and serves diverse communities (Amalia Yunia Rahmawati, 2020). The lens of multicultural theory helps with thematic coding as themes emerge through the cultural lens of the nonprofit managers, recounting understanding as opposed to the researcher's present knowledge.

The fundamental nature of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of nonprofit managers with crisis management through the transition from the COVID-19 pandemic to a new normal. Using the hermeneutic lens, substantiate the experience through perspective and not the researcher's existing knowledge objectivity. I used the hermeneutic lens to thoroughly explore the nuances of each experience and provided more depth to nonprofit managers' experiences.

The theoretical framework outlined for investigating the experiences of nonprofit managers in the United States during and post-COVID-19 through a multicultural lens was rich and multifaceted. The key components informed the research with multicultural theory at its core, recognizing and celebrating the diversity of human experiences and emphasizing the importance of understanding diverse cultural backgrounds, perspectives,

and identities (Amalia Yunia Rahmawati, 2020). This theory becomes particularly relevant in nonprofit management, where organizations often serve heterogeneous communities.

By acknowledging and embracing diversity, the research framework captured the nuanced experiences of nonprofit managers from various cultural backgrounds and identities. Investigative intersectionality, building upon multicultural theory, underscores the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, gender, class, and sexuality (Amalia Yunia Rahmawati, 2020; Kumar et al., 2024). For nonprofit managers who navigate complex social landscapes and often work with marginalized populations, understanding the intersectional dimensions of their experiences is crucial (Clary & Rose, 2022). This hermeneutic research helped reveal how multiple social identities intersect to shape managers' perceptions, challenges, and coping strategies in crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation, provides a methodological approach to understanding human experiences within their sociocultural contexts (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). By adopting a hermeneutic lens, the research uncovered the meaning and significance embedded in the lived experiences of nonprofit managers. I engaged in a dialogue with the participants, respected participant perspectives, and interpreted participant narratives without imposing preconceived interpretations.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to the nonprofit sector, necessitating swift adaptation and resilience from managers (Fuller et al., 2023). I explored how nonprofit managers navigated crises during and after the pandemic and

offer valuable insights into effective crisis management strategies, organizational resilience, and the redefinition of the "new normal." By focusing on managers' experiences, I identified common challenges and innovative solutions that emerge within the management sector. With the distinction between objectivity and perspective, traditional research aims for objectivity by minimizing researcher bias; the proposed framework recognized the value of subjectivity and perspective in understanding complex human experiences (Hovey et al., 2022). By prioritizing nonprofit managers' perspectives and refraining from imposing external interpretations, I sought to enhance the authenticity and richness of the findings.

In summary, the theoretical framework integrated concepts from multicultural theory, intersectionality, hermeneutics, and crisis management to investigate the lived experiences of nonprofit managers in the United States during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. By embracing diversity, acknowledging intersectional identities, adopting interpretive methodologies, and prioritizing participant perspectives, the research provided a comprehensive understanding of how managers navigate crises within the dynamic landscape of the nonprofit sector.

Conceptual Framework

The inductive approach clarified the meaning of the vivid descriptive language for a deeper understanding of the marginal aspect and interpretation of individuals or groups who express themselves. Hermeneutics represents the art of interpreting lived experience to generate meaning and comprehension of the perspective-situated consciousness of human phenomena (Gadamer, 2006). Phenomenology is a method of study in the field of

philosophy. Phenomenology is the study of one's experiences through the lens of the one experiencing it (Heidegger, 1962). The essence of being in time is to understand human existence in time and space, creating meaning and understanding through the interpretation of experiences through the lens of the person sharing the experience (Heidegger, 1962). Gadamer's (2006) seminal work on hermeneutics represents the interpretation of significance through traditional roles and culture, understanding the being in the world influenced from taking place in knowing itself the means to illuminate the condition of understanding.

Interpreting and cognizance research requires one's preunderstanding knowledge, the advantages or disadvantages around the major concepts of preunderstanding that there is more than one worldview to comprehend in being true to our own in facilitating and analyzing a co-constructed interpretation of findings. Applying hermeneutics in data analysis plays a vital role in the components of hermeneutics understanding as a process of dialectic analytical parts of a text and relating to the whole contexts while onward progress of interpretive cognizance preconceptions transferred (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). Cognizance preconceptions fusion in the horizon within a hermeneutic circle, interpreting the phenomena through the experiences or language, of the individual or group being interviewed (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021).

The inductive approach of this investigation involved reasoning from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories. A researcher captures the essence and nuances of lived experiences, making them more accessible for interpretation and analysis. As elucidated by Gadamer (2006) and others, hermeneutics is the art and

science of interpretation. It focuses on understanding texts, symbols, actions, and experiences within their cultural and historical contexts. In the research context, hermeneutics involves interpreting data to uncover underlying meanings and perspectives. This approach acknowledges that interpretation is not a neutral process but is influenced by the interpreter's preunderstandings, biases, and cultural background. Phenomenology, particularly as articulated by Heidegger (1962), explores the structures of lived experience. Phenomenology in this research emphasizes the subjective perspective of individuals and is used to understand phenomena as they are experienced, conscious nonprofit managers. Phenomenological research involves bracketing presuppositions and engaging in empathetic reflection to uncover the essence of human experiences (Hays & Singh, 2022). Interpretive cognizance recognizes the role of the researcher's preunderstandings in shaping the interpretation of data (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021).

This research highlighted the importance of reflexivity in research, where researchers critically examine their biases and assumptions throughout the research process. By acknowledging and addressing preunderstandings, researchers strive for more nuanced and transparent interpretations of data. Hermeneutic data analysis involves dialectical engagement with textual or qualitative data (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). This research entailed analyzing parts of the text while considering their relation to the whole context. This process was iterative and reflexive, with interpretations evolving as new insights emerged. Through hermeneutic data analysis, researchers uncovered layers of meaning embedded within texts and explored the perspectives of individuals or groups

being studied (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). In summary, integrating hermeneutics and phenomenology offers a rich framework for understanding human experiences and interpreting the qualitative data to be collected. By embracing the complexities of interpretation and reflexivity, I gained deeper insights into nonprofit managers' and communities' lived realities.

Nature of the Study

I addressed the research questions in this qualitative study, and the specific research design included this interpretive hermeneutic phenomenology approach using hermeneutics to attentively examine the lived experience of nonprofit managers through an interpretive lens to properly answer the research question: What are the lived experiences of nonprofit managers' experiences with managing crises during post-COVID 19 pandemic ends? Gadamer's (2006) qualitative hermeneutic data analysis scientifically establishes a phenomenology of evident interest for independent nonprofits. Haskell's (1941) multicultural theory presents the ability to manage after the COVID-19 pandemic ends proactively, and this research supports working knowledge in multicultural diversity utilizing hermeneutic data analysis. Moreover, this signifies the interpretive qualitative phenomenological and the social epistemology of the lived experience of nonprofit participants' multiple social identities post-COVID-19 (Heidegger, 1962).

I utilized semi-structured interviews of nonprofit managers subjected to open-ended questions and follow-up questions that were documented as the interview progressed with an inductive aspect generating an understanding of individual meaning

progress until the point of saturation was met. The strategy used three cycle coding inclusive of open, comparative, and thematic coding (Hays & Singh, 2022).

Data sources included individual interviews with nonprofit managers in the community, existing literature regarding the experiences of nonprofit managers, management styles, and learned information from the experience of interviewing nonprofit managers throughout the data collection process. A small sample size was utilized with data saturation estimated between 10 and 20 participants (Hays & Singh, 2022).

The data analysis followed Saldana's (2021) three-cycle coding process. First cycle coding is open coding of raw data. The second coding cycle was comparative analysis, which further narrowed the initial coding into categories, and the third cycle coding, thematic analysis, was the final coding process, taking categories and commonalities among interviewees and highlighting common themes. The rationale for this approach lies in its suitability for exploring subjective experiences, providing rich, nuanced insights into how nonprofit managers navigate crises in the post-COVID-19 landscape, and contributing to a deeper understanding of multicultural diversity in crisis management within the nonprofit sector.

Definitions

Crisis describes a unique situation of intense difficulty or imminent danger that credibly threatens the stability, well-being, or ultimate survival of vulnerable individuals, democratic groups, active organizations, or modern societies. Crises can arise from various social causes, including natural disasters, economic downturns, political unrest,

health emergencies, and environmental catastrophes. They frequently require prompt attention and key action to mitigate their direct impact and facilitate successful recovery. Crises can refer to multiple instances of such intense difficulty or imminent danger occurring simultaneously or sequentially. In some historical contexts, crises may be interconnected or compound one another, exacerbating their practical effects and complicating response efforts. Organizations and established governments frequently develop crisis management plans to effectively prepare for and respond to such unique situations.

Hermeneutics within the educational disciplines encompassing various degrees originated from biblical exegesis, literature, philosophical work, and religious scripts of interpreting text representing hermeneutics. Hermeneutic phenomenology is an interpretive analysis through experiences of the essence and underlining meaning to uncover approaches that researchers employ. Phenomenology establishes cultural contacts and social events of individuals' interpretation, experience, and understanding that are emphasized through phenomenology and hermeneutics as the combining element. Phenomenology acquires consciousness and structures of subjective experience. Through a systematic study in focus, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger expanded what was developed from the seminal work of Edmund Husserl in the 20th century in the philosophical movement on phenomenology.

Nonprofit managers are those in local leadership or managerial roles inside nonprofit organizations, and their administrative duties traditionally include supervising

organizational operations, allocating resources, and making strategic decisions (Kim, 2022; Kumar et al., 2022).

A *pandemic* is when an infectious disease outbreak promptly extends across a vast area, like several continents or the entire planet. Pandemics typically affect a considerably broader population than local epidemics, limited to a particular geographic area. They frequently result in significant illness, imminent death, and societal disruption due to the widespread transmission of the infectious agent. and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Post-COVID-19 is a specific time frame that follows the COVID-19 pandemic's acute phase. This practical phase has several distinct stages, like rebuilding, uniquely adapting, and recovering sufficiently. It typically includes key initiatives to properly deal with the pandemic's long-term repercussions on an innovative economy, modern society, necessary health, and personal well-being. The post-COVID-19 era's features typically differ based on instrumental variables, including immunization rates, governmental regulations, and social resiliency.

Assumptions

The experiences and viewpoints of nonprofit managers fairly represent the more general difficulties and dynamics that nonprofit organizations faced in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The reasoning behind this is that, even though individual experiences may differ, it is crucial to comprehend and address sector-wide issues if nonprofit managers' experiences offer significant insights into organizational dynamics (Gee & Nahm, 2023). Nonprofit managers are often at the forefront of decision-making within their organizations. Managers' are responsible for navigating challenges, allocating

resources, and adapting strategies to changing circumstances (Gee & Nahm, 2023). As such, their experiences can offer valuable insights into the overall functioning of nonprofit organizations.

Managers understand sector-wide issues. While individual nonprofits may vary in their missions, size, and operational models, they all operate within a broader sector characterized by shared challenges and dynamics (Fuller et al., 2023). These challenges include funding constraints, volunteer management, regulatory compliance, and community engagement. By examining nonprofit managers' experiences across different organizations, researchers and new practitioners identified common patterns and trends illuminating sector-wide issues. Comprehending and addressing nonprofit organizations is crucial in addressing social, environmental, and cultural issues. Understanding the challenges managers faced post-pandemic is essential for policymakers, funders, and other stakeholders to provide appropriate support and resources.

By addressing sector-wide issues, interventions can be designed to strengthen the resilience and effectiveness of nonprofit organizations in achieving managers' missions. Insights into organizational dynamics of nonprofit managers' experiences can highlight various aspects of organizational dynamics, including leadership, governance, collaboration, and innovation (Maher et al., 2020). These managerial insights can inform best practices and strategic approaches for enhancing organizational effectiveness and sustainability in the face of ongoing challenges and uncertainties.

A comprehensive perspective on individual experiences may vary; aggregating and analyzing data from multiple sources, including nonprofit managers, enabled a more

comprehensive understanding of the post-pandemic landscape. This conceptual perspective allowed for identifying common challenges and innovative solutions that benefit the nonprofit sector (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2022). In summary, while recognizing the diversity of experiences within the nonprofit sector, there is value in considering the perspectives of nonprofit managers to gain insight into sector-wide issues and dynamics. By leveraging these insights, stakeholders can work collaboratively to support and strengthen nonprofit organizations in their vital roles within society.

Scope and Delimitations

The study's goal was to comprehend the actual experiences that nonprofit managers have in the United States in the aftermath of COVID-19. Nonprofit managers from various American organizational sizes and sectors make up the population's boundary. Nonprofit managers working outside the United States and people not directly participating in managerial or decision-making roles are examples of excluded populations. This study does not examine theories or conceptual frameworks unrelated to nonprofit administration or crisis recovery. The findings may not immediately apply to entities operating outside of the United States due to current laws and regulations, organizational cultures, and resource availability that may change or be different in non-U.S. contexts. However, the findings may be transferable to comparable circumstances within the nonprofit sector housed and operating within the United States and outlying U.S. territories.

Limitations

Limitations of this study are the generalizability of the data collected due to being qualitative and not quantitative specific population being sampled. Challenges associated with this study include the demographic being contained to the specific nonprofit sector, as well as accessing and resourcing nonprofit entities that have survived the pandemic. Additional limitations include engaging participants and openly interviewing individuals for data collection, specifically minimizing personal biases so as not to influence the information collected, given that the interviews rely upon participants' self-disclosure (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). A barrier to this study was identifying appropriate nonprofit entities with managers still in place who have worked through the pandemic into the end.

Qualitative studies often face challenges in generalizing findings to broader populations (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). Qualitative research typically involves a smaller sample size to the point of saturation and focuses on an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena rather than focusing on statistical representation (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). In this research, the data collected provided rich insights into the experiences of a specific group of nonprofit organizations during the pandemic. However, further research may only allow generalizing these findings to some nonprofits or other sectors. Specific population sampling involved purposive or convenience sampling, meaning that participants were selected based on specific criteria rather than randomly chosen (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). In this research, the specific population sampled may limit the applicability of the findings to other groups or contexts.

The nonprofit sector presents unique challenges for research, including limited resources, diverse organizational structures, and a range of mission-driven goals. Accessing and resourcing nonprofit entities for research purposes can be particularly challenging, especially if organizations are understaffed or overwhelmed due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. Recruiting participants and engaging nonprofit managers in the research process can be challenging, especially in qualitative studies, where participation often requires a significant time commitment (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Nonprofit managers have busy schedules and competing priorities, making securing their participation in interviews or other data collection activities difficult.

This qualitative research minimized the influence of personal biases on the data collected by using rigorous methods such as semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. However, it is important to recognize that researchers bring their perspectives and biases to the research process, which can influence the interpretation of findings. Ensuring reflexivity and transparency in the research process can mitigate these biases (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Identifying and recruiting appropriate nonprofit entities for the study was challenging, particularly if organizations had experienced turnover or restructuring during the pandemic. My approach ensured that participants had relevant experience and insights to contribute to the research objectives, essential for obtaining meaningful data. Overall, while qualitative research offers valuable insights into complex phenomena such as this approach to the experiences of

nonprofit organizations post-pandemic, it also presents unique challenges that researchers must navigate to produce rigorous and credible findings.

Significance of the Study

Understanding nonprofit managers' experiences may explain the influence of their multicultural self-seeking behaviors and other conference competencies in management informational systems education, creating positive social change. Nonprofit organizations fundamentally contribute to the business environment's economic, social, and cultural constructs (Fuller et al., 2023). The grounded foundations of nonprofit organizations in the nonprofit manager experience and the post-COVID-19 pandemic added rich data for this investigative qualitative approach. This research fills the gap by providing rich data on the nonprofit management population after the COVID-19 pandemic as they provided innovative opportunities of operational restoration (Kumar et al., 2022). As a subgroup of the management population contributing to existing awareness/literature on meaningful knowledge of nonprofit management specified needs comments of social justice with the reaction procedural fairness and framing effects in the management information system (Kim, 2022).

This study bridges a critical gap in the existing literature by delving into the lived experiences and meaning-making processes of nonprofit managers in the United States during the post-COVID-19 era. While much attention has been given to understanding the broader societal impacts of the pandemic, there remained a lack of research focusing specifically on the experiences of nonprofit managers and their strategies for navigating crises such as job layoffs. By exploring these experiences, this study contributed valuable

insights into the unique challenges nonprofit managers faced in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings of this research hold significant implications for professional practice within the nonprofit sector. Nonprofit managers are responsible for effectively leading their organizations through periods of crisis, and understanding their experiences and sense-making processes is crucial for informing best practices in crisis management. By gaining a deeper understanding of how nonprofit managers navigated challenges such as job layoffs in the wake of COVID-19, this study offered practical insights that inform the development of more effective strategies and interventions for supporting nonprofit organizations in similar situations.

This study contributes to positive social change by promoting the worth, dignity, and development of individuals and communities within the nonprofit sector. By shedding light on the experiences of nonprofit managers post-COVID-19, this research has the potential to inform policies and initiatives aimed at bolstering support for nonprofit organizations and their leaders. By better understanding the challenges faced by nonprofit managers and the strategies they employed to mitigate crises, policymakers and stakeholders can work towards creating a more resilient and equitable nonprofit sector. Ultimately, this study empowers nonprofit managers and organizations to enact positive social change by providing them with the knowledge and tools to navigate crises and foster sustainable growth and development.

Significance to Practice

This research holds substantial implications for practice within nonprofit management. By delving into how nonprofit managers establish experiences, particularly within the context of multicultural self-seeking behaviors and conference competencies in management informational systems education, this study offers actionable insights for practitioners. Understanding these dynamics equips nonprofit managers with the tools and strategies to navigate diverse cultural contexts effectively, enhancing their ability to lead and manage teams of individuals from various backgrounds. Moreover, exploring how nonprofit managers adapted and innovated in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic offered practical lessons for resilience and organizational survival in times of crisis. By shedding light on the strategies employed by nonprofit managers to ensure operational restoration and sustainability amidst adversity, this research directly informs best practices in nonprofit management, ultimately contributing to more effective and impactful organizations.

Significance to Theory

The significance of theory contributed to advancing knowledge in nonprofit management by addressing several key theoretical gaps. Firstly, by examining the intersection of multicultural self-seeking behaviors and conference competencies within management informational systems education, this research offered new insights into the factors influencing managerial effectiveness in multicultural settings. The study enriched existing theoretical frameworks by elucidating how these factors shape managerial behavior and decision-making processes. Additionally, investigating nonprofit managers'

experiences during the post-COVID-19 pandemic period added valuable empirical evidence to the literature, filling a critical gap in understanding how organizations adapt and evolve in response to external shocks. This research contributed to the broader theoretical understanding of organizational resilience and change management, offering new perspectives on how nonprofits can thrive in disruption.

Significance to Social Change

This research significantly illuminated the experiences of nonprofit managers, particularly in the context of multiculturalism and crisis management. As such, the study promoted a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing nonprofit organizations in their pursuit of social impact. By equipping managers with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead diverse teams and navigate crises effectively, the research enhanced the capacity of nonprofits to address pressing social issues and drive meaningful change. Moreover, by emphasizing concepts such as social justice, procedural fairness, and framing effects within the management information system, the study underscored the importance of ethical leadership and decision-making in promoting equitable outcomes. Ultimately, by empowering nonprofit managers with the tools and insights needed to navigate complex socio-cultural landscapes and drive organizational effectiveness, this research catalyzes positive social change at both the organizational and societal levels.

Summary and Transition

In Chapter 1, the study backdrop was thoroughly reviewed, emphasizing the significance of comprehending the experiences of nonprofit managers during the

COVID-19 pandemic recovery period. I described the importance of nonprofits in society, the difficulties nonprofit managers have, and the need to understand organizational resilience and leadership styles. In addition, I discussed theoretical frameworks, pertinent literature, the study goal, research questions, and the methodology used. I laid the foundation for comprehending nonprofit managers' experiences following the pandemic. The methodology used in this study included the research design, methods for gathering data, and methods for data analysis, which will be covered in detail in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will outline and detail the methods used to obtain and interpret the data collected to explore the lived experiences of nonprofit managers facing crises in the post-COVID-19 era.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The global pandemic created stressors on businesses in the nonprofit sector, particularly managers (Fuller et al., 2023; Kim & Mason, 2020). COVID-19 jeopardized managers' intentions and career perspectives within the nonprofit organization sector (Kuenzi et al., 2023). The altering mental effect of COVID-19 has impacted the commitment of employees (Clary & Rose, 2022).

American social construction relies upon the nonprofit sector as nonprofit managers affected by COVID-19 strategically attempted to maintain the status quo through the pandemic (Gee & Nahm, 2023). This scholarly work investigated reactions, changes, sense-making, and the views of nonprofit managers' lived experience with COVID-19 end. Examining the experience of nonprofit managers through overlaid critical incidents that they experienced during COVID-19 presented an investigation of insight managers through their approach to weathering the pandemic through service to their immediate population (Kumar et al., 2022).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe nonprofit managers' related meanings from this group's lived experience in the United States post-COVID-19 era. The gap in the literature related to the experiences and understanding of nonprofit managers post-COVID-19 and mitigating crises like job layoffs and other factors. This research highlighted the social justice awareness of nonprofit managers working in the management constructs. This investigation utilized a phenomenological understanding of the experience of nonprofit managers to acquire meaning from the understanding of their lived experience.

The qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology method was applied to explore nonprofit managers' crisis management experience in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery period throughout the United States and how nonprofit managers develop the meaning of their experience. I conducted semi-structured interviews inquiring about the nonprofit managers' lived experience in post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery and analyzed in reflection of extant literature to understand better the data collected.

Current published writings reflected that the COVID-19 pandemic established a novel crisis (Fuller et al., 2023). Longtime managers must uncover innovative ways to adequately deal with their personal lives and create inclusive work environments, as well as blending such extraordinary circumstances to be gainfully employed from home proactively and operational flexibilities to promote effective communication while on lockdown in an uncharted field in the managing condition in the nonprofit sector (Choudhury et al., 2023; Stötzer et al., 2022). Additionally, researchers provide an investigative approach utilizing nonprofit agencies' operational components, creative productivity, and other procedural effects and influences, not limited to job layoffs (Kim, 2022). Investigators progressively expand on the conceptual frameworks to move beyond sustainable technology and organizational reworking for the social betterment of nonprofit managers (Stötzer et al., 2022).

Literature Search Strategy

Library databases and search engines accessed were ScienceDirect, PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, IEEE Xplore, JSTOR, PsycINFO, ERIC, and Business Source Complete. Key search terms included nonprofit managers, hermeneutics,

phenomenology, and COVID-19. Combined search terms included hermeneutic and nonprofit managers, phenomenology and COVID-19, nonprofit organizations and COVID-19 impacts, and hermeneutic approach to understanding COVID-19 in the nonprofit sector.

The search began with *nonprofit* and *hermeneutic* within the JSTOR database, shepardizing scholarly articles. The first search was primarily useful to research literature on the practical application of nonprofit organizations and hermeneutic principles. The iterative search incorporating COVID-19 refined with COVID-19 impact on organizational nonprofit managers from a unique perspective of hermeneutics on research platforms such as Google Scholar and ProQuest amplify the intersection of COVID-19 nonprofit in hermeneutic approaches. The inclusion of *phenomenology*, *COVID-19*, and *nonprofits* found journal articles that highlight nonprofit managers' phenomenological perspectives during the pandemic. Moreover, it revealed health-relevant scholarly writings in the context of COVID-19 and nonprofit organizations with phenomenological hermeneutic approaches.

The application of expanding search terms offered insight into the respective field by utilizing alternative terminologies and synonyms from equivalent concepts. Another innovative approach that provided valuable insight was government publications and organizational websites where white papers, working papers, and other informed reports of nontraditional and unpublished grey literature were located. Making inquiries on surveys and conducting interviews on the key topic contributes valuable firsthand information in the operative field of relevant stakeholders' primary data when there is a

need for more existing research (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). Researchers generate innovative ideas within the principal topic hermeneutic approach to understanding COVID-19 in the nonprofit sector, the implications of unique perspectives in extant literature from critical analysis and theoretical discussions with the interdisciplinary approaches are necessary to establish innovative ways to overcome scarcity in scholarly literature (Aldaihani & Data, 2022; Munblit et al., 2022).

Theoretical Foundation

Comprehension of people's lived experiences necessitated a complex and thorough approach, especially following major global events such as the COVID-19 epidemic. This research lays the groundwork for investigating how “phenomenology and hermeneutics” might be integrated when studying how nonprofit managers deal with crises in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing from the seminal writings of philosophers like Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Paul Ricoeur, and Hans-George Gadamer, this study explored the essence of managerial experiences through hermeneutic interpretation and phenomenological investigation. By integrating various philosophical frameworks, scholars may understand the multifaceted nature of managerial reactions to crisis scenarios, encompassing coping strategies, affective obstacles, and contextual elements that impact decision-making. This study fills knowledge gaps about nonprofit managers' experiences in the post-pandemic environment using interpretive narrative storytelling. The theoretical groundwork for the ensuing investigation of how hermeneutic phenomenology provided a useful methodological framework for locating

and analyzing nonprofit managers' lived experiences in the face of the post-COVID-19 world's issues is laid out in this introduction.

Edmund Husserl (1941) is the founder of phenomenology as a theory. Martin Heidegger (1962) influenced the novel interpretation and understanding of the nature of mortal existence in his research article "Beginning of Time," presenting a critical question that influenced hermeneutics and phenomenology, developing the hermeneutic circle. Seminal work by Hans-George Gadamer (2006) expanded thought with a distinct emphasis on prejudice and tradition in interpreting hermeneutics in his scholarly article "Truth and Methods," arguing between text and interpreter and ongoing dialogue in hermeneutics. Paul Ricoeur (1975) explored the human experience through a narrative structure in his scholarly article "Time and Narrative," with a temporal aspect of the complex interplay between narrative and history dictation, bridging the gap between phenomenology and hermeneutics.

The significant theoretical proposition represents the two foundational philosophies and experiences collectively connecting the worlds of an individual's life (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). It is a selected phenomenon of experience explored through hermeneutic phenomenology, where phenomenology uncovers the essence and angles through consciousness underpinnings as unspoken meaning to be investigated (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). Hermeneutics presents these experiences through symbols and understanding of the context, focusing on meaningful interpretation from a scientific and artistic understanding (Gadamer, 2006).

Edmund Husserl (1941) presented the theory of phenomenology as a transcendental ideal structure of consciousness of lived experience through the complex nature of individuals. Heidegger (1962) described humans as present in the world, connecting hermeneutics with phenomenology. Paul Ricoeur (1975) drew a connection between experienced meaning and language, the inseparable links served by both expressive and descriptive functions.

Using hermeneutic phenomenology, I highlighted the critical role of story and context in life experience in telling the realities of relationships as they are expressly constructed. These realities and constructions are considered through varying sophisticated levels of informed understanding (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). The interpretive elements of hermeneutics and phenomenology explicate meaning and reveal assumptions through individuals making system processes a paradigm allowing exploration of an individual's aspects who have encountered challenges in directly articulating their experience. The flexibility and challenges of hermeneutic phenomenology include the need for adherence to fixed methods (Hovey et al., 2022). The researcher must have adaptability with the understanding of no one-size-fits-all approach when combining lived experience meaning and interpretation to acquire a splendid tapestry of individual consciousness and understanding (Kuenzi et al., 2023).

Research-based literature related to this research in the context of post-COVID-19 challenges represented conditions where an investigative approach has been applied to individuals for the study of long-term effects of COVID-19 referred to as long-term COVID involving cognitive dysfunction and shortness of breath and lasting symptoms of

fatigue (Stötzer et al., 2022). Research or clinical practices need more consensus that the challenge is to define and diagnose these conditions involving hermeneutic phenomenology to explore the lived experiences of affected individuals. Moreover, the impacted coping mechanisms and symptoms in their ordinary lives. New healthcare system, the implications of patient well-being and conditions were essential research through hermeneutic phenomenology through interpretive narrative stories (Munblit et al., 2022). Other literature analyzed hermeneutic phenomenology applied through burnout in nonprofit organizations where the investigation was applied not directly post-COVID-19.

Clary and Rose (2022) explored burnout in women's contributing factors that examined nonprofit professionals' lived experience by analyzing the organizational dynamics using interviews with hermeneutic phenomenology highlighting the nonprofit emotional tolls of the workforce. This research on nonprofit burnout presented systematic challenges with interpersonal relationships and organizational structure beyond surface-level symptoms, presenting a deeper understanding of burnout (Clary & Rose, 2022). MacLeod et al. (2023) investigated the implementation of a health program through a scoping review of amorphous issues, addressed cross-cultural communication power dynamics, and other knowledge creation assumptions during researchers' hermeneutics application. Another investigative research represented how COVID-19 affected delivery workers' work environment. I utilized the hermeneutic phenomenology method to explore the experiences of delivery workers in South Korea, highlighting working conditions and other effects through in-depth interviews indicating the post-COVID-19. Moreover,

positive societal perception presents a rise in delivery labor income levels and attracts new workers to the industry due to the flexible and low entry barriers (Pyo et al., 2023).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is critical for the perspective of individual nonprofit organizational managers to understand the ambiguous and complex experience from a valuable attribute. Nonprofit managers are subjectively joining, meaning the choice and methodology dive deeply into the individual experience. Hermeneutic phenomenology employs the influence of human experience in interconnectedness and the broader context of a range of factors (Hays & Singh, 2022). Applying an interpretive nature makes sense to nonprofit managers' research. Moreover, all in the diverse ways of perceiving insight embraced by researchers' interpretation of cultural contact beliefs and a new unique background of these recognized individuals.

Humanistic understanding presents a description through hermeneutic phenomenology rather than quantifying phenomena (Hays & Singh, 2022). This approach is valuable in qualitative research investigation of subjects for deeper understanding, capturing the nuances from explicit descriptions accepted across disciplines from the adapted principles. Hermeneutic phenomenology presents direct interpretation and dialog emphasizing the research process in key components with extant literature and continuous dialogue with participants that critically reflects refining in interpreting understanding of the phenomenon investigation. Hermeneutics phenomenology presents a situated social-cultural context broader than the individual's subjective perspective on the sensitive subject of managing in post-COVID-19 experience (Hays & Singh, 2022).

The theoretical framework allows researchers to acquire rich descriptions for subsequent research.

The unique perspective of understanding lived experience provided insight into the experience managers attribute to the subjective meaning. I captured additional insight into how managers manage the crisis as a coping mechanism, emotional challenges, and workday experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic aftermath. Using hermeneutic phenomenology, I also highlighted the crisis and responses to the manager's perceptions and factors shaping the contextual analysis explored. Societal changes, availability of stakeholder relationships, and organizational structure influence contextual factors of nonprofit managers managing crises during COVID-19 (Hays & Singh, 2022).

Hermeneutic phenomenology presented a broader context within the experience and understanding of an interpretive inquiry. I began by understanding the interviewee's cultural context, values, background, and other bases of sense-making and interpreting the nonprofit managers' cognition (Hays & Singh, 2022).

Hermeneutic phenomenology allowed me to develop a rich description of understanding the phenomena and a comprehensive archive of outcomes and strategies employed. The challenges managers faced from the nuance of their experiences that was captured for the rich description of managing crisis post-COVID-19 is in line with the principles of hermeneutic phenomenology regarding the research question, what is the lived experience of nonprofit managers with managing crisis during the post-COVID pandemic era? The highlight of the lived experience was my primary focus using hermeneutic phenomenology to understand nonprofit managers' navigation of the

COVID-19 pandemic aftermath. This approach allowed me to release challenges and constitute present theories by addressing the gap related to existing theories exploring nonprofit managers' experiences.

The research question related to nonprofit managers' experience understanding and addresses the gap in such understanding in the context of management during post-COVID-19. While existing theory highlighted leadership in nonprofit and crisis management, the unique challenge in the pandemic aftermath established the need to explore nonprofit managers' lived experiences. Therefore, research questions offer a deeper understanding of the present theory in the post-pandemic of nonprofit managers' cognitive response (Hays & Singh, 2022).

The major theoretical propositions and hypotheses presented in the provided text revolved around integrating phenomenology and hermeneutics, particularly in understanding lived experiences, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Phenomenology as transcendental ideal structure of consciousness Edmund Husserl's (1941) phenomenology is foundational, emphasizing the transcendental ideal structure of consciousness and the complex nature of individuals' lived experiences. It focuses on uncovering the essence and angles of experience through consciousness underpinnings. Connection of phenomenology with hermeneutics Martin Heidegger's (1962) work is highlighted for connecting phenomenology with hermeneutics, emphasizing humans' presence in the world and the interpretation of experiences through symbols and contextual understanding.

Narrative structure and temporality Paul Ricoeur's (1975) contribution is significant in exploring human experience through a narrative structure and the temporal aspect, bridging the gap between phenomenology and hermeneutics and emphasizing the interplay between narrative and history. Expanding thought on prejudice and tradition Hans-George Gadamer's (2006) work expanded thought by emphasizing the role of prejudice and tradition in interpreting hermeneutics, highlighting the ongoing dialogue between text and interpreter in understanding meaning. Application in post-COVID-19 research application of hermeneutic phenomenology in understanding the lived experiences of individuals, particularly in the context of post-COVID-19 challenges. Using interpretive narrative stories, I explored long-term effects, coping mechanisms, and societal implications.

The rationale for choosing this theoretical framework lies in its qualitative approach to understanding lived experiences, especially in complex and ambiguous situations like those encountered during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Phenomenology allows researchers to delve into the essence of experiences, while hermeneutics provides tools for interpreting and making sense of these experiences within their cultural and contextual frameworks (Hovey et al., 2022). The selected theory related to the present study by offering a methodological approach to investigate the lived experiences of nonprofit managers navigating crises during the post-COVID-19 era. By combining phenomenological exploration with hermeneutic interpretation, researchers can capture the nuanced complexities of managerial experiences, including coping mechanisms, emotional challenges, and contextual factors shaping their responses

(Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). The research questions build upon existing theory by addressing the gap in understanding nonprofit managers' experiences, specifically in the post-pandemic context. While existing theories may touch on leadership and crisis management in nonprofits, the unique challenges posed by the pandemic aftermath necessitated a deeper exploration of managers' lived experiences. Therefore, the research questions sought to enrich existing theory by providing insights into nonprofit managers' cognitive responses to crisis management in the post-COVID-19 era, aligning well with the principles of phenomenology and hermeneutics.

To conclude, the amalgamation of phenomenology and hermeneutics provided a potent perspective for comprehending and interpreting the real-life encounters of nonprofit administrators following the COVID-19 outbreak. Based on the ideas of Husserl (1941), Heidegger (1962), Ricoeur (1975), and Gadamer (2006), this study used a qualitative methodology to explore the fundamentals of managerial reactions to crisis circumstances. Researchers can grasp the subtle complexity of emotional issues, coping mechanisms, and managerial decision-making by integrating phenomenological exploration with hermeneutic interpretation. By utilizing interpretive narrative accounts, this research fills knowledge gaps about nonprofit managers' crisis management in the post-pandemic environment. Going forward, more studies employing hermeneutic phenomenology may help illuminate the complex character of managerial experiences, providing insightful knowledge for organizational adaptability and resilience in a constantly changing world.

Conceptual Framework

The chosen qualitative research approach is hermeneutic phenomenology, utilizing the seminal works of Martin Heidegger (1962) and Edmond Husserl (1941). I aimed to understand individuals' lived experience and their world to interpret and acquire meaning through understanding and interpretation through hermeneutic phenomenology rather than prediction and explanation. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur, and Hans-Georg Gadamer are key theorists associated with hermeneutic phenomenology. Hans-Georg Gadamer (2006) expressed the essence of interpretation of human experience, while Paul Ricoeur (1975) highlighted the relationship between interpretation and context by applying the hermeneutic circle. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) expressed the role of perception in understanding the world and the embodied nature of human experience. In hermeneutic phenomenology, the key definition of statements in the framework consists of phenomenological reduction of the lived experience in essence and bias to focus on one's preconceptions and bracketing processes (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). Researchers utilize the hermeneutic circle to communicate vice versa parts and generate an understanding that informs overall, where interpretation represents the process in a circular cognition for understanding (Hays & Singh, 2022).

Moreover, a horizon of interpretations where the phenomenon or a particular situation develops the investigative framework's understanding, experience, values, and beliefs. Hermeneutic phenomenology presents unique contexts of individual experience in various subfields. In this research investigation, the frameworks assisted a rich description of the interpretation and meaning of participants' experiences through

complexity, uncovering patterns of underlining meanings where other research approaches were not relevant and other frameworks for exploring perspectives and unique experiences of human existence.

Hermeneutic phenomenology delves deeply into understanding individuals' experiences and subjective worlds. Drawing from the foundational works of Martin Heidegger (1962) and Edmond Husserl (1941), this approach prioritizes interpretation and meaning-making over prediction and explanation. Heidegger and Husserl laid the groundwork for hermeneutic phenomenology. Heidegger emphasized the "being-in-the-world" concept, suggesting that our existence is intimately tied to our surroundings. On the other hand, Husserl (1941) developed the phenomenological reduction method, which involves suspending assumptions and preconceptions to grasp the essence of lived experiences. Ponty (1951) expanded upon Husserl's ideas, emphasizing the embodied nature of human experience. Ponty highlighted the role of perception in shaping our understanding of the world, arguing that our bodily experiences fundamentally shape our interpretations.

Paul Ricoeur (1975) explored the relationship between interpretation and context, emphasizing the hermeneutic circle. This concept suggests that understanding emerges from an ongoing dialogue between parts and wholes, where interpretation informs context and vice versa. Hans-Georg Gadamer (2006) further developed hermeneutic phenomenology, emphasizing the importance of interpretation in human experience. Gadamer stressed the dynamic nature of understanding, where interpretation unfolds in a circular process of cognition. Employ the hermeneutic circle to navigate the complexities

of interpretation, aiming to uncover underlying patterns of meaning within participants' experiences. Researchers strive to set aside biases and preconceptions by engaging in phenomenological reduction and bracketing, allowing for a more authentic understanding of lived experiences (Collins & Stockton, 2022).

Furthermore, I acknowledged the importance of context and the horizon of interpretations. This perspective recognizes that individuals' experiences are shaped by their unique cultural, social, and historical contexts, influencing their values, beliefs, and perspectives. By exploring these diverse contexts, this research provided a rich description of participants' experiences, capturing the complexity and nuance of human existence. Overall, hermeneutic phenomenology offers a unique framework for exploring the subjective experiences of individuals, providing insights that may not be accessible through other research approaches (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). This research deepened our understanding of the human condition and the intricacies of lived experience by prioritizing interpretation and meaning-making.

Literature Review

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant change in the nonprofit management landscape, leading academics and practitioners to reevaluate strategy, priorities, and methods (Kim, 2022). The global crisis has presented nonprofit organizations with unprecedented challenges that have not only put their resilience to the test but also highlighted how important effective management is when navigating uncharted territory (Kim, 2022). In the post-pandemic era, nonprofit management is shaped by many complicated concerns that must be understood and addressed as the

sector struggles with rising service demand, tight budgetary constraints, and labor shortages (Kim, 2022; Kuenzi et al., 2023). Considering this, this study investigated nonprofit managers' experiences, difficulties, and prospects in the wake of COVID-19. The researcher illuminated the crucial topics of employee well-being, organizational resilience, resource management, crisis communication, and the adoption of digital technology (Stötzer et al., 2022). By exploring these important areas, the research advanced knowledge of the dynamics that are changing in the nonprofit sector and offers practical advice for improving organizational resilience and effectiveness in a setting that is becoming more complicated and unpredictable.

Santos and Laureano (2022) conducted research literature reviews during the pandemic addressing nonprofit management through extensive literature analysis comprising 154 academic articles. The research literature reviews strengths, including the nonprofit management crisis that contributes practical knowledge in the nonprofit sector and its impact from related themes within the crisis, presenting a holistic view. Weaknesses included individuals within the nonprofit sector needing to capture the nuances specified with recent development and potential exclusionary effects with the limited articles published in 2020 (Santos & Laureano, 2022). Other aspects of the approach during the pandemic were crisis nonprofit managers supporting a critical role in vulnerable individuals' necessities of shelter, food, and aid in the increasing demand of the pandemic. Strengths included a demonstrated responsiveness in addressing affected communities' urgent needs where weaknesses from such demands created a strain on resources from concerns of volunteering related to health conditions and workforce losses

(Santos & Laureano, 2022). The researcher established crisis management strategies presenting emerging emergency issues that guided crisis response in the pandemic's initial year to accumulate additional knowledge presenting strength in crisis management.

Moreover, improves facilities through critical issues that help practitioners improve focus and readiness presented in evolving situations of adaptation and ongoing scenarios not covered in such times as the pandemic (Santos & Laureano, 2022). The valuable contributions researchers have made in the COVID-19 landscape are altering the effects of the nonprofit sector. Essential for adaptation to address emerging issues with an emphasis on vulnerable populations reflected in analyzed literature contributes to managing during the post-COVID-19 pandemic.

The rationale for selecting the concepts is the topic of knowledge from existing literature establishing a theoretical framework to apply the research question based on relevance within the concept of nonprofit manager post-COVID-19 pandemic. The selected concepts started a research paradigm with a theoretical framework that ensured reliability and confirmability to be evaluated within the study findings. Selecting the concepts and theories that had been confirmed and previously studied, providing a logical foundation that formed present knowledge in the management field, in theory, to contribute to reliability in the management field.

Gee and Nahm (2023) studied organizational goals, financial resources, human resources, and leadership in governance, identifying four key differences between nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Aldaihani and Data (2022) conducted a qualitative research study on hospitality tourism marketing business and management, identifying

data analysis saturation challenges and recommending quantitative approaches with sufficient justification for sample size, strategy, and interview process. The study by Kuenzi et al. (2023) investigates the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on nonprofit employees' professional and personal lives. Through in-depth interviews, the researchers identified alternative ways of working with challenges and pragmatic views of working from home and flexibility. Researchers found more work to explore how nonprofit organizations boost employee identification, mitigate internal conflict resolutions, and cope with external stakeholders' demands. Moreover, organizational complexity highlights the need for more research on workers' perspectives and leadership development in nonprofit organizations (Gee & Nahm, 2023; Kuenzi et al., 2023).

Fuller et al. (2023) analyzed Twitter data from 578 nonprofit organizations during the Covid pandemic in the US. Researchers developed a communication and crisis management model, revealing innovative and preserving tendencies in COVID-19 responses. Kim and Mason (2020) studied 600 nonprofit agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing that most organizations had operated reserves. However, those with more reserves were less likely to reduce operations and encountered difficulties acquiring supplies and vendors. The research highlighted the importance of effective management in managing reserves to protect organizations from pandemics and economic shock, extending crisis communication, and strengthening nonprofit resilience in future crises (Fuller et al., 2023; Kim & Mason, 2020). Choudhury et al. (2023) observed a 4.4% increase in productivity in the US Patent and Trademark Office due to the transitional

work-from-home to working-anywhere program. This research was crucial for understanding remote workers' managerial effects in the post-COVID pandemic era.

Min-hyu's (2022) study explored the impact of organizational support on nonprofit managers' trust and procedural fairness during COVID-19 job layoffs. The researcher found layoff conditions influenced managers' reactions, with negative framing affecting their response, highlighting the importance of understanding pandemic impacts on nonprofit managers. Conversely, Kumar et al. (2022) explored the challenges and opportunities for nonprofits in times of crisis, focusing on digital technology and the need for a holistic framework to strengthen management functions, finding that nonprofits cater to clients and donors, and the complex environment requires reworking organizational effects and technology. This research was relevant to grasping the complexity of change after COVID-19.

Haskell (1940) studied universal language and shared methods and theories in physics, focusing on logic positivism. Heidegger's (1962) works on hermeneutics and phenomenology significantly contribute to discovering the meaningless space in human existence. Gadamer (2006) studied intersubjective communication, revealing human understanding and the need for critical approaches to interpreting text interpretations. Gadamer highlighted the importance of methodology in management working knowledge. These seminal works referred to unified science under three related strands of artificial language and nonprofit managers' evolving interpretation of experience.

Studies that emphasized the need for guidance on using philosophical notations in hermeneutic phenomenology particularly highlighted interpreting lived experience

descriptions (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). The researcher, involving postgraduate research students and less experienced supervisors, highlighted ontological significance in philosophical underpinnings (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). Savin-Baden and Howell-Major (2022) conducted a study on authoring research, focusing on perspective and researcher position, and found breakthroughs in terminologies and practical examples, providing essential guidance within theory.

Hays and Singh (2022) explored the foundations of qualitative research inquiry, ethical characteristics, research design, data analysis, and collection. Researchers provided a step-by-step guide for practitioners using quantitative research in social science and education, focusing on interviewing, observation, and maximizing trustworthiness (Hays & Singh, 2022). Alsaigh and Coyne (2021) developed a framework for analyzing data using Gadamer's hermeneutic phenomenology, providing strategic guidance and establishing trustworthiness for researchers employing this method, thereby enhancing their research (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021).

Smith and Fieldsend (2021) explored the relationship between lived experiences and meaning-making, highlighting the importance of theory-driven examination. Moreover, expressing interpretive work in methodological development (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). Hovey et al. (2022) explored philosophical hermeneutics in higher education, focusing on Indigenous people's oral health as a social responsibility for individuals with Thalassemia, highlighting the importance of community and understanding in diverse populations. Tomaszewski et al. (2020) conducted a study on phenomenology approaches, revealing internal consistency in two research contexts.

These researchers provide crucial knowledge for novice researchers, providing a starting point for alignment in qualitative studies (Hovey et al., 2022; Smith & Fieldsend, 2021; Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

Studies related to the constructs of interest, namely the experiences of nonprofit managers in the post-COVID-19 era, have emerged since the pandemic's onset. Several researchers have delved into the challenges faced by nonprofit organizations and their management during and after the COVID-19 crisis. Fuller et al.'s (2023) study acknowledged the emergence of a novel crisis due to COVID-19 and likely explores the broader impacts on various sectors, including the nonprofit sector. While the specific focus on nonprofit managers may not be explicit, their findings contribute to understanding the broader context within which nonprofit managers operate post-COVID-19. Stötzer et al. (2022) provided insights into nonprofit organizations' operational challenges and their management during the pandemic. Their exploration of innovative ways to navigate such challenges could offer valuable perspectives for understanding how nonprofit managers adapt and respond to crises. Choudhury et al.'s (2023) study focused on the transition to remote work and its implications for various sectors, including nonprofits. Nonprofit managers' experiences with remote work and maintaining inclusive work environments during the pandemic may be explored, shedding light on their adaptability and resilience. Kim's (2022) work investigated the operational components of nonprofit agencies during the pandemic, including issues such as job layoffs. Understanding the strategies employed by nonprofit managers to mitigate such challenges offers valuable insights into their decision-making processes and

organizational priorities. These studies provided a foundation for understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by nonprofit managers in the post-COVID-19 era. However, they have certain limitations. The scope was that some studies may have a broader focus, encompassing multiple sectors or organizational levels, rather than specifically targeting nonprofit managers. Methodological constraints studies may employ quantitative methods or secondary data analysis, which may not capture the nuanced experiences and meanings attributed by nonprofit managers themselves. Generalizability findings from single-case studies or studies conducted in specific geographical contexts may have limited generalizability to the broader population of nonprofit managers.

Given the gaps identified in the literature, the rationale for selecting the concepts of interest, nonprofit managers' experiences in the post-COVID-19 era, was justified. The chosen qualitative hermeneutic phenomenology methodology aligns with the research objective of exploring the lived experiences and meanings attributed by nonprofit managers to their post-pandemic experiences. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of individual experiences, perspectives, and sense-making processes, which quantitative methods may not adequately capture. By conducting semi-structured interviews, I elicited rich, contextualized data directly from nonprofit managers, enhancing the study's validity and relevance to the research question.

It is known that the COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for nonprofit organizations, including increased demand for services, financial strain, operational disruptions, and workforce issues. Controversial aspects may be debates

surrounding the most effective strategies for managing these challenges, such as resource allocation, crisis communication, and employee support (Gee & Nahm, 2023). Further research was needed to explore the long-term impacts of the pandemic on nonprofit management, including organizational resilience, adaptation strategies, and the role of technology in mitigating future crises (Santos & Laureano, 2022). It is also known to organizational goals and resource management that nonprofit organizations often face challenges balancing organizational goals with limited financial and human resources (Van Steenburg et al., 2022). In addition, knowledge exists relating to employee experiences and well-being that the pandemic had significantly impacted nonprofit employees' professional and personal lives, including remote work challenges, job insecurity, and burnout (Clary & Rose, 2022). With regard to crisis communication and management, it is known that effective crisis communication is essential for nonprofit organizations to maintain trust, transparency, and credibility during times of crisis (Fuller et al., 2023).

Digital technology adoption and organizational resilience knowledge include digital technology as a crucial role in enabling nonprofit organizations to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic, such as remote work, virtual service delivery, and online fundraising (Santos & Laureano, 2022). While significant progress has been made in understanding and addressing nonprofit managers' challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, many areas still warrant further investigation. By exploring these key concepts and phenomena in greater depth, future research can contribute to building a more resilient and effective nonprofit sector in the post-pandemic era.

Finally, it should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has unquestionably had a profound impact on nonprofit management, forcing organizations to survive through unprecedented difficulties and adapt, innovate, and adapt (Santos & Laureano, 2022). This study provided important new insights into the experiences of nonprofit managers, shedding light on the challenges and successes they faced when navigating the complex post-pandemic landscape. The path ahead is loaded with chances and problems when considering the potential findings and implications. Nonprofits may become stronger, nimbler, and more prepared to meet the changing needs of their communities by utilizing the lessons learned from the pandemic, adopting creative strategies for organizational resilience, putting employee well-being first, and utilizing digital technologies to improve mission delivery.

Summary and Conclusions

Literature in hermeneutics explores the interpretation and intersectionality of understanding, while phenomenology highlights individuals' lived experiences (Hays & Singh, 2022). This approach aligned with hermeneutic phenomenology to explore nonprofit managers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonprofit organizations impacted by the pandemic have been significant in detailing reevaluation goals (Kumar et al., 2022). Utilizing the hermeneutic approach also afforded me another perspective on the challenges being navigated within a nonprofit for managers to adapt to throughout the changing landscape of COVID-19.

The importance of interpretation is understood in the hermeneutic approach (Hays & Singh, 2022). In alignment with effectively exploring the lived experiences of

nonprofit organizational managers and the associated decision-making, hermeneutic phenomenology enhances and informs leadership within the nonprofit sector. Other investigations have highlighted the nonprofit organizational impact of COVID-19 and the innovative need for flexibility and resilience, excluding the role and experiences of nonprofit management as a demographic (Miller & Song, 2023).

The current approach to applying hermeneutics through data collection and analysis, as outlined in detail in chapter three to understand the impact of nonprofit managers in post-COVID-19, addresses the gap in the research on understanding and interpreting nonprofit managers navigating through a crisis. The qualitative research presented by Min-Hyun Kim (2022) supports institutional nonprofit resources as vital for identifying and filling critical gaps that impact science. A small body of research on pandemics has been done, and this research has helped to improve the creative approaches to resilience that nonprofit organizations have developed to manage crises like layoffs (Kim, 2022). According to researchers, nonprofit organizations impacted the immediate reserve, operational reserves, and fiscal management during COVID-19. Additionally, the association between providing services as a nonprofit and surviving the COVID-19 economic shock is statistically significant (Kim & Mason, 2020). The replication of narratives that capture the genuine language and the essence of nonprofit managers is taken into consideration in this qualitative study (Gadamer, 2006). Examining hermeneutics adaptation strategies and decision-making can enhance the nonprofit sector during uncertainties. This qualitative study extended awareness in the discipline by presenting practical implications with new insight for nonprofit managers

and leaders. Additionally, this research investigation highlighted and contributed to the literature on integrating hermeneutic principles with potential benefits into nonprofit management practices.

To expand on existing literature in bridging the gap, utilizing hermeneutic phenomenology to research nonprofit managers' lived experiences during the crisis is investigative, utilizing interview methods grounded in knowledgeable hermeneutic approaches. Reviewed it focused on understanding and interpretation guiding the interview analysis to acquire data uncovering perspectives and underlining meanings for nonprofit managers in response to COVID-19 pandemic challenges. The interview methods, as outlined in chapter three of this investigation, provided a rich understanding of managing the impacts of COVID-19 for nonprofit managers, thereby contributing insight into crisis management to the literature in the nonprofit sector.

The literature explored the application of hermeneutic phenomenology to understand the experiences of nonprofit managers during the COVID-19 pandemic. It emphasized the importance of interpretation and understanding, highlighting the need to bridge gaps in research regarding the role of nonprofit management in crises. Hermeneutic approaches can provide valuable insights into decision-making processes and adaptation strategies within nonprofit organizations, ultimately contributing to enhanced nonprofit leadership and crisis management practices.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This qualitative research characterized the lived experiences and associated meanings of a cohort of nonprofit managers in the United States following the COVID-19 pandemic. The material that was currently available indicated that nonprofit managers' post-COVID-19 experiences still needed to be fully understood in terms of averting crises like job layoffs (Kim, 2022). The management field became more knowledgeable about social justice and the demands of nonprofit managers because of this research. The knowledge of the phenomenological post-COVID-19 experiences of nonprofit managers and how they interpret them was captured in this study. To comprehend nonprofit managers' post-COVID-19 lived experiences of crisis management in the post-COVID pandemic recovery in the United States, a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological method was employed. This method also helped determine how nonprofit managers interpret their experiences.

Research Design and Rationale

What are the lived experiences of nonprofit managers' experiences with managing crises during the post-COVID-19 pandemic? In essence, the lived experience was examined using hermeneutic phenomenology to understand the interpretation through a focused study, utilizing this method to interpret experience through understanding for qualitative research that approaches specific phenomena and philosophical traditions. Hermeneutic phenomenology in this study offered a distinct structured interpretation of nonprofit managers' lived experiences and underlying meaning. Using hermeneutic phenomenology, I provided insight into the intricacies of human experiences and

emphasized the significance of comprehending how people perceive and comprehend their surroundings (Hays & Singh, 2022).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is part of the tradition of qualitative research. The phenomenon is drawn from the subjective experience of individuals. It is then interpreted philosophically using hermeneutics to emphasize understanding individuals' lived experiences and meaning-making as the focus in the natural context of interpreting these experiences. Researchers apply hermeneutic phenomenology to highlight, underline, and uncover the structures and meanings of human experience through in-depth exploration and interpretation principles utilizing shared narratives and perspectives (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Hovey et al., 2022).

The rationale for selecting hermeneutic phenomenology for this research was the provision of the rich and deep understanding that nonprofit managers had experienced. With this research approach, the exploration was well suited to subjective phenomena as it was intended to support the interpretation of the meaning of nonprofit managers' lived experience post-COVID-19. Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on understanding nonprofit managers' interpretations and unique perspectives, emphasizing the underlying structure and uncovering the essence of nonprofit managers' experiences (Gadamer, 2006; Haskell, 1941; Heidegger, 1962). Research traditions drive into subjective experience, acquiring complexities and answers that may be readily apparent in various research methodologies (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Hovey et al., 2022). The tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen to acquire innovative knowledge of contextually embedded live realities that intricately reflect the nonprofit managers' lived

experiences. The exploration of the COVID-19 crisis and post-COVID-19 crisis made sense by adopting this traditional approach to contribute to understanding nonprofit managers' experiences.

Role of the Researcher

As an investigator in a position of influence, taking notes in the interview established objective transcript data that allows data collection to remove biases between participants. Moreover, actively engaging within the research setting to acquire a phenomenon through the interaction and behaviors that are being documented (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Primarily, being aware that the researcher is an investigator and acknowledging the firsthand setting as a researcher detailing the experience of a principal acquiring rich data of the individual experience (MacLeod et al., 2023). Using hermeneutic phenomenology presented a deeper understanding of the rich data that may emphasize building a relationship between participant and researcher within the interview when conducting interviews. As part of the active engagement, the immersing self of the researcher with individuals in the participant role (MacLeod et al., 2023). The need for an investigator participant's ability to adapt to nuances of data collection and the potential adverse approach within a setting facilitates the ability to understand a more comprehensive way of providing the researcher the delicate balance needed in combining roles of participant and investigator through participant engagement and objective interviews (Collins & Stockton, 2022). The relationship with participants in the research setting depended on the objectives and participants selected. The researcher's role had challenges and unique advantages that were offered and best considered in a manner that

suits the investigative study, ethical considerations, and research goal (Collins & Stockton, 2022).

Maintaining ethical boundaries was considered through several aspects with the participants, the researcher, and the researcher's relationship with the Walden University Internal Review Board (IRB) and dissertation committee members in the research process. Ethical boundaries impact professional relationships and existing personnel, particularly within qualitative research, and are a critical consideration for participant autonomy and well-being (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). The investigator had a power-dynamic relationship with individual participants in the research study and established informed consent at initial contact. Within the power dynamics of a research process that impacts and mitigates the steps of a power dynamic, a researcher is aware of participants' autonomy and potential compromising bias or data-leading behaviors that unintentionally or intentionally influence participants' responses. The role of the researcher is to be aware of power imbalances within the relationship (Collins & Stockton, 2022).

Research process and integrity ensure ethics standards and upholding informed consent, combatting confidential issues and other interests of conflicts within the potential power dynamics (Kumar et al., 2024). Acknowledging the power relationships have on participants when conducting research in qualitative research. Informed consent of individuals' participation and the potential impact of individuals' rights within the nature of the research individuals will understand and be assured of the importance, particularly when obtaining informed consent (Kumar et al., 2024). Confidentiality and

trust were not breached, and participants were not made to feel uncomfortable or fearful or repercussions from sharing their experience, as confidentiality and such boundaries were communicated by me. Even if there was an existing relationship between participant and I, it was essential to maintain confidentiality in qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2022). Conflict of interest consists of professional and personal connections, regardless of the participant and research, and the interaction as a researcher remained impartial and objective in this critical role as research credibility is not undermined. Nor are research findings affected based on previous interactions, expectations, or pre-existing biases within the power dynamics (Collins & Stockton, 2022).

In this qualitative investigation, I managed the power dynamics, relationships, and research biases through several strategies within the power relationship, research biases, establishing integrity, and credibility. Utilizing reflexivity and interpretation, analysis, and data collection impacts mitigating steps of potential researcher biases throughout the investigation process (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Potential researcher biases may influence assumptions, values, and beliefs with ongoing reflection and engagement in the research approach (Collins & Stockton, 2022). Utilizing transparency with stakeholders and participants facilitated credibility and trust, building the relationships by openly collaborating on participants' interests and potential conflicts with the experience and backgrounds as a transparent researcher (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Establishing boundaries to reduce biases and risks for the researcher and participants meant maintaining autonomy and a respectful professional relationship through interpretation and data collection within the power dynamics that influence and minimize risk to

participants. I set clear, established boundaries (Collins & Stockton, 2022). Peer debriefing research findings help validate the researcher's valuable insight, provide external feedback, and identify misinterpretations and potential biases within the results (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Part of the role of the researcher process of interviewing participants and debriefing colleagues represented the basis of member checking and peer debriefing engagement.

Utilizing triangulation enhanced research outcomes (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Within the power relationship, triangulation was used to reduce researcher biases that may have impacted the researcher's data collection and validation of sources that may offer a variety of perspectives (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). The method of multiple data sources for research resulted in reliability triangulation. Adhering to ethical considerations, principles, and guidelines removed power imbalances like biases, augments, and other risk minimizations for participants' well-being (Collins & Stockton, 2022). Protecting participant rights throughout the research investigation and upholding ethical standards of participant autonomy concerning confidentiality and informed consent was imperative (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Knowledge advancing and contributing to research trustworthiness was rigorous and enhanced the qualitative research strategies and implementation (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021).

Ethical practices for collaboration, boundary setting, and transparency presented self-awareness and other combinations within the power dynamics required for managing research biases (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Other applicable ethical issues considered were ethical conduct, integrity, and validity identifiable by the critical

researcher in incentives within the power dynamics. Related issues of ethics are encountered by an investigator in a researcher's work environment (Collins & Stockton, 2022). Conflict of interest with analysis data collection that strives to remain unbiased and impartial within the research process is to maintain transparency of stakeholders and participant interests through potential conflicts of disclosing investigators conducting study in their work environment (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Researchers applying investigative study in their work environment can influence participants' behaviors and responses in the research process (MacLeod et al., 2023). Therefore, stakeholders and participants promoted open communication and the participant's autonomy, respecting clear boundaries (Collins & Stockton, 2022). Another established effect of mitigating steps with power differentials in mind.

Justifying incentives to encourage participation within the work environment raises ethical considerations in data collection and the enhanced quality of undue influences and potential coercion (Hays & Singh, 2022). Therefore, justification for using incentives and their use were ethically implicated in retaining every recruitment necessity participant benefit. Incentive-based justification of an equitable and fair manner accounting for participation and potential impact of research outcome and validity (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Ethical issues should be a blueprint comprehensively developed throughout the research process, incorporating identifying strategies to manage conflicts of interest using incentives to empower will be a guideline for clearly maintaining informed consent, upholding ethical standards, and ensuring confidentiality. Investigative researchers collaborate with mentors, colleagues, and IRB

to address implementation, research design, and integrity throughout the research (Hays & Singh, 2022). Proactive approaches ensure related issues of conflict-of-interest use of incentives and power differentials can uphold research integrity including ethical principles of individuals' transparency and autonomy within their work environment (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Proactive approaches facilitate the trustworthiness and credibility of the investigation and enhance addressing ethical issues in the study's findings (Hays & Singh, 2022).

Methodology

The present qualitative study set out on a deliberate expedition into the complex domain of nonprofit administration to extract deep knowledge from seasoned experts in the industry. This study used an intentional sampling approach, carefully handpicking well-known nonprofit managers for their distinct knowledge, opinions, and experiences instead of traditional random or systematic sampling techniques. By examining the management experience and personal insights of these chosen participants, this study clarified the research question aspects that encompass financial management, strategic planning, and oversight duties in nonprofit organizations. Driven by an unwavering dedication to precision and comprehensiveness, this exploratory study disentangled the complex web of nonprofit administration by using the varied perspectives and COVID-19 encounters within the chosen group. Employing a meticulous approach that included participant recruiting, data collection, and confirmability methods, this study provided an all-encompassing comprehension of modern nonprofit managers' diverse difficulties and opportunities.

This qualitative investigation used a purposeful sampling approach involving nonprofit managers selected based on their unique related knowledge, perspectives, and experiences rather than random or systematic sampling selections. Capturing a purposeful sampling justified an in-depth insight into the qualitative research topic aim, related to each specific individual's managerial expertise and firsthand experience (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). A purposeful selection of a qualified participant provided accurate and valuable diverse perspectives for a deep understanding within the qualitative investigation to uncover a unique phenomenon (Kumar et al., 2024). The purposeful sampling approach presented participant recruitment with a perspective insight to answer the research question accurately (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). The distinct population of participants were nonprofit managers and consisted of qualified individuals within managerial positions inside nonprofit companies. Participants self-identified personal responsibility, program development, community outreach, and other investments in the strategic direction of nonprofit operations finance and overseeing responsibilities. The criterion for inclusion included nonprofit managers with personal responsibility, program development, community outreach, and other investments in the strategic direction of nonprofit operations finance and overseeing responsibilities. The qualitative inquiries participants for interviews consisted of relevance to the investigation topic, research questions related to the experience, and valuable insight principles (Kumar et al., 2024). I ensured the diversity that represents objectivity in a broad range to confirm the participants' COVID-19 experience perspectives and diverse backgrounds were included. Moreover, representatives of the study group represented the broader population of the

selected individuals (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). I allowed for participant willingness, availability, and disclosure in the interviews within the study to be committed contributors. I established informed consent of participants in the investigative research, supplying the necessary information to all parties (Kumar et al., 2024). I kept confidential and protected information and the identities of participants private.

I employed various methods of recruiting selected criteria participants to meet such acceptance into this investigative research. Utilizing networking approaches such as attending group networking events, participating in a conference connected to the industry, engaging in a virtual community, taking part in internet discussion boards, having coffee with a new acquaintance, taking part in a networking group, leveraging connections through social media, or constructing a network of business contacts for potential contributors in the identified population targeting organizations and individual outreach. Snowball sampling was utilized for the investigative criteria, where partakers refer others for recruitment and advertisement through online social media and other necessary platforms (Hays & Singh, 2022). I collaborated with potential contributors, identifiable groups, and relevant organizations within the community of professional institutions. The number of participants in this qualitative research moved forward until the saturation of data, and no further new information was given from the involved contributors (Hays & Singh, 2022). Therefore, the sampling and diversity in the research complexity varied between 10-20 participants until saturation was met. However, the exact number may vary depending on the complexity and diversity of the sample (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021; Aldaihani & Data, 2022). The relationship between sample size and

saturation, and the more individuals participating, the more research information's likelihood of saturation increases (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). Moreover, I considered factors of collecting in-depth data from each individual, the diversity of the sample, and the data analysis research available.

Researchers understand that balancing sample size with information saturation is important for comprehensive data analysis (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). Established procedures for recruiting qualified participants consisted of confirmed identification, contact, and successful recruitment. My identification selection criteria ensured the professional individual met the mentioned methods as the investigator reached out to potential prospects (Hays & Singh, 2022). I used a demographic questionnaire to establish if an individual meets the sampling inclusion criteria (Appendix A). Official contact consisted of qualified participants properly obtained in this study, providing them with authentic information and promptly seeking individual consent. Successful recruitment was based on voluntarily agreed informed participants to knowingly participate in the qualitative study and scheduled as willing recruits for official discussion and interview (Hays & Singh, 2022). The identifiable source of data collection instrumentation consisted of a researcher journal, interview protocol including a self-developed interview questionnaire (Appendix B), and audio tape archived as confidential raw data. My journal documented behavior and nonverbal cues during the dialogues. The interview protocol was a check and balance that followed interview prompts and question outlines within the self-developed questionnaire that further assisted with the guided inquiry procedure instrumentation in the semi-structured strategies qualitative research

interview (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). To secure participants' confidentiality regarding potential ethical issues in a relevant in-depth interview, videotapes, artifacts, and focus group protocols were unutilized. However, audio taping was used for later analyzing the recorded interview as a data-collected mechanism for reflection and clarity of understanding. Archived audio data for research collected from the interview sessions was utilized as a perspective upon the face-to-face in-depth interviews.

The instrumentation of these data collection components was essential to establish the credibility and trustworthiness necessary for capturing data that the methodology and objectives of the researcher were aligned and ensured from the assessed research question, and that mechanisms were sufficient (Hays & Singh, 2022). Additional findings of trustworthiness and credibility of such instrumentation to enhance collection methods triangulation of data being studied within the population and the specific research contexts and the instrument appropriateness considered with the qualitative research approach (Hays & Singh, 2022). Within the interest-related investigation, findings from literature sources, theoretical framework, and the combination of other qualitative research interviews and developed instrumentation were fundamental in this exploration development. Within the inquiry context of appropriateness and relevance ensured through implementation refining, another was conducted pretesting of exploration studies in research. The IRB reviewed credibility established through instrumentation, establishing a thorough recapitulation of the research topic and proper dimensions from formal credibility assessment, providing comprehensive relevant and instrument clarity feedback for revision of instrumentation and credibility enhancement.

The following factors sufficient to answer research questions in the data collection consisted of alignment of objectives appropriateness for the research content key constructs and comprehensive questioning. Research objectives with alignment consisted of questioning the sufficiency and directly relevant research to capture the data within the instrumentation and design. Appropriateness was based on the research topic setting and the study population with specific characteristics, ensuring the instrument fit ethical considerations (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). The key constructs aligned the research questions with relevant dimensions that adequately check and balance with instrumentation. Comprehensive questions allowed participants to solicit detailed responses and italicize rich data with opened questioning throughout the interview, which was necessary within the instrumentation and limitations issues to identify the participants and small sample size to be assessed (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). Well-developed instrumentation addressed factors of alignment in the research goal, establishing a sufficient instrument for data collection to answer the research questions effectively (Aldaihani & Data, 2022).

The methodology described in this qualitative study concluded by highlighting the need for deliberate sampling to obtain complex insights from nonprofit administrators. Through thoughtful participant selection based on their distinct backgrounds, viewpoints, and experiences, this study guaranteed a deep and thorough comprehension of the research issue. The inclusion criteria, recruitment strategies, and data collection equipment were thoughtfully created to capture a range of perspectives and encourage in-depth investigation. Furthermore, the dedication to thorough and responsible

investigation was shown by the emphasis on confidentiality, ethical issues, and the validity and dependability of the research process. This study significantly contributed to nonprofit administration, employing methodical efforts, enhancing academic discourse, and providing guidance for practical implementations in organizational settings.

Participant Selection Logic

Nonprofit managers participants were selected based on their current or previous role as managers within nonprofit organizations. Experience with post-COVID-19 crisis management participants had direct experience dealing with the challenges and implications of managing a nonprofit organization in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, including issues like job layoffs and other crisis management strategies. Participants were identified through various channels, including professional networks, nonprofit organizations, and industry associations. I leveraged connections in the nonprofit sector and used snowball sampling techniques, where existing participants recommended other potential participants who met the criteria (Hays & Singh, 2022); Stötzer et al., 2022). Data saturation determines the number of participants in qualitative research. Data saturation occurs when no new themes or information emerge from additional interviews, indicating that enough information has been gathered to address the research questions sufficiently. Generally, the number of participants in qualitative research ranges from 10 to 20 individuals (Hays & Singh, 2022). This study, aimed at a diverse sample of around 10 to 20 nonprofit managers provided a rich and nuanced understanding of their experiences post-COVID-19 reaching a saturation point at 17

interviews. I identified potential participants through professional networks, organizational databases, and industry associations.

Once potential participants were identified, I contacted them via email or phone to introduce the study, explain the research purpose, and invite the potential participant to participate. Recruitment of interested participants was provided with detailed information about the study, including the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality measures, and the interview process (Hays & Singh, 2022). Participants were asked to sign consent forms or give informed verbal consent before participating in the study. As mentioned, the sample size was determined based on data saturation, where additional interviews were unlikely to yield new insights or themes. The goal was to balance obtaining sufficient data to answer the research questions comprehensively while avoiding unnecessary data collection beyond the point of saturation.

Typically, researchers continue recruiting participants until data saturation. At that point, the researcher confidently concludes that they have captured the range and depth of experiences relevant to the study's objectives. Participants were interviewed utilizing a semi-structured interview process of researcher-developed interview questions (Appendix B) with follow-up questions for clarity to gather data. The interviews were conducted remotely with the participant at the participant's place of employment or an impartial site of the participant's choosing. I conducted interviews with every participant individually, anticipating that each interview would run for approximately thirty to sixty minutes (Hays & Singh, 2022). With participant approval, voice recordings of the interview were captured using a confidential audio recording device stored in a secure

location with no personally identifying participant information and only accessible to me. If the initial recruitment process yielded inadequate participants, other recruitment tactics, like broadening the pool of potential candidates or prolonging the recruitment timeline, were explored. Interview follow-up was conducted as needed for triangulation, clarity of understanding, and data analysis.

Instrumentation

I produced a journal during all interview sessions and disclosed the purpose of researcher journaling as part of the informed consent process. An average journal session extended for the full interview session approximately 30 to 60 minutes in length. More time was needed during some interviews when journaling was extensive during interview sessions, as journal reviews are necessary if the first interviewee needs to provide more data. Researchers establish the research journal source for instrument type. Direct notes during interviews will increase the quantity and quality of information acquired and reviewed (Hays & Singh, 2022).

The location of the interview, remotely with the participant at the participant's workplace or another designated spot, was recorded in the journal. During interview sessions, I presented the journal and explained its purpose to acquire informed consent (Hays & Singh, 2022). Some journal sessions ran longer than the thirty to sixty minutes the interview lasted, dependent upon reflection notes and researcher insights. More time was needed if journaling was done in-depth during interview sessions. The justification journal reviews were necessary if further data was needed for the initial evaluation and reflection (Santos & Laureano, 2022).

Interviews were the primary source of data collection for this study. The interview questions were researcher-produced, and the instrumentation included a detailed interview protocol. To learn more about nonprofit managers' actual experiences with crisis management following COVID-19, semi-structured interviews with participants followed the protocol described below. I ensured relevance and depth, as the protocol's explanation was specially created to address the research topic and capture the subtleties of the participants' experiences.

Additional sources of data collection included an audiotape using a confidential audio recording device. The following is how the audio recordings containing the semi-structured interviews with nonprofit management were captured and retained. The justification for audio recording ensured accurate data gathering and helped with clarity when transcribing interview data (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021).

Archived data sources from multiple reliable sources, which comprised of reports, organizational papers, and other pertinent items were utilized to augment understanding of collected data during the analysis and coding process. In addition to interview findings, the inclusion of archive data offered more context and insights regarding crisis management following COVID-19. Historical context was provided through archived data, which yielded important insights into the crisis management tactics used by charitable organizations throughout the pandemic (Fuller et al., 2023).

Observation sheets were used during interviews to record non-verbal cues and contextual elements as it presented. I created an observation sheet as a data source. The justification for utilizing observations to help improve data collection is the value

observation data may hold regarding nonverbal cues and background information that audible data during interviews may not elicit (Gee & Nahm, 2023).

The sufficiency of the combination of data collection instruments outlined for this study was established through their combined use as a collective, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of nonprofit managers' experiences with crisis management post-COVID-19 and providing me with a source of triangulation of data during analysis. The semi-structured interview protocol enabled in-depth data collection, while audiotapes mitigate discrepancies through accurate recording. Archived data and observation sheets enrich the interview findings and provide additional context and insights to the verbal data captured (Hays & Singh, 2022).

As some of these instruments are researcher-produced, they were tailored to the study's specific needs and ensured alignment with the research question (Hays & Singh, 2022; Hovey et al., 2022). Content validity of the interview protocol was established through expert review, ensuring the appropriateness for the study population (Hays & Singh, 2022). Any necessary modifications were made based on feedback to address context- and culture-specific issues and enhance the relevance of the instruments for the current study. The semi-structured interview protocol was used, as I produced a series of interview questions as an instrument, including interviewing nonprofit managers to delve into their post-COVID-19 crisis management experiences by utilizing tailored questions to address the research question and capture nuanced experiences, ensuring both depth and topic relevance.

After participating in the study, exit procedures for participants included a debriefing of their experience and an opportunity for any additional questions or information that participants may deem necessary (Hays & Singh, 2022). Participants were provided with background information on the study, given access to view the study's final results, and given the chance to ask questions in the future should any arise. Participants were informed of the necessity for ongoing participation until the study was completed and the anticipated time commitment, including follow-up interviews or additional data collection (Hays & Singh, 2022). If further sessions were required, participants were contacted by phone or email to arrange additional sessions. I asserted ethical conduct to the extent of limitations disclosed and improved the transparency of their findings by offering comprehensive and clear information about participants' recruiting, participation, data collection methods, and exit strategies.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The efficacy of current recruitment strategies was assessed, and likely barriers and hindrances contributing to the low participant turnout were also explained. The strategies I considered include enlisting through different channels, engaging other network organizations, and revising recruitment messages to attract more participants. This strategy gave potential participants more time to learn about the research project and show interest in it as the investigator extended the enrollment period. The study timeline was adjusted in case of extending the recruitment phase as necessary to reach research objectives (Hays & Singh, 2022). The outreach mainly focused on demographics as well as professional groups targeted at a specific population. I teamed up with relevant

organizations, associations, and community groups who assisted in individual recruiting via their networks. I provided nominal incentives to participants to encourage participation in the form of ten-dollar gift cards.

Communicate the incentives offered in recruitment materials that attract potential candidates as a referral program where existing participants are encouraged to refer colleagues, peers, and acquaintances who meet the study criteria. Offering incentives and recognition to participants who successfully refer recruits to the study review adjusting the inclusion benchmarks to broaden the eligibility criteria for participation (Hays & Singh, 2022). I expanded the target population to increase the pool of potential participants. Exploring alternative qualitative sampling techniques, like snowballing and theoretical selection, I identified and recruited participants through existing connections and networks (Hays & Singh, 2022). Utilizing purposive sampling strategies targeting specific subgroups and individuals with unique perspectives and experiences relevant to the research topic. Moreover, engaged stakeholders, like community leaders, organizational partners, and advisory boards, solicited their input and support in participant recruitment efforts (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021).

I leveraged individual resources to amplify enlisting messages and influence a wider audience. I ensured that any modifications and adjustments to recruitment strategies comply with ethical guidelines and regulations governing human subjects' research. Moreover, I obtained approval from the IRB and ethics committee for changes to the enlisting process (Hays & Singh, 2022). By implementing a comprehensive follow-up plan that addressed recruitment challenges, I proactively and strategically enhanced

the member enlisting efforts and overcame barriers to ensure the successful completion of this qualitative research study. Participants were informed that they can withdraw from the study without repercussions.

Providing clear instructions I explained how individuals can communicate the decision to withdraw further, expressing as the study is drawing to its conclusion and activities were complete. While expressing appreciation for participation and contribution to the research, I debriefed sessions and provided necessary materials to participants upon completion of their involvement in the study (Hays & Singh, 2022). Such material explained the purpose of the investigation, its objectives, and how the data will be used. I presented an opportunity for participants to ask questions, seek clarification, and provide feedback on their experiences during the study. Further, providing information on how partakers can access study findings and publications from the research online. Moreover, I reiterated assurances of confidentiality and privacy regarding contributors' data and responses.

I informed participants on the measures taken to protect anonymity and the confidentiality of contributions (Hays & Singh, 2022). Expressed gratitude to participants for their time, effort, and willingness to recount their experiences. Offered post-study support and sources to participants if individuals needed referrals to relevant support services, organizations, and resources related to the study topic issues discussed during the research (Hays & Singh, 2022). Provided participants with my contact information for further questions and concerns after exiting the investigation. Encouraged feedback on

their overall experience in the study, including suggestions for improvement and areas of concern. I established mechanism for participants to provide feedback anonymously.

I documented participant exits and debriefing procedures for research records and compliance purposes consist of the following. I maintained records of debriefing sessions, participant communications, and any follow-up interactions (Hays & Singh, 2022). By implementing clear and transparent participant exit and debriefing procedures, investigators demonstrate respect for participants' autonomy and promote ethical research conduct. Moreover, I worked to foster positive research participant experiences.

Researcher practices contribute to the overall integrity and credibility of the qualitative research study (Hays & Singh, 2022). Follow-up procedures included requirements for participants to return for follow-up interviews, research objectives, and the level of engagement needed to address the investigation questions comprehensively. Follow-up interviews establish a deeper understanding of specific themes, issues, and experiences identified during initial data collection.

Researchers invite participants back for follow-up interviews to explore emerging topics and to clarify and elaborate on earlier discussions. Follow-up interviews were conducted as part of member checking, where participants reviewed and validated findings and interpretations derived from earlier data collection (Hays & Singh, 2022). Participants were invited to provide feedback on the accuracy and relevance of study findings, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. Follow-up interviews serve as triangulation, allowing researchers to corroborate and compare participants' perspectives obtained through different data collection methods and sources.

Follow-up interviews were used to solicit participants' feedback on the research process, materials, and data collection methods, allowing the investigator to refine future iterations of the study (Hays & Singh, 2022).

I remained flexible and responsive to participants' preferences and availability when scheduling follow-up oral examinations. Participants were allowed to decline participation in follow-up interviews without repercussions. I ensured that follow-up procedures adhere to ethical informed consent guidelines for additional data collection activities (Hays & Singh, 2022). Participants were informed about the follow-up interviews' purpose, duration, and voluntary nature. Follow-up interviews continued until information saturation was achieved, where no new themes and insights emerged from the data. Researchers monitor data saturation throughout the investigation and adjust follow-up procedures accordingly (Hays & Singh, 2022). By incorporating follow-up procedures, like requirements for return for follow-up interviews, researchers deepen the understanding of participants' experiences, enhance the richness and complexity of qualitative data, and strengthen the validity and credibility of research findings (Hays & Singh, 2022). These procedures also demonstrate researchers' commitment to engaging participants as active collaborators in the research process.

Data Analysis Plan

Interview Data

The interview data were linked to the study question concerning how nonprofit managers experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and post-COVID-19 transitions at work, emphasizing finding significant themes and patterns associated with workplace

challenges. To ensure accurate depiction and trustworthiness, participants receive an overview of the transcripts of their interviews. The interview data was subjected to thematic analysis to recognize recurrent themes, patterns, and concepts, using three-cycle coding to categorize similarities that shape as more significant themes emerge. The first coding cycle included an outline of cultural material, emotional coding, concept coding, exploring concepts within the initial coding, and eclectic coding. Second-cycle coding established the refinement of first-cycle coding themes and categories. Third-cycle coding synthesized the first- and second-cycle coding for theorization (Hovey et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2024; Saldana, 2021).

I manually transcribed the data. The themes provided in the data served as the basis for the initial coding, which was improved through an iterative process of three-cycle coding and theme development. NVivo software was utilized to manage and assemble the coded data, make data retrieval easier, and aid in theme analysis. Inconsistent instances or anomalies within the data were meticulously scrutinized and considered to offer significant understandings or distinct viewpoints that enhanced the investigation or provided topics for future research. Codes were carefully recorded and examined to identify potential causes for disparities and the consequences of the study's conclusions.

Journal and Observation Data

With an emphasis on studying communication patterns, collaboration, and interview dynamics, the journal data was related to the research topic of how people engaged in an interview in context. The journal data was analyzed using content analysis,

identifying certain behaviors, interactions, and communication patterns during the interviews to augment interview data analysis. Researchers use a three-cycle coding approach to classify further similarities, and more prominent themes emerge (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Hovey et al., 2022; Saldana, 2021). The first coding cycle included an outline of cultural material, emotional coding, concept coding, exploring concepts within the initial coding, and eclectic coding. Second-cycle coding established the refinement of first-cycle coding themes and categories. Third-cycle coding synthesized the first- and second-cycle coding for theorization (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Hovey et al., 2022; Saldana, 2021).

Journal data were analyzed in coordination with transcripts as augmented data to the emerging themes and codes including cultural material and emotional coding. Journal data was coded, rather it was used in coordination with coded data and transcripts utilizing the hermeneutic circle, where I continued to develop and build knowledge with each interview and individual data analyzed (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Crowther & Thomson, 2020; Hovey et al., 2022; Saldana, 2021). Journal data provided various facets of the interactions and dynamics of participants during the interviews. Excel software simplified the data analysis process for organizing and classifying the journal data concerning coded data. To ascertain the causes of any discrepancies in data, the journal data that exhibited discrepancies was rigorously examined and evaluated through triangulation.

I thoroughly comprehended the observed interactions and interview dynamics, which were considered in the study. To ensure a methodical and extracting approach to

data analysis, I specified the data analysis plan for every category of data gathered. The methodical and extracting approach to data analysis for this research provided transparency and guidance for other researchers to replicate the data analysis process and discover the treatment of discrepancies in the data (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021).

The interview data was linked to the research question concerning how nonprofit managers experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and post-COVID-19 transitions at work, focusing on significant themes and patterns associated with workplace challenges. Journal data was connected to the research question as the journal data focused on studying communication patterns, collaboration, and interview dynamics in the context of how people engage in interviews. The type of procedure for coding and thematic analysis was employed to recognize recurrent themes, patterns, and concepts. Three-cycle coding was utilized. First cycle outline of cultural material, emotional coding, concept coding, exploring concepts within initial coding, and eclectic coding (Saldana, 2021). The second cycle was a refinement of the first-cycle coding themes and categories (Saldana, 2021). The third cycle synthesized first- and second-cycle coding for thematization (Saldana, 2021). NVivo was used to manage and assemble the coded data, aid in data retrieval, and facilitate theme analysis. Treatment of discrepant cases, inconsistent instances, or anomalies within the data was meticulously scrutinized and considered for potential insights or viewpoints that could enhance the investigation or inspire future research.

Moreover, causes for disparities and their consequences for the study's conclusions were identified and examined. The procedure for coding content analysis was utilized to identify behaviors, interactions, and communication patterns during the

interviews. Excel software was used to simplify the data analysis process for organizing and classifying the journal data concerning coded data. Treatment journal data exhibiting discrepancies was rigorously examined and evaluated through triangulation. I thoroughly comprehended the observed interactions and interview dynamics, considering them in the study to ensure a methodical and extracting approach to data analysis. Both types of data followed a rigorous coding and analysis process, utilizing software tools where appropriate and ensuring thorough treatment of any discrepancies to maintain the integrity and trustworthiness of the research findings.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

In this qualitative research, ensuring credibility was a key consideration. In establishing the criteria for credibility I utilized triangulation with diverse perspectives. Converging evidence provided throughout the study enhanced credibility through triangulation with the collaborative findings on the data collection methods utilizing multiple sources (Hays & Singh, 2022). I equally applied prolonged engagement for deeper understanding and development of phenomena under investigation inside the research setting. Prolonged engagement enhanced the capturing of nuances and complexities within the environment (Crowther & Thomson, 2020).

I employed member checking to represent independent perspectives accurately and ensure accurate interpretations by providing feedback for the accuracy of involved shared conclusions. Peer debriefing of misinterpretations and potential biases were

addressed and identified to aid my critical reflection. Peer debriefing allowed expert discussion of findings, establishing and enhancing credibility (Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

A rich description of the factors and findings allowed transferability to enhance credible procedures in data collection of individual research contexts through an accurate investigative account (Hays & Singh, 2022). Reflexivity was practiced within the research process as a preconception and assumption of the researcher's bias. Reflexivity increased transparency in the perspective background that influences the investigative study (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). I used a robust description of the in-depth social phenomenon in complexity capturing to enhance credibility. Qualitative research addressing these considerations enhanced credibility through understanding and findings, thereby strengthening research trustworthiness (Hays & Singh, 2022).

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability is imperative to findings and broader relevance to assessing the phenomena's importance (Hays & Singh, 2022). With prioritizing a deep understanding of investigation settings in the population applied in other contexts, consideration for this qualitative research transferability represented a rich description of contexts of interest. Sampling strategies influence transferability relevant to the research questions through contextual perspective in the range of theoretical and variation sampling techniques (Kumar et al., 2024). The robust description drew upon the context of the research findings and complexities in understanding the richness (Hays & Singh, 2022).

Comparative analysis was employed for the setting, findings, and applicability that influenced and identified factors of different commonalities across the investigative study. Reflexivity within the conclusions, research subjectivity, and potential impact allowed readers to enhance transferability in a documentation reflection and consider how factors were influenced through perspectives, assumptions, and researcher biases (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). Context from similar populations was relevant to the findings from participants' perspectives and experiences that resonate for interpretation, ensuring transferability within the research process (Hays & Singh, 2022).

Theoretical sensitivity inside the diverse settings and findings were potentially applicable across distinct contexts and commonalities identified by me. Theoretical sensitivity inside the implied population of understanding biases was provided through enhanced transferability within the relevant theoretical framework. Qualitative research does not aim for transferability but draws attention to transferability that enhances related areas for further policy analysis and informs practices through qualitative findings as a utility of relevance (Aldaihani & Data, 2022).

Dependability

Dependability in this qualitative investigation enhanced considerations of the qualitative findings that reinforce trustworthiness with methodological transparency of studies replications (Hays & Singh, 2022). Other researchers can analyze technical data collection procedures and decision-making processes throughout the investigative method. Dependability emphasizes consistent data collection in a data collection process and potential variations within the setting time points and diverse individuals that ensure

consistency and protocol procedures (Aldaihani & Data, 2022). I used audit trails to help dependability for other researchers' verification, and data analyzed transparent operations. Audit trails within the recording, providing enhanced dependability throughout the research process in decision-making and documentation tracking from coding decisions to transcripts and field notes (Aldaihani & Data, 2022; Saldana, 2021).

Triangulation enhanced dependability within the data source and other methods inherited from error or bias and collaborative findings from perspectives and sources (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Peer debriefing improved dependability from oversight inconsistencies and potential biases identified through feedback and critical reflection, providing an opportunity to enhance the research process through interpretation and findings (Hays & Singh, 2022). Member checking enhanced the dependability of participant experiences, an interpretation that resonates with researchers' accuracy, and verified review and validation responses with participants in the inquiry process. These considerations enhanced the dependability of the researcher's interpretations and findings, increasing credibility, trustworthiness, and the qualitative research process (Aldaihani & Data, 2022).

Confirmability

Qualitative research confirmability considerations ensured trustworthiness from interpreting human experience with the degrees shaped by data rather than the researcher's preconceptions, biases, and perspectives done by utilizing the hermeneutic circle (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). I used reflexivity to enhance confirmability, examining and acknowledging the investigators' assumptions, biases, and contexts (Taquette &

Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Reflexivity throughout the investigative process and the researcher's role minimized the influence of individual biases with interpretation in the research process.

Triangulation assisted confirmability with collaborating conclusions analysis and data collection methods using multiple references, providing convergence of evidence from prospective sources (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Triangulation reduced subjectivity and research bias within the findings (Hays & Singh, 2022). An audit trail encouraged me to verify the data analysis process by providing transparent recording and audio trails throughout the inquiry process, documenting decisions and steps within the coding transcripts and field notes (Hays & Singh, 2022; Saldana, 2021).

Peer debriefing allowed me to oversee inconsistencies and potential biases. Peer debriefing through discussion of the research process with peers and interpretation of colleagues enhanced confirmability through feedback and critical reflection (Hays & Singh, 2022). Member checking was employed to perspective and respective experience for responding validation, allowing individuals to verify and review for accuracy on findings and interpretations. Transparency was a key consideration in the findings for potential replicated studies. The facts and trustworthiness for other researchers' ability to enhance decision-making processes and analyzing techniques and data collection or procedures through transparent documentation of the research investigation.

Ethical Procedures

Before research was efficiently conducted, confidentiality agreements to acquire potential participants and data access followed the outlined procedure (Taquette &

Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Providing transparency along with the IRB application, including the research protocol for private interviews, recruitment material, and consent forms. Institutional permissions and IRB approval for this investigative study were relevant. Once the IRB was approved, I efficiently conducted a qualitative research investigation with approved consent forms and recruitment flyers for the interview protocol. The ethical concerns to active recruitment from potential participants in the decision-making process were informed and voluntary consent that ensures the outline strategy of IRB application related to successful recruitment, including deception and lack of transparency (Hays & Singh, 2022).

The informed consent process for official participation included consent forms, participant rights, and confidential benefits-risk measures (Kumar et al., 2024). The informed consent process procedures included the academic purpose of the doctoral study and other necessary information of needed transparency provided to key participants, including describing the IRB application and data collection and analysis process. The ethical concern related to data collection for prospective participants was to minimize risk by ensuring voluntary participation, maintaining confidentiality, and addressing other concerns in this outline (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Such proactive measures in the IRB application included apparent risks to potential participants, researcher, and participant power relationship mechanisms, personal privacy, data collection, and other unexpected related ethical concerns (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022).

The confidentiality treatment of the informative data was outlined from timelines of data destruction, access, control data dissemination, encrypted digital storage, physical storage with a three-lock system that safeguards the confidentiality of individuals, and qualitative data related to confidential or anonymous labeling by the IRB application. The IRB application addressed ethical issues like conflict of interest representing the working environment, power differentials, and appropriate incentives like \$10 gift cards. I protected the rights and well-being of all active participants and managed all issues ethically, justifying the investigative process (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). These steps ensured responsible manner and ethical conduct throughout the qualitative research in properly obtaining IRB essential approval in the qualitative research process, protecting individuals within the research through ethical standards upholding an authentic commitment to demonstrate an elaborate ethical procedure and code of conduct guided by the IRB application. Provided documentation of institutional permissions, including IRB approvals to individual. Include a letter from the institution granting permission to conduct the research and any relevant IRB approval numbers (Hays & Singh, 2022). These documents demonstrated that the research had undergone ethical review and approval.

Ethical concerns in recruitment consisted of recruitment materials that described the recruitment materials and processes that were used to attract participants to the study (Hays & Singh, 2022). Ensured that these materials accurately represented the purpose and procedures of the research and avoided any deceptive or coercive language. I addressed ethical concerns related to recruitment, such as ensuring informed consent,

respecting participant autonomy, and protecting vulnerable populations. Furthermore, included obtaining informed consent from participants, providing clear information about the study, and offering opportunities for participants to ask questions or withdraw from the study at any time. Ethical concerns in data collection/intervention included participant refusal or withdrawal (Hays & Singh, 2022).

I anticipated potential issues such as participants refusing to participate or withdrawing from the study prematurely. I addressed these concerns, including strategies for ensuring voluntary participation and minimizing coercion. I responded to adverse events considering the possibility of adverse events occurring during the study, such as emotional distress or harm to participants. Procedures for responding to these events included providing appropriate support and resources to affected participants as treatment of data includes whether the data collected was anonymous or confidential (Hays & Singh, 2022). Anonymous data cannot be linked to individual participants, and I ensured confidential data is kept private and only accessible to authorized individuals. Data protection is described as procedures for protecting confidential data, including data storage, dissemination, access controls, and data destruction (Hays & Singh, 2022). I ensured that data was stored securely and only accessible to authorized personnel.

Other ethical issues like conflict of interest of research being conducted within one's work environment, disclose any potential conflicts of interest, and I explained how these were managed to ensure the integrity and impartiality of the research. I addressed any power differentials between me and participants, particularly due to me holding a position of authority or influence over the participants. I minimized the potential for

coercion or undue influence (Hays & Singh, 2022). Incentives were used ethically and did not unduly influence participants' decision to participate in the study. I addressed these ethical considerations in the IRB application, where I demonstrated commitment to conducting research responsibly and ethically, and ensured the protection and well-being of human participants.

Summary

This research examined U.S. nonprofit managers' experiences after COVID-19, concentrating on how they understand crisis management. By applying a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological technique to comprehend these managers' interpretations and the difficulties they encountered in crisis management, the research seeks to improve knowledge of social justice and the needs of these managers. This study uses hermeneutic phenomenology to comprehend the lived experiences of post-COVID-19 administrators. The hermeneutic phenomenology method unearths distinct viewpoints by concentrating on subjective experiences (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). To uncover the core of nonprofit managers' experiences, contextually embedded realities were examined using hermeneutic phenomenology. This conventional method offered deep insights into the experiences of nonprofit administrators and aided in comprehending the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 crises. Informed consent was maintained, ethical standards were followed, and power dynamics problems were resolved during the study. Participants in qualitative research need to be aware of their rights and the significance of informed consent. Moreover, it is important to preserve confidentiality and trust, even in an established connection (Hays & Singh, 2022). In order to prevent prejudices stemming

from prior contacts, expectations, or undermining the credibility of the findings, researchers uphold impartiality and objectivity (Hovey et al., 2022). Using a deliberate sample technique, I used the qualitative study to include nonprofit administrators according to their special expertise, viewpoints, and experiences.

This approach offered a comprehensive grasp of the study issue, facilitating a more profound comprehension of the distinct phenomena. Participants were qualified professionals working in managerial capacities for nonprofit organizations, emphasizing program creation, community engagement, personal accountability, and strategic operations financing. Credibility was established by triangulation with different viewpoints, convergent evidence, and extended participation in the qualitative study (Hays & Singh, 2022). I used member checking to reflect different points of view correctly and offered comments on findings that have been reached. Through knowledgeable discussion of the results, peer debriefing enhanced trustworthiness by pointing out potential biases and misinterpretations (Hays & Singh, 2022). Consent documents, participant rights, and confidentiality safeguards were all part of this doctorate study application procedure. Process' informed consent reduced risk by guaranteeing voluntary involvement, upholding confidentiality, and resolving ethical issues, including power relations, individual privacy, and unforeseen critical incidents (Kuenzi et al., 2023). The findings of this study are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This research was developed to investigate nonprofit managers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on how they navigated the challenges and adapted their leadership strategies. I sought to understand the emotional, psychological, and operational impacts on nonprofit managers and the long-term effects on nonprofit management. By examining nonprofit managers' roles, adaptations, and responses, I aimed to shed light on how nonprofit organizations adjusted to the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications for future nonprofit operations in a post-pandemic world. The central research question guiding this research was: What are the lived experiences of nonprofit managers in managing crises during the post-COVID-19 pandemic era?

This chapter is structured first to present the interpretation of the findings, offering insights into the data gathered. The interpretation of findings is followed by an analysis of the findings within the context of the theoretical framework, providing a deeper understanding through established concepts. This chapter also addresses study limitations, acknowledging the scope and constraints of the research, and moves on to propose recommendations based on the research findings. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's broader implications, especially regarding nonprofit management in a post-pandemic landscape.

Research Setting

Various personal and organizational conditions significantly influenced nonprofit managers during phone interviews, shaping their perspectives and responses in ways crucial for interpreting study results. On a personal level, many managers grappled with increased stress, anxiety, and burnout stemming from the pandemic's challenges. This emotional state often led to more cautious or even pessimistic views about their organizations' futures. For instance, those who experienced significant personal hardships were more inclined to express concerns about sustainability or community impact, reflecting their anxieties. Additionally, some managers' adaptability and resilience while navigating past crises influenced their confidence in addressing current challenges. Managers with prior crisis management experience often articulated a more optimistic perspective, potentially skewing the interpretation of the study results towards a more favorable view of organizational capabilities. Personal values and priorities also played a critical role in shaping responses. Many individuals reassessed their life goals during the pandemic, leading to a heightened focus on mental health, community engagement, and social justice. Such shifts affect how managers discuss their organizations' missions and strategic directions, framing their responses around a newfound commitment to these values. Work-life balance emerged as another significant factor, with the pandemic blurring the lines between personal and professional life. This altered managers' perceptions of job satisfaction and organizational culture. Those struggling to maintain boundaries expressed frustrations that influenced their views of organizational

effectiveness and employee well-being. On the organizational side, resource availability was a prominent concern.

Many nonprofits faced financial strain during COVID-19, which impacted their operational capabilities. Managers who felt constrained by limited resources interpreted through a lens of caution and concern for future sustainability, emphasizing the need for innovative fundraising or cost-cutting measures. Staffing changes, including layoffs, furloughs, or shifts to remote work, further affected team dynamics and morale. Managers reflected on these changes when discussing organizational effectiveness, highlighting challenges in collaboration or communication that arose from remote work settings. The pandemic also prompted a reevaluation of missions among many organizations. Managers engaged in this process expressed a sense of urgency or clarity about their purpose, influencing their views on current challenges and future opportunities. This reevaluation results in more nuanced interpretations of how their organizations could pivot to meet evolving community needs.

Furthermore, shifts in stakeholder engagement particularly changes in relationships with donors, volunteers, and beneficiaries, were pivotal. Managers who experienced strained relationships during the pandemic articulated concerns about the long-term viability of these connections, shaping their interpretations of organizational success and impact. Lastly, the rapid adoption of technology for communication and service delivery during the pandemic influenced how managers perceived innovation and adaptability. Those who embraced digital tools shared more optimistic views about their organizations' capacity to evolve, while others who struggled with this transition

expressed skepticism or frustration. In summary, the interplay of these personal and organizational conditions profoundly shaped the insights and interpretations of nonprofit managers during the study. Recognizing these influences is essential for contextualizing the findings and understanding potential biases in their responses, ultimately leading to a more comprehensive interpretation of the results.

Demographics

I examined the experiences of nonprofit managers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants were a diverse group of nonprofit managers who have significantly influenced their organizations from 2019 to 2023. Their roles as members of crisis management teams demonstrated a commitment to navigating the complex challenges brought on by the pandemic. This involvement required swift decision-making, resource allocation, and strong leadership as they guided their teams through uncertainty and rapidly evolving circumstances. The participants' extensive experience, ranging between 3.5 to 40 years in nonprofit management alongside similar tenure in the for-profit sector, suggests a depth of knowledge in various operational frameworks. This dual experience allowed them to draw parallels between sectors, applying successful strategies from the for-profit world, such as efficiency and customer focus, to enhance nonprofit service delivery. Their understanding of both worlds equipped them to innovate and adapt to changing landscapes, ensuring their organizations remained relevant and effective. The variety of services their nonprofits provide is impressive, reflecting the sector's adaptability and responsiveness to community needs. Participants associated with health initiatives to improve physical and mental well-being expressed the vitality of

these services, especially during global health crises. Participants involved in arts programs expressed that their programs foster creativity and provide a sense of normalcy and engagement during isolating times. Participants engaged in services targeted at children and adults showcased a commitment to supporting vulnerable populations and addressing educational, emotional, and social needs.

Participants engaged in church-related activities stated that churches offered spiritual support and community connection, reinforcing the social fabric that many individuals relied on. Furthermore, some participants stated that including grant writing as a service highlights the critical need for financial sustainability in the nonprofit sector. Participants shared that many organizations faced significant funding challenges during the pandemic, making it essential to pursue diverse funding sources. Participants working in farm services, particularly in food security contexts, illustrated how nonprofits engage with local communities to address pressing issues such as hunger and poverty. This broad spectrum of services emphasized nonprofits' versatility and critical societal role. Many participants stated that they transitioned to or included virtual services during the 2019-2023 period. The transition to virtual services during the pandemic was not merely a logistical shift but a profound transformation in how these organizations engaged with their communities. Participants reported leveraging technology to deliver programs and maintain client relationships, often utilizing online platforms for workshops, support groups, and consultations. This shift ensured the continuity of services and allowed organizations to reach clients who might have previously encountered barriers to access. The ability to connect with individuals remotely has expanded outreach efforts and

fostered greater inclusivity, enabling nonprofits to serve diverse populations more effectively post-pandemic. While many participants have held their current positions for less than 6 years, this relative newness can be advantageous.

Emerging leaders often bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a strong desire to implement change (Gee & Nahm, 2023; Kuenzi et al., 2023). Participant managers are typically more attuned to contemporary societal issues, such as social justice, equity, and environmental sustainability, which inform their organizations' missions and strategies. Their experiences during the pandemic may reinforce the importance of ethical leadership and social responsibility, motivating them to cultivate a culture of transparency and community engagement within their organizations.

Participants reported annual salaries exceeding \$100,000, indicating that they occupy senior leadership roles. This compensation level can influence their decision-making authority, allowing them to advocate for resources and implement initiatives that align with their organizations' missions. However, it raises pertinent questions about equity in nonprofit compensation structures, particularly frontline workers and program staff who may earn significantly less despite their critical roles. Demographically, the participants represent a wide age range from 29 to 80 years, allowing for a blend of generational perspectives that may enhance organizational dynamics. This age diversity leads to a richer exchange of ideas, as seasoned professionals offer wisdom and historical context while younger managers introduce fresh concepts and approaches. Gender diversity, with both male and female managers represented, fosters a more balanced leadership dynamic, promoting inclusivity and a variety of viewpoints in decision-making processes.

The racial and ethnic diversity of participants encompassed individuals who identify as Caucasian, African American, Filipino, Syrian, Indian, Jewish, and Mexican, further enriching the discourse around nonprofit leadership. This representation is crucial in ensuring organizations understand and address the communities' needs. Culturally competent leadership leads to more effective programs and initiatives, as leaders who reflect the demographics of their communities are often better equipped to engage with and understand the unique challenges those populations face (Fuller et al., 2023). The educational backgrounds of the participants, ranging from associate to doctoral degrees, underscore the importance of ongoing professional development in the nonprofit sector. Advanced education often correlates with enhanced skills in critical thinking, strategic planning, and program evaluation, all vital for effective leadership, particularly during times of crisis (Hays & Singh, 2022). Continuous learning and training opportunities empower these managers to stay abreast of best practices, emerging trends, and innovative solutions. Overall, these nonprofit managers' comprehensive demographic profiles and experiences provide invaluable insights into the complexities of leading organizations during a global pandemic. Their collective experiences shed light on effective strategies for resilience, adaptability, and community engagement, offering lessons that inform the future of nonprofit management. Understanding these dynamics may be essential for developing sustainable and impactful nonprofit organizations as the sector evolves.

Data Collection

The data collection process involved a comprehensive approach with 20 participants, reaching a saturation point of 17 interviewees. This saturation point indicated that additional interviews were unlikely to yield new insights, ensuring the data collected was robust and representative of the participants' experiences. Interviews were conducted via phone calls, providing flexibility and convenience for the participants, who were managers at various organizations. I undertook an active outreach strategy, connecting daily with potential interviewees. However, outcomes varied, and this proactive approach by me aimed to secure at least two interviews weekly. Some days resulted in successful interviews in immediacy, while others led to scheduling conflicts or the need to arrange future interviews. The overall duration of the data collection process spanned approximately 10 weeks, allowing for a thorough exploration of participants' insights and experiences. Throughout this period, audio recordings of the interviews were made with the explicit permission of the participants. This method ensured an accurate capture of their narratives.

Additionally, I took detailed notes during the interviews to complement the audio data, allowing for a richer analysis and understanding of the participants' perspectives. This dual approach of recording and note-taking enhanced the overall quality and depth of the collected data, contributing to a more nuanced interpretation of the findings. Several unusual circumstances emerged during the data collection process that required careful navigation. One notable aspect was the saturation point, which was reached with 17 participants rather than the initially planned 20. This unexpected early saturation

suggested that the quality and depth of the data collected exceeded expectations. The insights from these interviews were rich and varied, indicating that fewer well-chosen participants could provide a robust understanding of the research topic. Conducting interviews remotely via phone calls was intended to facilitate convenience and flexibility for participants. However, this format introduced some challenges. Technical issues, such as poor connections or difficulties with audio clarity, sometimes disrupt the flow of conversations, leading to pauses or the need to clarify points repeatedly. In some instances, these interruptions required me to reschedule interviews, adding to the complexity of the data collection timeline.

The need to remain adaptable became crucial, as I had to balance the flow of discussion with technical troubleshooting. The outreach strategy employed to secure interviews revealed variability in response rates. On some days, interviews were successfully arranged. On other days, unexpected scheduling conflicts or last-minute cancellations occurred. This unpredictability meant that I often had to adjust daily plans and remain persistent in efforts to connect with potential interviewees. The goal of maintaining at least two interviews per week proved challenging, requiring both patience and strategic planning.

Diversity among participants also played a significant role in the data collection process. All participants were nonprofit managers from various organizations, each bringing distinct experiences and perspectives. While this diversity enriched the data, it also led to some unexpected insights that did not align neatly with the initial research objectives. For example, certain participants highlighted organizational challenges or

cultural aspects that were not initially anticipated, necessitating additional interpretative work to understand these nuances fully and how they related to the research questions.

Ethical considerations surrounding the recording of interviews also surfaced during the process. Although participants provided explicit permission for audio recordings, some initially hesitated about privacy and confidentiality. To address these concerns, I conducted comprehensive discussions about the measures to protect participant anonymity and ensure data security. This dialogue was essential in building trust and encouraging open, candid responses from participants. Balancing notetaking with audio recording presented another challenge.

While I aimed to capture detailed information through both methods, the dual approach sometimes led to the oversight of important verbal cues or nuances. For instance, while focused on jotting down key points, I occasionally added follow-up questions that further enriched the conversation. I required a conscious effort to manage both tasks effectively, ensuring the richness of participants' narratives was preserved. Finally, many participants faced difficulties in allocating sufficient interview time due to their managerial responsibilities. This time constraint occasionally limited the depth of discussions on specific topics. I had to be sensitive to these limitations, adapting questions and discussions to fit within the available time while still aiming to elicit meaningful insights. Overall, these circumstances necessitated a flexible and responsive approach to the data collection process. I had to navigate technical challenges, diverse participant perspectives, ethical considerations, and time constraints, all while ensuring the integrity and richness of the information gathered. This adaptability enriched the data

collection experience and ultimately enhanced the credibility and depth of the research findings.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis of nonprofit managers' experiences during and after the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds a complex narrative highlighting their adaptability, resilience, and deep commitment to community service. Moving inductively from specific coded units to larger categories and themes involved an exploration of individual responses, which were initially distilled into key codes. These codes reflected critical aspects of their experiences, such as "communication," "operational challenges," "emotional impact," and "community engagement." Initially, I identified codes such as "adaptation to remote work," "community engagement," and "staff well-being," which emerged from respondents' descriptions of their experiences. For instance, P1's reflections on operational shifts highlighted how his organization utilized virtual tools, while P16 emphasized the significance of maintaining community connections despite physical distancing. These individual codes were grouped into larger categories: operational changes and adaptability and community engagement and support. Through careful examination, these codes were grouped into broader categories that captured the essence of their narratives. For example, the code "communication" frequently appeared across different responses, leading to the category of "adaptation strategies." This category emphasized how managers leveraged various communication methods to navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic. One manager noted, "We had to pivot our entire service delivery model to ensure we were meeting community needs while keeping

everyone safe." This statement underscores the importance of flexibility in operational strategies, illustrating how organizations were compelled to rethink their approaches to service delivery in response to rapidly changing circumstances.

As I further examined the data, several overarching themes began to crystallize. One prominent theme was adaptation to remote work, encapsulating how organizations adjusted their operational models to maintain engagement and service delivery. Participants described this transition in terms of innovative strategies, such as utilizing Zoom for meetings and virtual workshops. For example, P16 noted, "The shift to virtual education allowed us to reach clients we hadn't engaged before." This adaptability was crucial in maintaining connections and ensuring continued support for vulnerable populations. Another significant theme was community and health concerns. Respondents consistently emphasized their dedication to serving vulnerable groups, often modifying communication strategies to ensure accessibility. P13 articulated this sentiment well, stating, "We had to be more sensitive to the needs of our clients, especially those who were immunocompromised." The emphasis on safety protocols, such as mask-wearing and temperature checks, further underscored the commitment to health standards during in-person interactions. Another recurring theme that emerged was the emotional burden borne by managers. Many expressed the weight of ensuring their staff and communities' physical safety and mental well-being. One manager poignantly shared, "The weight of ensuring our team's safety while managing their mental health was overwhelming." This quote encapsulates the profound interplay between operational responsibilities and leaders' emotional challenges, highlighting the human aspect of nonprofit management

during a crisis. The emotional toll and the necessity of supportive leadership became apparent, revealing that the organization's health is inextricably linked to the well-being of its people.

Operational challenges and resilience emerged as a theme reflecting the difficulties faced in managing staff and resources effectively. Many respondents discussed the emotional toll on both staff and clients. P7 noted, "It's been a struggle to keep morale up while ensuring everyone's safety." This statement highlights the complexities of staff management in a virtual context, where emotional and psychological well-being become increasingly important. The theme of innovative strategies and solutions reflected the creativity exhibited by organizations in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. Participants shared examples of hybrid service delivery models that combined in-person and virtual interactions, showcasing a shift towards more flexible approaches to meet client needs. P9 commented, "Our new hybrid model has opened up opportunities we didn't have before, allowing us to serve a wider audience." In addition to identifying key themes, the analysis also considered discrepant cases, which provided valuable insights into the diversity of experiences within the nonprofit sector. For instance, while many managers reported struggles with transitioning to remote work, one respondent highlighted a notably smooth shift due to prior investments in technology, stating, "Our prior investments in technology made the shift to virtual services almost effortless." This exception illustrates that readiness and resources varied significantly among organizations, reminding me that context plays a crucial role in shaping experiences. By incorporating these discrepant cases, the analysis could paint

a more nuanced picture of the landscape, acknowledging that while many faced significant challenges, others were better prepared and able to adapt with relative ease.

Additionally, the emotional and psychological impact theme pointed to the heightened awareness of mental health issues stemming from isolation and uncertainty. Respondents expressed a shared concern for the well-being of their teams and clients, with P12 stating, "We have had to prioritize mental health resources like never before." This acknowledgment of emotional needs played a significant role in shaping organizational responses. Discrepant cases were also considered in this analysis. For instance, while most respondents expressed a sense of resilience, a few voiced concerns about burnout and the sustainability of new operational models. These differing perspectives highlighted the complexity of the nonprofit landscape, prompting a more nuanced understanding of the challenges at play. Participants like P11 reflected on the need for ongoing support systems, stating, "We can't ignore the reality that many are struggling to keep up." This insight ensured that themes encompassed a range of experiences, not just the dominant narratives of adaptability and innovation.

The thematic analysis revealed a rich and multifaceted understanding of the nonprofit sector's challenges during the pandemic. The themes of resilience, innovation, and a profound dedication to community engagement reflected the collective effort of nonprofit managers to not only respond to immediate crises but learn and grow from them. This analysis illustrated that while the pandemic presented formidable hurdles, the responses of nonprofit managers highlighted their unwavering commitment to serving their communities effectively. Their reflections on adaptation strategies, emotional

impacts, and the importance of communication reveal a sector marked by challenges and remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. Ultimately, this narrative underscored the potential for growth and transformation within the nonprofit landscape as leaders strived to navigate a changed operational environment while remaining steadfast in their mission-driven work. The interplay of codes, categories, and overarching themes allowed me to capture the complexity of the respondents' experiences, offering a rich narrative of resilience and innovation in the face of adversity.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In this qualitative research, the strategies outlined for enhancing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were carefully implemented and adjusted, particularly due to the shift in interview format from in-person to phone interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted via cold calls, which required thoughtful modifications to ensure that the integrity of the research process was maintained. I relied on triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement, and peer debriefing as key strategies to ensure credibility. Given that the interviews were over the phone, I made several adjustments. For triangulation, while the phone format limited face-to-face interactions, I incorporated multiple data sources, including recorded interviews, field notes, and follow-up questions. These steps allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences.

Prolonged engagement, typically achieved through in-person interactions, was maintained by scheduling multiple interviews or follow-up calls with participants (Crowther & Thomson, 2020). These efforts helped build rapport and allowed me to gain

deeper insights into the participants' views, even without in-person presence. Member checking was another critical strategy, adjusted using follow-up phone calls to verify and clarify the data after each interview (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Building rapport allowed me to ensure that the interpretations of the findings were accurate. Peer debriefing was also adapted by holding virtual discussions with colleagues, who reviewed the interview transcripts, audio recordings, and researcher's interpretations. These sessions were vital for identifying potential biases or misinterpretations, especially considering the limitations of phone interviews.

For transferability, I ensured that a rich description of the research context and findings was provided, allowing readers to assess the relevance of the findings to other settings (Hays & Singh, 2022). Using cold calls to reach participants posed challenges for the sampling strategy to target specific subgroups and multiple layers of contact within the organization, identifying an appropriate manager participant. However, I made sure to select a diverse range of individuals that reflected the key characteristics of the target population. Important to ensure that the findings are generalized to similar contexts. The research context was carefully described, including how the phone interviews influenced the interaction dynamics. I remained aware that phone interviews might limit some aspects of communication, such as the ability to read body language, but made efforts to create an open and engaging environment over the phone. To enhance the transferability of the study's findings, I compared the phone interview data with field notes, identifying similarities and differences across contexts.

Dependability was another focus. I took measures to ensure consistency throughout the study (Aldaihani & Data, 2022; Saldana, 2021). The data collection process was standardized as much as possible, even though the interviews were conducted by phone. A structured interview protocol was followed, and I kept careful records of all interviews, including audio recordings and detailed field notes. Ensuring that the data collection process remained consistent across different participants, even though interviews were conducted at different times and under potentially different circumstances. Audit trails were maintained to document all decisions made during the research process, from participant selection to data analysis. This transparent documentation allowed for the process to be reviewed and verified by me. Member checking and peer debriefing were again critical for ensuring dependability. After each phone interview, I contacted participants to clarify any uncertainties and ensure their views were accurately reflected. Peer debriefing, conducted through virtual meetings, allowed for additional feedback on my interpretations of the data, helping to identify any inconsistencies or potential biases.

For confirmability, I took steps to minimize the impact of personal biases on the interpretation of the data (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Reflexivity was central to this process, as I regularly examined assumptions and biases, particularly concerning the limitations of conducting phone interviews. I was conscious of how the medium of communication might affect the responses given, and this self-awareness helped reduce the potential for misinterpretation. Triangulation again played a role in enhancing confirmability (Hays & Singh, 2022). I compared the phone interview data

with the field notes to ensure that the specific dynamics of the interview format did not overly influence the findings. Audit trails were also essential for confirming the transparency of the research process. By keeping detailed records of all decisions made throughout the study, I provided a clear account of how the data were analyzed and interpreted. Peer debriefing was used to ensure that the findings were grounded in the data, with colleagues providing feedback on researcher's interpretations and offering critical insights into the process.

Study Results

All participants confirmed they were currently serving in nonprofit management roles. This commonality provided a foundational context for their experiences during the pandemic. Every participant was active in their roles throughout the pandemic, highlighting a shared landscape of operational upheaval. This continuity in management roles allowed for a rich collection of experiences reflective of the broader nonprofit sector. Most respondents indicated involvement in crisis management teams. One manager noted, "Being part of the crisis management team meant we had to make decisions on the fly while ensuring our staff and clients were safe." This involvement underscored the necessity of agile leadership during crises. All participants were willing to share their experiences, demonstrating a desire to reflect on and learn from the challenges. One participant articulated this sentiment: "It's important for us to share what we've learned, both to help others and to improve our own practices." Participants had varying lengths of experience, ranging from 3.5 to 40 years. This diversity contributed to a range of insights into operational management under stress. Experience in the for-profit

sector varied among respondents, with some having none and others possessing up to 10 years.

This diverse background provided differing perspectives on crisis management strategies. Respondents described various services, including education, health support, and community outreach. These services shaped nonprofit managers' operational responses during the pandemic. As highlighted by one manager, "Our focus on education meant we quickly shifted to virtual learning, which was a huge challenge but also an opportunity." Most organizations transitioned to virtual service delivery during the pandemic. For instance, P16 noted, "The shift to virtual education allowed us to reach clients we hadn't engaged before," reflecting innovative adaptation strategies. Tenure in current roles ranged from less than a year to over a decade, indicating a mix of seasoned and newer managers navigating the crisis. Participants provided a range of annual salaries, reflecting the organizational size and funding diversity. These data are critical for understanding the financial context of nonprofit management during the pandemic. Participants' ages varied, most within the 29-80 age range. This demographic detail is relevant for understanding generational perspectives on crisis management. The gender composition of participants was predominantly female, reflecting the representation of women in nonprofit leadership roles. Responses indicated diverse ethnic backgrounds, enriching the discussion on how cultural contexts influence management practices during crises. Like ethnicity, the racial diversity among participants provides valuable insights into varied leadership experiences. Most participants held advanced degrees, suggesting a

high level of education among nonprofit leaders, which may correlate with their ability to navigate complex challenges.

Adaptation to Remote Work

The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed transformational change within the nonprofit sector, forcing managers to adapt to new realities rapidly. Before the pandemic, many organizations had established traditional in-person service delivery models emphasizing face-to-face interactions. However, as the crisis unfolded, nonprofit managers were confronted with the urgent need to shift these models to virtual formats almost overnight. This necessity led to reevaluating existing practices as managers navigated the challenges of remote work. One manager encapsulated this drastic change, stating, "We were forced to rethink everything we did, from service delivery to how we engaged with our clients." The transition involved adopting new technologies and fostering a culture of flexibility and innovation within their teams. Managers found themselves implementing tools for virtual communication, developing online resources, and reimagining program delivery to ensure continuity of services. As organizations began to stabilize, the focus shifted towards long-term sustainability. A participant noted, "Now, we're focusing on sustainability and how to better support our teams moving forward," indicating a recognition that the adaptations made during the pandemic would likely shape the future of nonprofit operations. This strategic foresight highlights an emerging trend toward hybrid work models that blend in-person and remote engagement, reflecting a permanent shift in how nonprofit organizations might function in future years (Table 1).

Table 1*Data Analysis Sample*

Raw data	Raw code	Category	Code	Themes
We were forced to rethink everything we did, from service delivery to how we engaged with our clients	Shift to digital platforms, increased use of video conferencing, flexible schedules, remote team collaboration, technology challenges, work-life balance, reduced face-to-face interaction, adjusting to home office setups.	Organizational Change & Work Environment	OC/WE	Adaptation to Remote Work
We had to be more sensitive to the needs of our clients, especially those who were immunocompromised	Social distancing measures, public health protocols, mental health awareness, anxiety about health risks, health education, community outreach programs, stress about vulnerable populations, impact of lockdowns on families.	Public Health & Social Impact	PH/SI	Community and Health Concerns
The weight of ensuring our team's safety while managing their mental health was overwhelming	Increased anxiety, emotional exhaustion, feelings of isolation, burnout, overwhelming caregiving duties, guilt or helplessness, overload from balancing work and home life, grief and loss.	Emotional Well-Being & Stress	EWB/S	Emotional Burden
It's been a struggle to keep morale up while ensuring everyone's safety.	Resource shortages, supply chain disruptions, remote training and onboarding, uncertainty in business continuity, need for process adaptation, employee health and safety protocols, risk management adjustments, crisis leadership decisions.	Organizational Response & Problem-Solving	OR/PS	Operational Challenges and Resilience
Our new hybrid model has opened opportunities we didn't have before, allowing us to serve a wider audience	Adoption of new technologies, agile workflow implementation, creative problem-solving, digital transformation initiatives, new business models or services, collaboration tools for remote work, expansion of e-commerce, flexible service delivery methods.	Innovation & Problem-Solving	I/PS	Innovative Strategies and Solutions

Our prior investments in technology made the shift to virtual services almost effortless	Varying access to resources, different levels of job security, variations in home-office environments, unequal remote work experiences, disparities in health outcomes, differing coping strategies, gendered differences in caregiving, varied personal responses to lockdowns.	Diversity of Experience & Inequality	DE/I	Discrepant Experiences
We have had to prioritize mental health resources like never before	Increased stress, feelings of uncertainty, impact on relationships, psychological toll of isolation, coping mechanisms, trauma.	Mental Health & Well-Being	MH/WB	Emotional and Psychological Impact

Community and Health Concerns

Nonprofit managers have long been committed to serving their communities, but the pandemic intensified this commitment. The urgent need to respond to the health crisis forced organizations to reassess their service delivery approaches, particularly concerning vulnerable populations. Managers expressed heightened awareness of the unique challenges faced by their clients during the pandemic. One manager articulated this necessity: "We had to be more sensitive to the needs of our clients, especially those who were immunocompromised." This statement underscores the ethical responsibility that nonprofit leaders felt to prioritize client safety while ensuring access to essential services. The focus on community well-being extended beyond immediate health concerns and broader social and economic impacts. Many organizations had to address issues such as food insecurity, housing instability, and mental health crises exacerbated by the pandemic. Managers reported collaborating with other community organizations to form coalitions, leveraging resources to provide comprehensive support to those in need. This collaborative spirit highlighted the importance of community connections, with managers

noting, "The relationships we built during this time are invaluable, and they've reshaped how we engage with our community." This renewed emphasis on collaboration may lead to more integrated service models, strengthening the nonprofit sector's capacity to respond to crises (Table 1).

Emotional Burden

The emotional burden of leadership during the pandemic emerged as a poignant theme, reflecting the unique pressures faced by nonprofit managers. Many expressed feelings of isolation and overwhelmed as they juggled the needs of their teams, clients, and organizations. One manager's reflection, "The weight of ensuring our team's safety while managing their mental health was overwhelming," captured the multifaceted challenges of leadership in a crisis. The pandemic heightened the emotional stakes of nonprofit management, as leaders were not only tasked with operational decision-making but also with supporting the mental well-being of their staff. This dual responsibility required managers to actively listen, provide reassurance, and foster a culture of openness where team members felt safe to express their concerns. The increased focus on mental health and well-being led some organizations to implement new initiatives, such as virtual wellness programs and mental health resources. This shift reflects a growing recognition of the importance of emotional support within nonprofit settings, signaling a potential transformation in organizational culture that prioritizes mental health in the long term (Table 1).

Operational Challenges and Resilience

The operational challenges posed by the pandemic tested the resilience of nonprofit organizations in unprecedented ways. In remote work environments, managers face significant hurdles in maintaining staff engagement, morale, and productivity. The need for clear communication and consistent support became paramount, with one manager noting, "It's been a struggle to keep morale up while ensuring everyone's safety." As teams adapted to new workflows, leaders had to balance the demands of crisis management with the ongoing program delivery responsibilities. This dual focus required creative problem-solving and the ability to pivot quickly in response to changing circumstances. Managers shared numerous examples of how they fostered resilience among their teams, from regular check-ins to celebrate small wins to implementing team-building activities that bridged the gap created by physical distance. The ability to cultivate a sense of camaraderie, even in a virtual space, became a crucial strategy for maintaining team cohesion and morale (Table 1).

Innovative Strategies and Solutions

In the face of significant challenges, nonprofit managers demonstrated remarkable innovation in their approaches to service delivery. The urgency of the pandemic catalyzed creative solutions that many organizations had not previously considered. As one manager noted, "Our new hybrid model has opened up opportunities we didn't have before, allowing us to serve a wider audience." This innovation was evident across various domains, from the development of virtual programming to the expansion of online fundraising efforts. Many organizations harnessed technology to reach clients in

new ways, offering telehealth consultations, virtual workshops, and online support groups. The ability to adapt and evolve in response to immediate needs sustained operations during the crisis and revealed new avenues for engagement that could benefit organizations long after the pandemic. This focus on innovation signifies a shift in the nonprofit landscape, where flexibility and responsiveness become central tenets of effective management (Table 1).

Discrepant Experiences

While the pandemic presented universal challenges, the experiences of nonprofit managers varied widely based on their organizations' prior investments in technology and infrastructure. Some organizations embraced digital transformation and found the transition to remote work smoother than others. One respondent noted, "Our prior investments in technology made the shift to virtual services almost effortless." This statement indicates that organizational readiness played a significant role in determining how effectively nonprofits could navigate the crisis. The disparities in experiences also shed light on the broader systemic issues within the nonprofit sector, such as resource inequities and varying levels of support for technology adoption. Organizations that were better prepared maintained service delivery and set a precedent for others to follow. This variability underscores the importance of ongoing investment in capacity-building and technology to enhance resilience and adaptability in the face of future challenges (Table 1).

Emotional and Psychological Impact

The heightened awareness of mental health issues during the pandemic marked a significant shift in priorities for nonprofit managers. As they faced their emotional challenges, many recognized the importance of providing mental health support to their teams. P12 emphasized, "We have had to prioritize mental health resources like never before," reflecting a newfound commitment to addressing psychological well-being as an integral part of organizational health. In response to the emotional toll of the pandemic, many organizations implemented comprehensive mental health initiatives, such as access to counseling services, wellness days, and workshops focused on stress management. These measures addressed immediate needs and contributed to a culture of care within organizations. Managers expressed hope that this focus on mental health would continue to be a priority, fostering a more supportive and resilient workforce in the nonprofit sector. The detailed exploration provided a richer understanding of the complexities and challenges faced by nonprofit managers during the pandemic. It highlighted the immediate adaptations required and the long-term implications for the sector, suggesting a potential shift toward more resilient, innovative, and community-focused practices (Table 1).

Summary

During the COVID pandemic, nonprofit managers faced significant disruptions and challenges. Many organizations experienced a sharp halt in their core activities, particularly those that relied on in-person programs and events. For instance, training sessions, fitness classes for seniors, and performing arts performances were canceled or

moved online. Health education programs had to transition to virtual formats to comply with state mandates, and community services had to adapt quickly to remote delivery. At the same time, nonprofits struggled with financial instability as traditional revenue streams like in-person events and retail operations were no longer viable. Many organizations turned to government grants, emergency loans, and other COVID-related funding to stay afloat. Despite these efforts, maintaining financial health remained a challenge, and nonprofits had to be creative in finding new ways to generate income, such as offering virtual events, drive-through distributions, or online fundraising campaigns. Health and safety concerns were at the forefront of nonprofit management. Staff had to work remotely when possible, and organizations that provided in-person services had to adjust their operations to comply with health mandates. Included changes to service delivery, such as offering virtual programs or modifying physical spaces to accommodate social distancing. Nonprofits also faced the challenge of managing staff, particularly when many employees had to shift to new roles or take on additional responsibilities. The need for flexibility and agility became a central theme. Nonprofit managers had to navigate a constantly changing landscape, adjusting to new government restrictions, shifting community needs, and the challenges of remote work. Some managers took on new roles, quickly learned new technologies, and found creative solutions to keep their organizations running. There were also difficulties in maintaining engagement with staff, clients, and donors as face-to-face interactions became impossible. However, many managers emphasized the resilience they found through these challenges, noting that the experience of pivoting quickly and adapting to new

realities ultimately strengthened their organizations. The pandemic forced nonprofit managers to rethink how they delivered services, engaged with communities, and managed their teams. It was a crisis period of learning, adaptation, and growth.

Nonprofits had to be nimble, creative, and ready to pivot at a moment's notice, ensuring that they could continue serving their communities during one of the most challenging periods in modern history.

During the COVID pandemic, typical workdays for many individuals involved navigating an unpredictable and often chaotic environment. Most spent significant time managing virtual communication whether through emails, phone calls, or Zoom meetings—while adapting to shifting regulations and protocols. For some, like P1, the initial phase involved heavily relying on technology to distribute information and resources to their networks, eventually returning to in-person interactions as restrictions eased. This shift allowed for more personal connections and outreach efforts, particularly in California, where the need for community reconnection was high. Others, like P2, focused on ensuring vulnerable populations, particularly seniors, had access to essential services, including food deliveries and COVID-19 vaccinations. The challenge of maintaining services during the pandemic was compounded by staff shortages and the difficulty of reopening in-person activities while adhering to strict health protocols. For those in supervisory roles, such as P3, maintaining communication with teams and ensuring adherence to public health regulations was crucial. The transition to remote work meant many had to adapt by managing staff virtually, often with minimal in-person contact. As restrictions lifted, organizations gradually navigated a return to normalcy.

However, some, like P3, found that staff who had grown accustomed to remote work were reluctant to return to the office. The post-pandemic period required adjustments to accommodate new work dynamics, with some teams continuing remote operations and others reintegrating into office settings. Staff health and safety remained a priority, as evidenced by the extensive measures taken by P5 to protect workers during facility cleaning and by P8, who appreciated the quieter and more solitary aspects of remote management. In fields like nonprofit and community service, the pandemic required quick pivots, as seen with P12, who coordinated meal deliveries while managing essential community partnerships and overseeing vaccination clinics. The transition back to normalcy came with the challenge of continuing rigorous health measures like sanitization and social distancing, even as operations began to scale down. Overall, the pandemic prompted individuals and organizations to reassess their operations, with many adopting hybrid work models and finding innovative ways to stay connected with staff, clients, and communities.

The post-pandemic period saw a mixture of relief at returning to some sense of normalcy and recognition that the "new normal" involved adjusting to changes that were once temporary but had become embedded in how businesses and services functioned. During the COVID-19 pandemic, work routines were significantly reshaped, and the daily experiences varied across different sectors, but common themes of adaptation, technology use, and safety precautions emerged. For managers in educational and healthcare settings, the day typically began with Zoom meetings, coordinating remote and in-person staff, managing sick calls, and addressing ongoing COVID-related

challenges. In one case, a manager described the difficulty of balancing leadership responsibilities with the logistics of covering absent employees and teaching online classes when staff were out with COVID. Safety measures such as temperature checks, mask mandates, and PPE management were central to operations, and there was a constant effort to ensure staff and student well-being while maintaining educational services. At nonprofit organizations, the shift was similarly marked by a reliance on virtual tools, such as Zoom and teleconferencing, to maintain communication with clients and partners. Some nonprofits partnered with a local church and chose not to close their doors entirely. They implemented stringent safety protocols but continued to provide services in person, believing that their community's emotional and spiritual needs were even more pressing during the pandemic.

On the nonprofit side, staff had to get creative in reaching clients, expanding their digital presence, and adjusting their service delivery models to keep operations running. Despite some challenges, these shifts often led to lasting changes, such as using virtual platforms for workshops and galas, which ultimately increased reach and participation. For some organizations, the transition to virtual methods allowed them to expand their geographic reach, moving from local to regional operations. Others, particularly those working with vulnerable populations, maintained close communication with public health agencies to ensure their services adhered to safety guidelines. In more hands-on roles, like those in creative industries or arts organizations, the pandemic necessitated a complete rethinking of business practices. Even when some staff were laid off or temporarily stopped working, others focused on grant writing, restructuring operations,

and finding new ways to engage their communities online. For many, the return to in-person work after the height of the pandemic brought relief, though it was still tempered by concerns over health and safety and the ongoing impacts of COVID on clients and staff. The shift to hybrid models in church and nonprofit sectors became a long-term strategy, blending in-person and virtual engagements. As organizations moved toward post-pandemic operations, they found that some of the changes, like virtual meetings, were not only necessary but had expanded opportunities for engagement that would not have been possible before. This adaptability allowed organizations to stay resilient during uncertain times, and for some, it signaled a permanent shift in how they operate going forward.

The typical day for a nonprofit manager can vary greatly depending on the specific organization and the individual's role. However, common threads include administrative tasks, staff management, community engagement, and program oversight. Many managers attend meetings, answer emails and phone calls, and oversee staff activities. Sometimes includes coordinating special events or programs, such as summits or community outreach initiatives. Additionally, managers often handle various logistical tasks, such as managing resources, ensuring safety protocols, and dealing with staffing issues, including absences or illness. For some, a significant part of their day involves working on fundraising strategies, managing donor relationships, and securing grants or funding. Some nonprofit managers have embraced technological changes post-COVID, with cloud-based systems now managing data, payroll, and communications. In addition to overseeing staff and client services, many managers are involved in strategic planning

for future projects and ensuring the smooth operation of day-to-day activities. A key aspect of the role of several managers is ensuring that their organizations are responsive to community needs, which can involve direct contact with clients, site visits, and maintaining active relationships with community partners. Overall, while the day-to-day can involve routine administrative tasks, nonprofit managers must be adaptable, balancing urgent operational needs with long-term planning and community engagement.

Being a manager in the nonprofit sector offers both rewarding experiences and significant challenges. Many respondents express a deep passion for their work, particularly because of its meaningful impact on the community and individuals. There is a common theme of loving the sense of purpose and the fulfillment that comes from serving others, whether through direct advocacy, community engagement, or providing vital services like health care, education, and support to marginalized populations. The flexibility and freedom to quickly navigate changing needs in the nonprofit space is often highlighted as a key advantage over the more rigid structures in government or corporate settings. However, the role is not without its difficulties. Financial instability is a recurring concern, with many managers acknowledging the constant pressure to secure funding, often through grants, which can fluctuate. The reliance on uncertain funding sources can lead to job insecurity, making it challenging to offer staff stability. There are also concerns about high turnover rates, as employees may leave for more secure or better-compensated positions, undermining the continuity of services and client relationships. Despite these challenges, many managers strive to foster a supportive work environment by offering flexibility and understanding to staff, often compensating for the

lack of formal benefits with a focus on work-life balance and personal well-being. Some managers also mentioned the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, emphasizing the need to address microaggressions and create an environment where all staff feel valued and supported. The sense of community within nonprofit work is another major benefit, as many managers enjoy the collaborative, mission-driven culture that comes with being part of an organization dedicated to a cause greater than any individual. While managing in the nonprofit sector can be demanding and uncertain, many find it deeply fulfilling, appreciating the autonomy, the potential for innovation, and the opportunity to make a tangible difference in people's lives.

In several ways, managing in the nonprofit sector differs from managing in the for-profit sector. A primary distinction is the focus on people and purpose. Nonprofit managers often work with a mission-driven mindset, prioritizing community impact over profit margins. For example, nonprofit managers are typically more involved in building relationships with their communities, navigating complex social challenges, and working to make a tangible difference, even if progress is slow or difficult to measure. In contrast, for-profit managers are generally more focused on financial goals, like generating revenue, meeting sales targets, and ensuring shareholder returns. Nonprofit managers also face the challenge of securing funding through grants, donations, and fundraising efforts, unlike the more stable financial environment typical in for-profit sectors, where revenue is generated through products or services. This fundraising pressure can lead to greater job insecurity in nonprofits, which often directly influences a manager's position.

Additionally, nonprofit managers may lack the financial resources to offer competitive salaries. However, they may offer a more flexible and mission-driven work environment, which can attract individuals seeking purpose over financial gain. The work environment in nonprofits tends to be less rigid than in the for-profit world. Nonprofit organizations often operate more flexibly, focusing on bottom-up collaboration, where input from all levels can influence decisions. In contrast, for-profit sectors often have more hierarchical structures, with decisions flowing from the top down. Another important difference is the impact of regulatory and oversight requirements. Nonprofits frequently have to navigate complex legal and bureaucratic structures, such as boards and government funding restrictions, which can create additional layers of complexity. While for-profits also face regulations, these tend to be less focused on mission-related activities and more on market operations. Overall, nonprofit managers often experience a more varied and challenging set of responsibilities, balancing financial constraints, mission-driven work, and the constant need for fundraising. In contrast, for-profit managers typically operate with clearer financial objectives and resources.

In the nonprofit world, decision-making is often a collaborative process shaped by a combination of the organization's structure, available resources, and its stakeholders. Leaders often consult the board of directors for approval and support when making major decisions involving significant funding or programmatic changes. Additionally, external partners, such as regulatory bodies or academic institutions, may be involved to provide insights and ensure decisions align with industry trends. For instance, one nonprofit described using input from their board, field staff, and corporate headquarters to inform

decisions, balancing top-level guidance with insights from those on the ground. Day-to-day decisions, however, tend to be more localized, with staff closest to the work making most choices. Managers typically set the framework and larger strategic goals, but smaller operational decisions are often left to those directly engaged with the programs. When crises arise, nonprofits rely heavily on cross-departmental collaboration. Teams formed of staff from various functions, finance, training, and operations are quickly mobilized to assess the situation, devise a response, and get approval before implementing a solution. The process is typically fast-paced, with a readiness to pivot if needed while maintaining flexibility to learn from successes and failures for future preparedness. In times of crisis, some leaders find that they can navigate through chaos by maintaining a calm and methodical approach, often forming smaller, cross-functional teams to address specific challenges.

The decision-making approach in nonprofits can be described as both hierarchical and collaborative. Major decisions require a broad consensus involving senior leadership and board approval. In contrast, smaller decisions are often decentralized, with staff members empowered to act based on their expertise and the organization's established policies. Crisis decisions demand quick, coordinated action and the ability to rely on diverse perspectives across the organization. In the nonprofit world, decision-making processes vary depending on the scale of the decision and the nature of the crisis at hand. Boards typically make major decisions of directors, although some leaders also have the autonomy to make these decisions themselves, particularly in smaller organizations. Decision-making often falls to individual leaders for day-to-day operations, though they

may consult with their team or board for decisions involving significant resources or changes. Small decisions, which often relate to routine operations, are frequently delegated to staff or made independently by leaders as long as they align with the organization's mission and strategic objectives. In crises, the decision-making process becomes more urgent and centralized. Many leaders reported that in the face of immediate crises, they take action swiftly, sometimes independently, while consulting with their team or board when possible. Some organizations, particularly those led by founders or long-established leaders, emphasize proactive approaches to crisis management. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, several leaders made early decisions to adjust operations, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and preparedness.

In contrast, others preferred a more consultative approach, gathering input from various stakeholders, including staff and board members, before moving forward. Crisis-related decisions often involve gathering as much information as possible, responding to immediate needs, and adjusting as the situation evolves. While some leaders rely on their intuition and experience, others value collective input to ensure that decisions are well-informed and aligned with the organization's values and mission. Throughout all types of decisions, leaders in the nonprofit sector emphasize the importance of keeping the mission at the center of decision-making, whether about fundraising, programming, or navigating difficult situations.

Nonprofit managers reflected on their experiences during the COVID pandemic and shared insights into what they would change now that we are post-pandemic. Several

managers noted the reactive and sometimes disorganized approach taken during the pandemic. Some felt they could have been more proactive in planning for post-pandemic needs and sustainability. They believed that, with better foresight, they could have saved time and money and created a more robust response infrastructure. For example, one manager wished they had focused on long-term solutions instead of constantly adjusting to immediate crises, which led to unnecessary overhead costs. Communication and information dissemination were recurring themes. One manager lamented the political nature of COVID-related messaging, which made it challenging to provide clear, consistent guidance to their vulnerable clients, especially seniors. Another manager wished there had been more focused, timely information to help staff navigate the complexities of operating under pandemic conditions, particularly when managing clients with health vulnerabilities. Many managers acknowledged that the pandemic exposed existing systemic issues, like resource shortages, workplace violence, and mental health struggles, and some expressed concerns about reverting to pre-pandemic normalcy without addressing these problems. A key post-pandemic challenge was maintaining attention to issues uncovered during the pandemic, such as housing and financial challenges, and ensuring they do not get overlooked as the focus shifts away from the crisis. On a personal level, some managers recognized areas where they could have improved, such as prioritizing self-care or providing more emotional support to staff. For instance, one manager wished they had checked in more regularly with their team to address the stress they were experiencing. At the same time, another reflected on needing more help earlier rather than trying to manage everything alone. Despite the challenges,

many also highlighted how they adapted to the circumstances, such as finding new ways to connect with clients and donors through virtual platforms. Some noted that these adaptations have created new opportunities they intend to continue exploring in the post-pandemic world, especially regarding technology and remote work. Overall, while many felt they navigated the pandemic well, there was a shared sense that more could have been done regarding preparation, communication, and support both for clients and staff. There was also a recognition that the nonprofit sector, especially small organizations, faced ongoing challenges in managing resources and adapting to the evolving post-pandemic landscape.

In response to the question, what else is pertinent, the answers varied, reflecting individual perspectives and experiences. One interviewee highlighted concern about how the agricultural industry is perceived, emphasizing farmers' hard work and sacrifices and the need for better communication about their contributions. Another response focused on the importance of nonprofits during the pandemic, noting how essential services provided by nonprofits gained more respect as for-profit and government services shut down. Some shared frustrations with the lack of understanding about the behind-the-scenes work in nonprofits, where staff often juggle multiple responsibilities. Several responses addressed the lessons learned from the pandemic, with one person expressing hope that future crises will be handled better, particularly in leadership and crisis management. Another respondent discussed the benefits of remote work for people with disabilities and neurodiversity, emphasizing the need for more inclusive work environments and

addressing micromanagement issues. A few respondents expressed concern about the ongoing mental health challenges post-pandemic, particularly in student populations.

In contrast, others noted the essential role of state support, such as PPE and technology, which helped nonprofits continue their operations. The impact of the pandemic on volunteerism was also noted, with one respondent pointing out that COVID-19 hindered volunteer participation, which is crucial for many nonprofits. Lastly, there were reflections on the importance of proactive thinking and maintaining a positive attitude in future crises, stressing the need for leadership development in nonprofits. In Chapter 5, I discuss non-significant but interesting findings and implications for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

I explored nonprofit managers' experiences and responses during the COVID-19 pandemic. By examining nonprofit managers' roles, adaptations, and challenges, I captured how nonprofit organizations navigated the crisis, focusing on leadership, innovation, and community service delivery. I also sought to understand the emotional, psychological, and operational toll on nonprofit managers and the long-term implications for nonprofit management in a post-pandemic world.

Interpretation of Findings

Key Findings

I found that with a common leadership landscape, all participants were actively involved in nonprofit management during the pandemic, with most serving as part of crisis management teams. This involvement required managers to make quick decisions while prioritizing the safety of their staff and clients. Nonprofit managers were forced to rapidly transition to virtual service delivery models, which required adopting new technologies and rethinking how services were provided. In adaptation to remote work, many organizations also adopted hybrid work models, which are likely to persist in the long term. In community service, nonprofit managers showed increased commitment to addressing the urgent needs of vulnerable populations, particularly in health, food security, and housing. Many organizations have been formed to focus on community and health concerns with new collaborations with other community groups to provide comprehensive support. At the same time, the emotional and psychological burden on

nonprofit managers was evident, as they had to balance operational decision-making with supporting the mental health of their teams. To address these challenges, emotional and psychological burden organizations implemented wellness programs and mental health resources for staff. I also highlighted the innovative responses to innovative strategies by nonprofits, such as expanding virtual programming, online fundraising efforts, and digital service delivery platforms. However, the discrepant experiences of nonprofit managers varied significantly depending on their organization's prior investments in technology and infrastructure. Organizations that had already embraced digital transformation found the transition to remote work smoother, while others faced significant challenges adapting to the new environment.

Interpretation

The findings confirm several key themes identified in the peer-reviewed literature on nonprofit management during the pandemic. For instance, the emphasis on crisis management and agility aligns with the research by Santos and Laureano (2022), which pointed to the critical role nonprofit managers play in addressing urgent community needs such as food and shelter. The swift transition to virtual service delivery also mirrors the findings of Kumar et al. (2022), who highlighted the importance of technology adoption for maintaining operations during a crisis. Similarly, the focus on mental health and emotional resilience among nonprofit managers echoes Kuenzi et al. (2023), who explored the personal and professional impacts of the pandemic on nonprofit employees and leaders. The findings further extend the literature on leadership during crises by emphasizing the emotional burden that nonprofit managers carried consistently with Min-

Hyu (2022), who explored the psychological impacts of COVID-19 on nonprofit managers, particularly regarding layoffs and workforce management. The increased attention to mental health resources in nonprofit organizations is a direct response to these emotional challenges, with many managers recognizing the need for comprehensive mental health support for their teams.

My findings also contribute to the understanding of the digital transformation of nonprofits, reinforcing the work of Fuller et al. (2023) and Kim et al. (2020), which demonstrated that organizations with better technological infrastructure were better equipped to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic. I underscore the importance of investing in technology and capacity-building to enhance resilience and adaptability, as highlighted by the varying experiences of nonprofit organizations in the study. Finally, the adoption of hybrid work models and the increased use of virtual platforms for service delivery reflect broader trends in organizational transformation during the pandemic. Choudhury et al. (2023) found that remote work could enhance productivity, a finding supported by researcher's observation that nonprofits that embraced hybrid models could engage with a wider audience, suggesting that the pandemic has permanently altered how these organizations function.

Analysis in the Context of the Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in organizational resilience and crisis management theoretical frameworks applied to nonprofit management during a crisis. The findings support the notion that nonprofits, like other organizations, must develop adaptive strategies to survive and thrive in crises (Gee & Nahm, 2023). The emphasis on

leadership agility and the ability to navigate complex, shifting challenges during the pandemic extends the understanding of how nonprofit managers balance operational needs with the well-being of their teams. Moreover, emotional resilience and leadership agility extend the theoretical understanding of how leaders navigate complex challenges while maintaining their team's well-being and organizational stability. Additionally, I built on the conceptual framework of digital transformation in nonprofits. By showing how technology adoption facilitated the shift to virtual service delivery, the study contributes to the growing body of literature that underscores the importance of technological readiness in crises. Digital transformation in nonprofit organizations is particularly relevant in the context of Kumar et al. (2022), who argued that nonprofits must embrace digital tools to ensure continuity in service delivery.

I also reflected on the broader themes of emotional resilience and the growing importance of mental health support within nonprofit organizations, which have been increasingly highlighted in the literature (Kuenzi et al., 2023; Min-Hyu, 2022). The findings suggest that nonprofit leaders who can provide emotional support to their teams are better positioned to navigate crises successfully, indicating a shift toward a more emergentist view of leadership in the nonprofit sector. I also highlighted how crisis conditions can spur innovative leadership practices, as managers were forced to pivot quickly to virtual platforms, reflecting the broader trends of innovation and adaptation seen in crisis management literature (Fuller et al., 2023). In conclusion, I confirmed existing literature on the challenges faced by nonprofit managers during the COVID-19 pandemic while extending knowledge on the long-term impact of these experiences. The

findings highlight the critical role of leadership agility, technology adoption, and mental health support in shaping the future of nonprofit management, offering valuable insights into how nonprofit organizations can become more resilient and innovative in the face of future crises, extending knowledge on the long-term implications for organizational practices, particularly in terms of hybrid work models, emotional health priorities, and community collaboration.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations impacted the trustworthiness and generalizability of the findings, which must be considered when revising the research proposal. One of the primary limitations was its qualitative nature, which restricted the generalizability of the findings. The data collected were drawn from a specific sample of nonprofit organizations. As such, the results cannot be easily extrapolated to the broader nonprofit sector or other sectors. The sample size was not large enough or sufficiently diverse to allow for widespread generalizations about all nonprofit organizations or the broader impacts of the pandemic on the sector. Another significant limitation stemmed from the challenges related to sample selection. The study focused on nonprofit organizations that had survived the pandemic, specifically those with managers involved in navigating it and its aftermath. A selection bias, as only organizations with managers who successfully weathered the pandemic and maintained stable leadership were included. Nonprofits that faced severe challenges or experienced closure during this period were excluded from the study, potentially skewing the results and limiting the scope of the findings. The experiences of these organizations, particularly those that struggled or failed, were not

captured, which could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the pandemic's impact on the nonprofit sector.

The process of engaging participants also presented difficulties. Many nonprofit leaders with a sensitive nature to the subject matter of the impact of the pandemic on their organizations had been hesitant to disclose the struggles or failures their organizations experienced fully. This reluctance could have led to participants offering more selective or optimistic responses than would have been the case in a more comfortable or secure interview setting.

Furthermore, most interviews were conducted over the phone, introducing rapport-building and non-verbal communication limitations. While phone interviews allowed for flexibility and convenience, they may have affected the depth of the conversation. In face-to-face interviews, I might have been better able to read body language, establish a deeper connection with participants, and clarify responses in real time. The absence of these cues in phone interviews made it more difficult to fully gauge participants' emotions or the nuance of their responses. An additional limitation involved the potential for researcher bias. Because the study relied on self-disclosure during interviews, there was a risk that participants' responses could be influenced by social desirability or by what they perceived I wanted to hear. Although I made efforts to maintain neutrality and reduce bias through careful question design, the interpretative nature of qualitative research meant that personal assumptions or preconceptions could still have influenced how the data was analyzed and interpreted.

Lastly, the study's focus on nonprofits that survived the pandemic limited its ability to capture the full range of organizational experiences. Nonprofits that were less resilient or struggled to recover from the pandemic were not included in the study, providing a different, possibly more critical perspective on the sector's challenges during this period. This omission may have resulted in a partial view of the broader impact of the pandemic on nonprofit organizations. These limitations must be considered when revising the study's findings and conclusions, particularly about the transferability of the research outcomes to other contexts or populations.

Recommendations

Future research should include organizations that struggled or closed during the pandemic to offer a more comprehensive view of the nonprofit sector. To capture a broader range of experiences and provide critical insights into the full impact of the pandemic, including challenges faced by organizations that were unable to recover. By exploring the experiences of nonprofits that faced leadership turnover, financial collapse, or other significant hurdles, future studies could present a more nuanced understanding of the sector's vulnerabilities during times of crisis. Furthermore, exploring leadership development during the pandemic would also be an important area of inquiry. Understanding how nonprofit leaders adapted and developed new skills to navigate the crisis could inform leadership training programs and help build stronger, more adaptable leadership within the sector.

A longitudinal study could offer another valuable contribution to the literature. While the current study focuses on the short-term impact of the pandemic, a longitudinal

approach could track the recovery and evolution of nonprofit organizations over a longer period. A longitudinal approach would provide deeper insights into how nonprofit organizations adapted to the pandemic's challenges over time, both in terms of their strategies and organizational practices. Such studies could also examine how nonprofit leaders adjusted their crisis management approaches, financial planning, and employee engagement practices in the years following the pandemic, offering more long-term recommendations for the sector.

Crisis communication and governance are also key areas where further research could be valuable. Fuller et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of communication and governance structures in navigating crises. Future studies could explore how nonprofit organizations developed and executed crisis communication strategies during the pandemic and how these strategies evolved as the crisis unfolded.

Additionally, the role of nonprofit boards and leadership teams in decision-making during times of crisis could be investigated further. Research could examine how nonprofit governance structures impacted organizational responses and whether more agile or decentralized decision-making approaches were more effective in addressing the rapidly changing circumstances of the pandemic. Finally, the issue of organizational support for nonprofit managers warrants additional exploration. Min-hyu (2022) emphasized the impact of organizational support on managers' trust and their responses to crises, such as job layoffs. Future research could investigate how different forms of organizational support, financial, emotional, or professional development, affect nonprofit managers' ability to navigate crises. Research could explore how nonprofit

organizations can provide more targeted support to leaders during high-stress situations and what interventions are most effective in enhancing managerial resilience. By addressing these areas, future research can provide a more comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of how nonprofit organizations navigated the pandemic and offer valuable insights into how they can build greater resilience and adaptability for future crises. This research would complement the current study's findings and help refine strategies nonprofit managers can implement to ensure their organizations' long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

Implications

The potential for positive social change that emerges from understanding how nonprofit managers navigated the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic is significant across multiple levels, including individual, family, organizational, and societal/policy dimensions. This exploration provided insights into the immediate responses to a global crisis and long-term shifts in leadership practices, organizational resilience, and societal attitudes toward community-based support systems. At the individual level, nonprofit managers who overcame the challenges of COVID-19 likely gained deeper self-awareness and refined their leadership capacities. They had to navigate complex and high-pressure situations, making quick decisions to protect the organizational mission and the well-being of employees and stakeholders. The experience could lead to personal growth, enhanced problem-solving abilities, and a more empathetic leadership style. These individual transformations can ripple outward, influencing their broader professional networks and potentially inspiring others to adopt

more resilient and adaptive leadership behaviors. Moreover, these managers' coping mechanisms, developing emotional intelligence, and stress management skills could serve as models for others in the nonprofit sector or community.

On a family level, nonprofit managers often play a key role in ensuring the stability of their organizations, which in turn affects the livelihoods of their employees and their families. The pandemic tested the balance between professional and personal life as managers were forced to rethink work arrangements and respond to crises while managing their health and familial responsibilities. Managers who overcame these challenges likely helped maintain the financial stability of the organizations they lead, which has directly positive effects on the families of employees. Moreover, the decisions to accommodate work-from-home policies, flexible hours, and mental health support may have long-lasting benefits for family life, potentially influencing work-life balance norms in the nonprofit sector.

At the organizational level, the changes brought on by COVID-19 may have fostered a shift in how nonprofit organizations view and implement operational resilience. Nonprofit managers who adapted successfully would likely have made lasting adjustments to internal systems, including crisis management frameworks, technological infrastructures, and remote working models. These changes allowed organizations to survive during the pandemic and paved the way for greater operational agility in the future. Changes broadly impact the nonprofit sector by encouraging innovation in service delivery, fostering a culture of adaptability, and improving the sustainability of organizations, especially those dependent on grants and donations (Stötzer et al., 2022).

On the societal and policy level, the challenges faced by nonprofit managers during the COVID-19 crisis underscore the need for more robust social safety nets and greater public sector collaboration with nonprofit organizations. By overcoming these challenges, nonprofit managers provided critical services to underserved communities, highlighting the essential role of the nonprofit sector in addressing social inequities and meeting basic needs during times of crisis. Challenges influence policymaking, leading to more supportive policies for nonprofits, such as better access to government funding, tax incentives, and frameworks for disaster response (Van Steenburg et al., 2022). Additionally, the pandemic revealed gaps in social services and the fragility of community support systems, possibly sparking broader societal discussions about the need for more sustainable and equitable approaches to public welfare.

The methodological approach for understanding these dynamics is rooted in hermeneutics and phenomenology. By applying these frameworks, researchers can understand how nonprofit managers perceive and interpret their lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The inductive approach allows for generating themes directly from the data, focusing on the subjective meanings and personal interpretations of those who experienced the crisis. Hermeneutics, as articulated by Gadamer (2006), emphasizes the process of interpreting and understanding lived experience through a dialogic, co-constructed approach. It is essential to recognize that the interpretation of experiences is influenced by the background knowledge, assumptions, and preconceptions of both me and the participants, creating a dynamic space for deeper reflection on how nonprofit managers navigated the pandemic. Using phenomenology, as defined by Heidegger

(1962), allows for an exploration of the lived experiences of nonprofit managers, focusing on how they understood and made sense of their roles and responsibilities in a crisis. The essence of these experiences is shaped by the time and space in which they occurred, offering a unique perspective on human existence and organizational behavior during a global pandemic. The theoretical framework for this study draws from multicultural theory and intersectionality to better understand the diverse identities of nonprofit managers. By acknowledging the varied social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds of nonprofit leaders, this approach considers how their intersecting identities (race, gender, class, and immigrant status) influenced their experiences of the pandemic. The multicultural perspective underscores that these managers did not respond to the pandemic in a vacuum but were shaped by their cultural and social contexts. Haskell's (1941) work highlights the importance of recognizing these differences, as nonprofit managers of diverse backgrounds may have faced unique challenges and adopted distinct strategies to ensure their organizations' survival. Recommendations for practice focus on fostering resilience and adaptability within nonprofit organizations.

Nonprofit managers should continue to prioritize emotional intelligence and leadership development to navigate crises better. Implementing flexible work policies and offering support for mental health could enhance organizational stability and employee well-being. Additionally, nonprofit organizations should invest in digital infrastructure and disaster preparedness plans, enabling them to respond more effectively to future crises. On a broader scale, nonprofit leaders should advocate for policies that provide greater financial support and recognition for the sector, ensuring that nonprofit

organizations remain equipped to serve vulnerable populations, particularly during societal disruption. Lastly, a deeper commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in nonprofit leadership is essential to ensuring that the sector is prepared to address the multifaceted challenges posed by future crises.

Conclusions

Nonprofit managers have been crucial in guiding organizations through the complex recovery process after the COVID-19 pandemic. Their experiences offer valuable insights into overcoming financial constraints, shifting community needs, and evolving regulations. By examining these real-world strategies and leadership styles, this research helps identify management informational systems for building resilient, effective nonprofits that can better serve communities and advance social causes in the face of future crises. The findings are essential for policymakers, donors, and sector stakeholders to support and strengthen the nonprofit sector, ensuring its sustainability and impact. This research highlights the importance of understanding the specific challenges faced by nonprofit managers in times of crisis.

Their ability to navigate financial stress, maintain service delivery, and adapt to changing social dynamics is crucial for the long-term effectiveness of nonprofits. By learning from their experiences, the nonprofit sector can improve its capacity for resilience and innovation, making it better equipped to respond to future challenges. The research also underscores the need for tailored management informational systems, such as capacity-building programs, financial policies, and strategic frameworks, to help nonprofits better manage their operations and fulfill their social missions. These insights

can guide the development of policies that foster an environment of collaboration, resource-sharing, and flexibility, empowering nonprofits to thrive even in uncertain times. The study emphasizes that by fostering strong leadership, addressing resource gaps, and building a culture of continuous improvement, nonprofits can enhance their ability to drive positive social change and meet the evolving needs of communities. This research contributes to the nonprofit sector's ongoing development and offers a roadmap for creating a more resilient, adaptive, and impactful sector in the future.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

- 1) Are you currently a nonprofit manager?
- 2) Did you work as a nonprofit manager during COVID pandemic, between 2019 and 2023?
- 3) Were you part of a crisis management team in your nonprofit role during COVID pandemic, between 2019 and 2023?
- 4) Are you willing to discuss your experiences of managing A nonprofit during COVID pandemic, between 2019 and 2023?
- 5) How long have you been a manager in a nonprofit?
- 6) How long were you a manager in the for-profit sector?
- 7) What is the nature of the services that your nonprofit organization provides?
- 8) Does your nonprofit offer services virtually?
- 9) How long have you been in your current role?
- 10) What is your annual salary in your current role?
- 11) What is your age?
- 12) What is your gender?
- 13) What is your ethnicity?
- 14) What is your race?
- 15) What is your highest level of education?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

- 1) Tell me about your experience of nonprofit management during COVID pandemic, between 2019 and 2023?
- 2) Tell me what a typical day was like for you during COVID pandemic, between 2019 and 2023, and at the start of transition to post pandemic 2023?
- 3) Tell me what a typical day as a nonprofit manager looks like for you now?
- 4) Tell me what it is like for you to be a manager in the nonprofit sector?
- 5) Tell me how being a manager in a nonprofit sector is different from being a manager in the for-profit sector?
- 6) How do you make major decisions in the nonprofit world? Small decisions? And crisis related decisions?
- 7) Tell me what you would change about your experience as a nonprofit manager during the COVID pandemic, between 2019 and 2023 now that we are post pandemic?
- 8) Is there anything else you feel is pertinent for me to know?