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Strategies for Not-for-Profit Sustainability

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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2019

Abstract

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by

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MBA, Walden University, 2015

BS, Michigan State University, 2001

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Leaders of not-for-profit organizations could benefit from learning how to build a sustainable organization to help ensure that their organizations could continue to provide valuable services to the community for the future. The purpose of this single case study was to explore the fundraising strategies and donor development skills that leaders used to create a sustainable organization. Five purposefully selected leaders of a not-for-profit organization in Michigan, with experience in implementing effective fundraising strategies and fostering donor development skills for a sustainable business, participated in the study. Transformational leadership was the conceptual framework. The data collection process entailed face-to-face semistructured interviews, observations, and review of company documentation. In-depth analysis of interview transcripts, organizational websites, and organizational documents provided the basis for coding of repeated words and clusters of information to identify 3 themes: the impact of relationships on fundraising efforts, fundraising strategies for organizational viability, and endowment funds as a source of revenue that can help an organization become financially sustainable. The implications of this study for positive social change are increases in sustainability within the not-for-profit community or increases in charitable contributions locally, possible improvements in the quality of life for the employees and community, and the continuation of vital services that are provided by these organizations.

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Dedication

I would like to first and foremost thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for blessing me to fulfill this amazing journey and giving me the strength every step of the way. “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want,” Psalms 23:1. I would like to thank my parents, Pastors Alonzo and Elmira Vincent who spent countless hours praying with me and for me, helping me to count and recount references, and keeping me awake during late nights. I cannot thank you enough for your love and support. I love you both very much. I thank you both for the countless sacrifices that were made, your patience, and unwavering support. Your prayers were always right on time. Pastor E. Vincent, I especially thank you for understanding and keeping me motivated and not allowing me to lose faith. I would like to thank my entire family who supported me through the process and understood when I was not available to participate in family functions. Your prayers were greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank the Mission of Peace Pentecostal Church Family who stood behind me, prayed with me, and have supported me. I was blessed beyond measure to have a wide supportive net of family and friends who stood by me and encouraged me continuously. I must thank Dr. Samora who I feel I was blessed to have as my Committee Chair. Dr. Samora, you were a constant source of support. I thank all of my colleagues who helped me out along the way, who helped me when I got stuck and was generally supportive.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables iv

Section 1: Foundation of the Study 1

- Background of the Problem 1
- Problem Statement 2
- Purpose Statement 3
- Nature of the Study 3
- Research Question 5
- Interview Questions 5
- Theoretical or Conceptual Framework 6
- Operational Definitions 7
- Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations 8
  - Assumptions 8
  - Limitations 8
  - Delimitations 9
- Significance of the Study 10
- A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature 11
  - Organization of the Review 13
  - Search Strategy 13
  - Summary of Peer-Reviewed Articles and Publications 14
  - Application to the Applied Business Problem 14
  - Critical Analysis and Synthesis of Transformational Leadership 15

Contrasting Theory 21

Not-for-profit Organizations....23

Funding Types 26

Fundraising 34

Donor Development 40

Corporate Social Responsibility 41

Sustainability 43

Summary and Transition 49

Section 2: The Project....51

Purpose Statement 51

Role of the Researcher....52

Participants 54

Research Method and Design....55

Research Method 55

Research Design 57

Population and Sampling....58

Ethical Research 60

Data Collection Instruments 61

Data Collection Technique 64

Data Organization Technique....67

Data Analysis....68

Reliability and Validity 72

Reliability 72
Validity 73
Credibility 73
Transferability 74
Confirmability 74
Data Saturation 74
Summary and Transition 75
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change 76
Introduction 76
Presentation of the Findings 76
Applications to Professional Practice 85
Implications for Social Change 90
Recommendations for Action 91
Recommendations for Further Research 92
Reflections 93
Conclusion 95
References 97
Appendix: Interview Protocol 135

List of Tables

Table 1.Total Percentages of References Used 14

Table 2. Professional Background of the Participants... 78

Table 1 14

Total Percentages of References Used 14

Table 2 *Professional Background of the Participants*.. 78

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

One of the primary challenges facing leaders of not-for-profit organizations is ensuring that the organization is sustainable and viable on a long-term basis (Sebastian-Ion, Eduard-Gabriel Orzan, Cristian & Marin, 2017). The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge from successful leaders of a not-for-profit organization to understand the fundraising strategies and donor development skills used that allowed the leaders to be successful. By conducting interviews with leaders of a not-for-profit organization in Michigan, I gathered insightful information that future and current not-for-profit leaders could use for sustainability beyond 5 years. Leaders of not-for-profit organizations in other states may benefit from this study's results; those regarding sustainability through leaders' fundraising strategies and donor development skills can be used to help leaders change as needed to meet the needs of their organizations.

Background of the Problem

Unmet needs in society—such as programs and services that improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities—lead to the formation of not-for-profit organizations. At a fundamental level, not-for-profit institutions provide value to societies by fulfilling those needs. Not-for-profit organizations play pivotal roles in societies: They produce a variety of benefits, such as boosting economic prosperity, maintaining environmental integrity and pursuing social justice—thus, providing value to society and improving the quality of life of communities and clients (McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram, & Sullivan Mort, 2015). Besides their integral roles in society, not-for-profit organizations are influential contributors to the economy (McKeever & Gaddy, 2016). Nonprofits organizations pursue missions that satisfy the needs of their targeted populations, which may not correlate to being a sustainable organization. These organizations operate in a progressively competitive environment due to severe competition for donors, grants, and government contracts (McDonald et al., 2015). In 2013, there were over 1.4 million registered not-for-profit organizations representing over 10% of the domestic workforce, which equals about 5% of the gross domestic product (McKeever et al., 2016).

Based on the structure of not-for-profit organizations coupled with their reliance on various sources of funding, upholding public relations is one of the essential functions of the leadership in the organization (Vasavada, 2014). Not-for-profit organizations face many challenges, which include how to create a sustainable organization. During lean times, not-for-profit organizations find themselves competing against each other for a limited amount of funding (Vasavada, 2014). Thus, creating the need for leaders to implement fundraising strategies while using strong donor development skills to generate sufficient funds for the sustainability of the organization. A critical issue for not-for-profit organizations operating in challenging environments is the securing of their economic viability and growth (McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram, & Sullivan Mort, 2015).

Problem Statement

Financial distress and vulnerability are typical circumstances that leaders of not-for-profit organizations frequently experience, which impacts their sustainability and viability (Tevel, Katz, & Brock, 2015). As of 2014, only 47% of nonprofits engaged in any form of sustainability partnership to ensure the organization had sufficient funds for operations (Kiron et al., 2015). The general business problem was that some nonprofit organizations are negatively affected by leaders' lack of fundraising knowledge and donor development skills, which results in the lack of sustainability for the organization. The specific business problem is some leaders in nonprofit organizations lack fundraising strategies and donor development skills to sustain their business.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, single-case study was to explore the fundraising strategies and donor development skills that not-for-profit leaders used to sustain their business. The targeted population was a not-for-profit organizations' leaders in a nationwide, Michigan-based, not-for-profit organization that served the underprivileged. Who demonstrated fundraising strategies and donor development skills that enabled sustainability. The results of this study could contribute to social change by identifying strategies that can help not-for-profit organizations become financially sustainable so that such organizations can continue providing quality services in the local communities they serve while maintaining a consistent level of employment for employees.

Nature of the Study

The selection of a research method influences the entire study, as it forms the structure for the doctoral study. The research method for this doctoral study was a qualitative single-case study. Researchers use qualitative research methods to explore data based on the use of social practices along with the identification of impediments to change (Grieb, Eder, Smith, Calhoun, & Tandon, 2015). The incorporation of qualitative research tools, such as interviews and observation, is for exploring critical theoretical and practical questions within management (Garcia & Gluesing, 2013). Qualitative research method incorporates values and perspectives from the researcher and the participants. On the other hand, the focus of quantitative research is on statistical analysis through the collection of numerical data coupled with the testing of a hypothesis (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). A mixed method study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. According to Halcomb and Hickman, (2015), mixed method research consists of the integration of both qualitative and quantitative research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research question than using either method alone. The implementation of mixed method research is appropriate when using either qualitative or quantitative research alone will not provide all the needed information. However, the qualitative approach was sufficient to provide all the information required for this doctoral study.

The research design was a single case study. The selection of the single case study allowed the development of an in-depth analysis of a single not-for-profit organization's leadership who understood the importance of strong fundraising strategies and donor development contributing to a sustained business for over 5 years. Using a case study can give clarity to, and increased knowledge about, a particular phenomenon (Dresch, Lacerda, & Miguel, 2015). Using the case study can extract data from various sources, such as interviews and observations to allow numerous levels of concurrent exploration of the dynamics in a single setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The use of the case study research design for this study was to identify crucial financial strategies the organization used to remain?? financially sustainable. The case study was a more appropriate design compared to phenomenology or ethnography. The use of a phenomenology design helps in understanding the essence of meanings of participants' experiences relating to a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I did not select the phenomenology design as I was seeking to explore the strategies of not-for-profit leaders in obtaining sustainability through knowledge gained in interviews held in real-life settings. Thus the phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study. Employing an ethnographic design involves the description and interpretation of a cultural or social group (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The best use for ethnographic research design is when studying a cultural or social norm. So it was not an applicable option for this study. In case studies, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, employing an investigative approach and producing a rich description (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). For this research design, I focused on not-for-profit leadership in an organization that exhibited sound fundraising strategies, and donor development skills; therefore, the case study design was appropriate.

Research Question

What specific fundraising strategies and donor development skills do not-for-profit leaders need for their organizations to be sustainable?

Interview Questions

I used the following interview questions to help answer the overarching research question and to help understand the attributes of transformational leadership and the challenges faced by not-for-profit leaders:

1. How does your organization define the term *sustainability*?
2. What steps do you take in your organization to ensure it is sustainable?
3. What are the current fundraising strategies that your organization uses to cover operational costs and remain viable?
4. How do you cultivate relationships with your donors and volunteers?
5. How do you influence or motivate donors and volunteers to meet the fundraising goals?
6. What are your long-range financial planning strategies for organizational sustainability?
7. What additional information would you like to share about your success at running a sustainable not-for-profit organization?

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this qualitative study was transformational leadership. Burns coined the terms *transactional leadership* and *transforming leadership* in 1978 (Burns, 1978). However,. Bass in 1985 extended the work of Burns by explaining how to measure transformational leadership, and the impact it has on follower motivation and performance. According to Bass, Waldman, Avolio, and Bebb (1987), transformational leadership occurs when a manager is charismatic and intellectual and treats subordinates as individuals. A transformational leader can guide followers to exceed their performance expectations by attempting to raise the needs of followers to be aligned with the goals and objective of the leaders, based on deep personal values for things such as justice and integrity (Bass et al. (1987); Humphreys & Einstein, 2003). A not-for-profit leader should work with donors and funders to encourage them to establish an on-going relationship and to provide sufficient funding to the organization. The leader’s inability to fundraise can ultimately affect the sustainability of the organization.

The goal of a not-for-profit leader is to create a sustainable organization that can continue providing goods or services to the communities it serves. According to Bass, Waldman, Avolio, and Bebb (1987), there are four behaviors associated with transformational leadership: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Humphreys & Einstein, 2003). Transformational leaders can encourage their followers to unite, change their goals, and collaborate for a collective purpose (Jyoti & Dev, 2015). Their abilities to inspire individuals to exceed normal performance levels using inspiration, intelligence, and promoting individual strengths can encourage individuals to contribute to the sustainability efforts of an organization.

Operational Definitions

The following two operational definitions provided clarity to the application of the terms throughout the doctoral study.

Organizational Sustainability: Nonprofits should strive to remain financially viable and better equipped to deliver the services that fulfill the social needs of the community (McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram, & Sullivan Mort, 2015). Nonprofits have to balance achieving the mission in conjunction with receiving adequate earned income to continue operations. Sustainability is the ability to accomplish the mission of the organization along with producing sufficient revenue to continue operations (McDonald et al.).

Transformational leader: Characteristics of a transformational leader include being a visionary, creative, motivational, and sensitive to the needs of the followers (Valero, Jung, & Andrew, 2015). There are benefits to a leader who is in a position of authority by being a transformational leader. Transformational leadership has evolved over the last 50 years and resulted in a more wide-ranging comprehension of leadership behaviors that have led to a higher level of leadership efficacy (Asencio, 2016). The transformational leader needs to establish a relationship of trust with its subordinates to motivate them to exceed expectations.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Marshall and Rossman (2016) defined an assumption as an unverified fact. Based on the financial and organizational capacity issues affecting nonprofits in Michigan, the first assumption was that fundraising knowledge and donor development strategies were needed to strengthen the sustainability of these organizations. The second assumption in this study was that not-for-profit leaders needed to learn donor development tactics based on the information that Flint, Michigan, was in the process of making a sluggish recovery due to decades of a recession (Custer, 2016). The third assumption made, was that not-for-profit organizations did not have a long-term fundraising plan that enabled the organization to be sustainable.

Limitations

A limitation occurs when the process of selective recognition is used to indicate what is applicable in a study for the description of limitations in a qualitative research study (Pettigrew, 2013). When the identification for the potential weakness happens in the study, the limitations become apparent. One potential limitation of this study was the narrow focus taken by identifying fundraising knowledge and donor development strategies as the primary factors that led to organizational sustainability. Not-for-profit organizations are attempting to secure funding while working in a competitive environment that has limited funding, regardless of the level of fundraising knowledge and donor development approaches. Furthermore, the limited geographic scope could have posed a limitation on the findings of the study due to the concentration on a Michigan not-for-profit organization with a social service focus. There could have been different results for organizations located in various geographic areas.

The first limitation for the study is, the participants of the study could have elected not to disclose information that was relevant to the study for some reasons, perhaps proprietary. Second, participants could have their own set of notions concerning my role as the researcher and the implications on their organization that may have affected the results. Additional limitations to this study might exist.

Delimitations

Akaeze (2016) explained that a delimitation pertains to the scope and boundaries covered by a study. The study included a purposeful sample of leaders of not-for-profit organizations who managed a not-for-profit organization in Michigan. Interviews captured the actual lived experiences of these leaders within this single qualitative case study. The specific focus areas of this study were not-for-profit leadership, fundraising strategies, donor development skills, and sustainability. Study participants had to have at least 5 years of knowledge of fundraising strategies, donor development skills, and sustainable practices. According to Leung, Law, Van Hoof, and Buhalis (2013), the combination of these priority factors provided a threshold for specific strategies that could be useful to help a not-for-profit organization achieve sustainability and viability. Individuals excluded from participation in this study were those who did not meet the criterion. The researcher was confident the research would provide a comprehensive overview of findings and discussions in not-for-profit leadership.

Significance of the Study

Challenges that some not-for-profit organizations face are shrinking budgets, operating with limited resources, while beingconfronted with demand for increases services. Therefore it was necessary for the organization to achieve its mission and be sustainable (Kapucu & Demiroz, 2015). Some nonprofits have had to cease operations due to not having sufficient funding (Curtis et al., 2010). Findings from this study may be of value by potentially providing other not-for-profit organizations with tools that they can use to build a financially sound organization. Nonprofits provide essential services to the community; which is why it is vital that they have a plan in place for continuing to operate and providing needed services. Nonprofits that do not have the proper foundation, including funding for the organization's activities, may have to cease operations (Kapucu et al, 2015.).

The exploration of the strategies in this doctoral study has the potential to provide not-for-profit leaders with essential knowledge for fundraising success. Regardless of the size of the organization, its performance correlates significantly to fundraising proficiency (Su, Nuryyev, & Aimable, 2014).

Leung, Law, Van Hoof, and Buhalis (2013) stated that effective not-for-profit organizations are typically at the heart of communities because they provide valuable services, such as skills training and healthcare. If not-for-profit organizations did not provide these services, some individuals would not gain access to them. Not-for-profit leaders may learn donor development skills, which would enable the organization to continue receiving adequate levels of funding to continue providing services supporting their communities' citizens.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore the donor development skills and fundraising strategies that not-for-profit leaders used to obtain sustainability. In this section, I sought to put the study in context through a comprehensive analysis and synthesis of existing literature. The section begins with a description of my search strategy, followed by a detailed discussion of the study's conceptual framework and contrasting theory. Next, I discuss not-for-profit organizations, fundraising, sustainability, and donor development. The section concludes with a summary and transition to Section 2.

Currently, there are more than 1.4 million registered not-for-profit organizations in the United States that do work for the public good and address challenges such as hunger and malnutrition, homelessness, education, and civil rights (Jones & Mucha, 2014). The vital services provided by these not-for-profit organizations benefit the community, which is crucial for organizations to be sustainable. The work done by nonprofits is work that for-profit organizations cannot or will not do (Jones et al, 2014.). The nonprofits meet the needs that neither the business sector or the public sector fulfills. Nonprofits typically pursue missions that are not necessarily profitable (McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram, & Sullivan Mort, 2015).

Medina-Borja and Triantis (2014) explained that during a period in which nonprofits experienced a higher demand for services, nonprofits who lacked sustainability were forced to cease its operations. Which contrasts with the research conducted by Teske (2017) that stated organizations needed a thorough understanding of the organizational process to be successful. However, Weiwei and Qiushi (2016) concluded that the financial resources of nonprofits are essential for organizational sustainability and growth. Additionally, obtaining long-term financial sustainability through maintenance and enhanced financial capacity is the primary financial goal of not-for-profit organizations (Weiwei et al.). Medina-Borja et al., revealed not-for-profit organizations providing social services are dealing with challenging fundraising environments at the same time of dealing with social and health problems which can lead to sustainability concerns. However, Teske posits that when nonprofits concentrate on fulfilling its mission versus making money can lead to an organization lacking sustainability. Schaltegger and Hörisch (2017) concluded that managers should handle sustainability at the same times as addressing the overall health and mission of the organization. Researchers can use the following analysis of previous research to understand the importance of using transformational leadership necessary to sustain not-for-profit organizations.

Organization of the Review

The purpose of the literature review was to (a) present this study in the context of donor development skills and financial strategies to produce a sustainable organization, (b) justify the need for the research, and (c) ensure the establishment of the study on existing research. The literature review has several subsections. It begins with an introduction, which includes information about the strategy I used when searching for the literature, the percentages of peer-reviewed articles, as well as publication dates. In the next section, I focused on the application of what exactly??? to the applied business problem, conceptual framework, and contrasting theory. The subtopics discussed were not-for-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, fundraising, funding types, donor development, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability.

Search Strategy

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the strategies not-for-profit leaders use to create sustainable organizations using fundraising knowledge and donor development skills. The literature review explored the literature on financial fundraising strategies and donor development.The following databases were used: (a) ABI/Inform Complete, (b) Business Source Complete, (c) EBSCO Host, (d) Emerald Insight, (e) ProQuest, and (f) the Sage Journals to. The following keywords and phrases were used: *donor development skills, financial strategies, nonprofits, corporate social responsibility, nonprofit, not-for-profit, for-profit organizations, fundraising, fundraising* *strategies, responsibility, transformational leadership, transactional leadership,* and *sustainability*.

Summary of Peer-Reviewed Articles and Publications

Table 1 illustrates the reference, total, and percentage of resources used within the 5 years or less anticipated Chief Academic Officer (CAO) approval, which is from 2014 to 2018.

Table 1

Total Percentages of References Used

Reference	Total	% of references	% of usage, less than 5 years	% of usage, greater than 5 years
Scholarly and peer-reviewed articles	233	94	88	12
Other sources (seminal work, dissertations & gov. sites)	16	6	69	31
Total	249	100	100	100

Note. Seminal works refer to books.

Application to the Applied Business Problem

The objective of this qualitative, single case study was to explore the strategies that leaders of not-for-profit organizations used to examine donor development skills and fundraising strategies used to achieve sustainability. The qualitative approach enabled the development and understanding of the strategies within the exploratory single case study. In this study, the researcher provided insight into donor development skills and financial strategies of leaders in not-for-profit organizations based on the perspectives of leaders.

The findings of the study can assist with the development of appropriate strategies nonprofits can use. The appropriate strategies will equip leaders with the necessary skills and strategies to works towards organizational sustainability. The findings from the study can improve business practice by identifying appropriate donor development skills and fundraising strategies which result in increased efficiency and organizational competitiveness. The potential for social change included applying proven strategies to develop sustainable not-for-profit organizations to help not-for-profit leaders address broader issues, such as solving problems that for-profit organizations do not address.

Critical Analysis and Synthesis of Transformational Leadership

The conceptual framework for this qualitative study was transformational leadership. As indicated by Palumbo (2016), leadership is a vital success factor for nonprofits. Transformational leadership and its characteristics demonstrate an equal quality needed in leaders who are fundraising and using donor development skills. Transformational leadership is the process by which leaders affect a radical change in the behavior of followers (Burns, 1978) such as during the process of donor development and fundraising. The not-for-profit sector experienced significant changes that impacted their sustainability beginning with the recession of 2008-2009 (Jacobs, 2017). A transformational leader can help to provide the not-for-profit with needed leadership during these challenging economic times. Nonprofits deal with complex social issues such as poverty, housing, education to be solved by multiple entities (Jacobs). According to Burns, a transformational leader is an individual that elevates the followers' level of awareness about the significance and value of sought-after outcomes and the tactics to obtain those outcomes. As a not-for-profit leader is working with individuals, they will share the goals of the organization which includes the soliciting of funds.

Burns (1978) stated an integral part of transformational leadership is the relationship between leaders and followers, he described transformational leaders as those who bring about expressive relationships coupled with a mutual comprehension of others to motivate them to obtain their highest potential, understanding the importance of their work reaching their organizational goals, while creating superior work. Not-for-profit leaders at times rely on their charisma to motivate employees to exceed their goals which can lead to higher levels of productivity. Khan and Ismail (2017) note that charisma a component of transformational leadership can elicit change in followers. Not-for-profit leaders can use charisma to unite individuals with their fundraising strategies. Sasson and Katz (2014) noted that the core of transformational leadership is an ethical vision and morals which is beneficial in donor development relations. Not-for-profit organizations need transformational leaders to help propel the organization forward. Masa'deh, Obeidat, and Tarhini (2016) state that transformational leadership can result in exceptional positive relationships with underlings along with performance motivation and promise. Leadership of a not-for-profit organization plays a significant role in the operation of the organization.

Leadership is a crucial concept for organizations due to their influence on employee attitudes and actions (Yıldız & Şimşek, 2016). Burns (1978) indicated transformational leadership occurs when one or more individuals interact with others in a manner that leads to leaders and followers having a mutually increased level of inspiration and ethics. As not-for-profit leaders identify fundraising goals and to solicit donors, they can embrace transformational leadership as a tool to influence employees and donors alike. The mutual motivations within a transformational leadership relationship effects both leaders and followers. According to Taylor, Cornelius, and Colvin (2014), transformational leadership can encourage others to move past focusing on their interests and begin acting in the best interest of the organization. Leaders charged to meet the needs of the clients. Taylor et al. noted that visionary leadership is a form of transformational leadership wherein it presents occasions to grow the capacity of the organization to fulfill the necessities of its clientele. Leaders are operating in challenging fundraising environments and can use their transformational leadership qualities such as charisma when engaging in fundraising strategies. Transformational leadership, over the last 50 years evolved into a more wide-ranging comprehension of leadership behaviors that have led to a higher level of leadership efficacy (Asencio, 2016). Muthia and Krishnan (2015) opined that transformational leadership raises followers' leadership capability by addressing their needs. The needs of a follower can include a thorough understanding of the fundraising goals of the organization. As stated by Taylor et al. leadership plays a vital role in the level of organizational efficacy.

Burns (1978) explained the correlation between leaders and followers noting transformational leaders work to create meaningful relations and mutual understanding with people to encourage them to yield superior work and accomplish organizational goals. Rowold, Borgmann, and Bormann (2014) pointed out that a transformational leader possesses the ability to encourage their followers to increase performance which is useful when soliciting donors or identifying fundraising strategies. Transformational leadership primarily focuses on the overall organization and their shared goals as evidenced by Allen et al. (2016). The shared goals of an organization include identifying any fundraising strategies needed to raise the annual budget.

Leaders stress the importance of organizational growth and development. A not-for-profit organization could benefit from transformational leadership, which inspires and motivates people to exceed ordinary expectations (Mesu, Sanders, & Riemsdijk, 2015). Allen et al. stated that transformational leaders empower and encourage followers to take ownership of organizational visions, which promotes behaviors such as intellect, imagination, ingenuity, risk-taking, advancement, and success. The level of exertion by employees is mainly dependent upon the relationship established with its leadership. Mesu et al. found that in small and medium-sized organizations transformational leadership provoked extraordinary commitment in their followers, which led to exceptional performance. Allen et al. explained the primary behaviors of charismatic leadership, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration characterize transformational leadership. The intention of the behaviors is to motivate followers. Gyanchandani (2017) explained that leaders play an integral role in organizations as role models who influence the values, system, culture, and behaviors of individuals within the organization. The influence of a transformational leader can stimulate employees to think outside of the box and identify inventive solutions to exceed performance goals.

Gyanchandani (2017) opined that leadership in and of itself is a crucial factor attributed to the growth or breakdown of an organization. According to a study by Asencio (2016), transformational leadership results in positive employee job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is crucial to the success of not-for-profit organizations, mainly because of the volunteer efforts of their workforce. Transformational leadership also plays a substantially larger role in job satisfaction as compared to that of transactional leadership (Asencio). Trust is an essential factor for transformational leaders. Employees need to trust the leader and be willing to follow their directives. Valero, Jung, and Andrew (2015) concluded that transformational leaders are visionary, creative, motivational, and sensitive to the needs of their followers. As transformational leaders undertake the fundraising process, they provide clear guidance and direction in not-for-profit organizations making it essential for the improvement of these traits.

Transformational leadership can empower followers and produce positive changes in their life. Muthia and Krishnan (2015), explained the empowerment and improvement heightened by transformational leadership inspire the followers to obtain higher goals. Not-for-profit organizations that encounter frequent change could benefit from a transformational leadership culture. Witmer and Mellinger (2016) explained the need for nonprofits to seek sustainable strategies in this environment rift with changing funding landscapes and tumultuous economic times.

Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, and Wu (2018) explained that transformational leadership is an ongoing process where leaders and followers continue to raise each other to higher levels of morals and inspiration not focused on self-interest but the collective interest. Transformational leadership is not a one-time occurrence but is a continual process whereby leaders engage employees to an increased level of performance. Organizational leaders depend on employees to help the organization to run smoothly, effectively, and efficiently. According to Stahl, Covrig, and Newman (2014), leadership behaviors foretells overall leader efficacy. The management of those employees is highly dependent on the quality of the leadership, which affects their relationships and the determination of handling internal and external issues employees face when working to achieve corporate goals (Jyoti & Dev, 2015). Yahaya & Ebrahim (2016) posited that transformational leaders emphasize the needs and personal development of followers. Also, Jyoti et al. indicated that transformational leaders could influence the employees to exceed expectations. Mozammel and Haan (2016) argued that transformational leadership could increase customer relations. As explained by Effelsberg and Solga (2015), a reason for the effectiveness of transformational leadership lies in the fact that the leaders provide inspirational motivation through the communication of a captivating mission in the perspective of employees. When leaders influence the employees, it helps provide alternative solutions to foreseeable problems they may encounter. Not-for-profit organizations can benefit from dynamic leadership and engaged employees.

Fazzi and Zamaro (2016) shared that transformational leadership is essential for the management of groups of individuals versus boosting individual performance. Not-for-profit leaders are concerned with the overall organization and not just one person. The study by Veríssimo and Lacerda (2015) illustrates that integrity is a predictor of transformational leadership behavior. Integrity can relate to moral or ethical behavior and is a critical element of leadership. Individuals are more prone to follow a leader with high morals. According to Veríssimo and Lacerda leaders with the highest level of transformational leadership had higher integrity which is also a driver of corporate social responsibility. Leaders who demonstrate high levels of integrity are more prone to be engaged in corporate social responsibility due to their transformational leadership behaviors. Veríssimo and Lacerda noted transformational leadership aligns individual needs and values with the cohesive goals of the organization. Transformational leadership typology provides a leadership style that not-for-profit organizations can use to develop fundraising strategies and donor development skills.

Contrasting Theory

According to Burns (1978), the conceptualization of leadership occurs as being either transformational or transactional. Also, Burns discerned that transformational and transactional leadership are on opposites ends of the spectrum and is dissimilar. Burns stated there is a perception of transformational leaders as leaders who arouse and encourage underlings to expand their leadership ability and accomplish astonishing outcomes, whereas transactional leadership rewards or punishes employees based on obtainment of goals (Caillier & Sa, 2017). McCleskey (2014) stated that the exchanges that occur during transactional leadership enable leaders to achieve their performance goals, accomplish necessary tasks, avoid needless risks, and to focus on enhanced organizational productivity. According to Yahaya and Ebrahim, (2016), a characteristic of transactional leadership is the exchange that occurs amid leaders, coworkers, and followers. Burns stated a transactional leader abides by the guidelines and procedures to achieve the agency mission and objectives, delivering precise instructions to subordinates for the completion of assignments along with offering rewards for a fruitful event. Another distinction made by Oberfield (2014) is transactional leaders establish clear performance goals, carefully monitor employee progression, and administer a reward or punishment based on goal achievement. According to Fazzi and Zamaro (2016), transformational leaders provide their followers with long-range objectives, needs, and beliefs that they can identify with whereas transactional leadership operates on a complementary approach which offers benefits to both sides. Burns stated that transactional leaders concentrate on instructive tasks and presenting incentives for positive performance and penalties for negative performance. According to Brahim, Riđić, and Jukić (2015), transactional leadership does not provide a high level of inspiration or even motivation for the followers; instead it issues penalties for not meeting performance objectives. Helmig, Hinz, and Ingerfurth (2015) stated that transactional leadership is the preferred style for instruct and regulated approach. Yahaya et al. supported Bass's assertion that transactional leader can produce satisfactory results for a short time whereas transformational leadership can create long-standing changes, imagination, and throughput. According to Yahaya et al., three leadership elements connected with transactional leadership include conditional reward, lively management via an exception, and inactive management via an exception. Additionally, Megheirkouni (2017) states contingent compensation denotes the limitations the leader explains obligations with promised or actual incentives presented for achieving the expectations. Helmig et al. noted that transformational and transactional leadership styles could be complementary to each other in a dynamic setting.

Not-for-profit Organizations

Rosenbaum (2016), explained that since the inception of the Internal Revenue Code, the federal tax policy created an exemption for exempt organizations which operates for explicit charitable purposes are known as a not-for-profit organization. However, a not-for-profit still needs to generate revenue to maintain its operations. The primary source of funds comes from grants and donations, but this is not a limitless pool of funds which creates sustainability issues (Khorin, Potanina, & Brovkin, 2017). According to Beaton and Hwang (2017), in the United States, the not-for-profit sector is massive and seeing the continuous growth of small organizations. Not-for-profit organizations intend to further a mission, rather than to enrich a set of people or earn a profit. One of the primary purposes of not-for-profit organizations is to fulfill the social needs and public services of society (Park & Kim, 2016). McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram, & Sullivan Mort, 2015 states that nonprofits provide value and make what some consider as a substantial role in society. Nonprofits engage in program services as defined by the Internal Revenue Service which yields public benefit outcomes and to fulfill their mission (Brown, 2017). Nonprofits are involved in a wide range of industries such as the arts, environmental services, healthcare, higher education, and social service agencies. Soysa, Jayamaha, and Grigg (2016) state the majority of the objectives for not-for-profit organizations relate to the servicing of the target communities with the intention of producing a positive impact. According to Dobrai and Farkas, (2016), nonprofits are called various names including not-for-profit, nongovernmental organizations, and voluntary. Despite the difference in terminology, the core of a not-for-profit organization is to provide a collective and public purpose to be charitable (Osula & Ng, 2014). Gamble and Beer (2017), clarified that in the United States, nonprofits receive the formal recognition as legally registered organizations under the 501(c)3 Tax Code which provides them with the ability to obtain tax-exempt status. Additionally, Osula and Ng explained that the charitable purpose allows it to receive tax-exempt status. Fontes-Filho and Bronstein (2016), discussed some standard features of nonprofits is that donations are typically tax deductible, there are no owners in a nonprofit, and the boards and managers will never have to face a takeover or possess assets with values associated with the nonprofit's success. Osula and Ng state that typically the owner of nonprofits occurs by a community sector and the governing board which is responsible for the organization. Zhu, Wang, and Bart (2016) noted that the engagement of the board of directors for nonprofits and for-profit organizations contributes to financial performance, competitiveness, and innovation. However, Jaskyte (2015), noted that the board of directors in a not-for-profit is ultimately accountable for organizational performance. Whereas for-profit companies create short-term and long-term goals, there is an owner or principal of the company and includes profit as a performance benchmark according to Fontes-Filho and Bronstein. Bernstein, Buse, and Slatten (2015) noted the importance of board members for a not-for-profit as they work to ensure the not-for-profit remains true to its mission, adheres to the law and operates in a fiscally responsible manner. Over the past 20 years, the number of not-for-profit organizations registered with the IRS has risen from 1.09 million to 1.57 million according to the National Center for Charitable Statistics database, which contributes to the competitive environment that nonprofits operate in (Tysiac, 2016). According to Helmig, Hinz, and Ingerfurth (2015), nonprofits are continually dealing with proficiency demands making it necessary for them to focus not only on the mission but on a broader perspective that will satisfy many goals and expectations. The mission-driven focus influences how the organization brings in revenue: there is a purpose behind how the revenue received as it allows the organization to further its mission (Gazzola, Ratti, & Amelio, 2017). As indicated by Hu, Kapucu, and O'Byrne (2014), smaller nonprofits can use a transformational leader to combat their limited resources and to engage in strategic management as a method to achieve its mission. All nonprofits provide some community benefit that enables the organization to get the advantages of being a not-for-profit entity (Colombo & Gazzola, 2014). Nonprofits could benefit from operating their organizations in a precise manner like a for-profits to remain relevant in a competitive environment. According to Gazzola et al. the not-for-profit is held accountable; which includes ensuring that the organization is effectively providing the intended benefit or service such as feeding the homeless, environmental protection, or contributing a cultural endeavor.

Charles and Kim (2016) explained that the not-for-profit sector represents a substantial contribution to the United States economy while providing an essential role in the lives of individuals throughout the country and world. Waniak-Michalak and Zarzycka, (2015), concluded that donors select the nonprofits they contribute to and this decision may at times have connections to the reputation of the organization and its leaders along with the personal experiences of the individual donor. Gilstrap and Minchow-Proffitt (2017), asserts the public image of nonprofits becomes driven largely by the interaction with stakeholders. As indicated by Morrison (2016), in theory, nonprofits rely on donations from the public and donors voice their support of an organization through their donations. The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University estimates that in 2013, 95.4% of American households donated to charity with an average donation of $2,974 (Charles & Kim, 2016). Based on the amount of money donated and time spent volunteering to nonprofits provides support for the importance of nonprofits (Grizzle, 2015). According to Uzonwanne (2016), all organizations regardless to being not-for-profit or for-profit need leaders who possess leadership ability as it is pertinent and necessary. Grizzle further explains that leaders need to understand what drives individuals to give to nonprofits due to the significant amount of total donations given to the sector annually. Nonprofits can benefit from learning more about the characteristics of individual donors as it develops its fundraising strategies. Based on the target audience will determine how the messaging they will use as their fundraising strategy (Tysiac, 2016).

Funding Types

Nonprofits do not have investors instead they rely on support from grants and donations to achieve their charitable goals (Waniak-Michalak & Zarzycka, 2015). Osula and Ng (2014) stated that nonprofits have numerous stakeholders who can create fundraising diversity for the organization. A common stakeholder for nonprofits is government funding which can come in the form of grants, contracts, reimbursements, vouchers. Nonprofits seek to leverage multiple funding sources to help with organizational viability. These numerous sources include foundations, government grants, corporate grants, government contracts, individual donations, private donations, membership dues, service-related fees, product-related fees, charitable gifts, and investments (Ali & Gull, 2016; Omura & Foster, 2014). There have been unexpected growth within the not-for-profit sector, leading to competition for limited financial and human resources and leading to the necessity of distinction among organizations (Čačija, 2016). In recent years, nonprofits organizations have faced challenges with financial instability due to declining sources of revenue, dependency on government grants, and lack of financial strategies. There are growing societal needs coupled with increased competition for donors and grants has created a need for nonprofits to have more human and physical capital than in previous years (Park & Kim, 2016). Osula and Ng (2014), discussed the challenge of not-for-profit leaders is meeting the varying expectations of its funding sources. The challenges of meeting expectations present an impediment to sustainability in some not-for-profit organizations who are not able to raise the increased human and physical capital. Alsalami, Behery, and Abdullah (2014) explain that a transformational leader stresses the necessity of organizational change to bring about creativity and innovation. Due to fundraising challenges, nonprofits have to think outside the box to generate funding for sustainability. The lack of fundraising strategies and donor development skills for nonprofits has been an issue that has led to nonprofits not achieving sustainability.

According to Mataira, Morelli, Matsuoka, and Uehara-McDonald (2014), due to economic changes and uncertainty nonprofits are evaluating their long-term sustainability. These organizations need to work on diversifying their funding by creating a mixture of funding sources. Mataira et al. (2014) further explained that nonprofits are exposed, and susceptible, as usual, funding sources are exhausted forcing nonprofits to make some tough decisions determining how to generate new revenue sources. The organizations can benefit from diversity in their funding sources, which will help them to continue their operations even if they lose one of their funding sources. Nonprofits funding for operations come from a multitude of sources including donations, special events, government grants, and program revenues (Gaver, Harris, & Im, 2016). Chikoto-Schultz and Neely (2016), stated that nonprofits could accomplish financial sustainability through diversified funding sources such as investment income, government grants and contracts, and private contributions.

Su, Nuryyev, and Aimable (2014) noted over the years; leaders have recognized the significant role that finance plays in the not-for-profit organization. Not-for-profit organizations need to seek creative methods to sustain the organization and avoid relying heavily on philanthropic or government funding to operate. Also, Su et al. (2014) stated not-for-profit organizational leaders must be aware of the need to generate different types of activities to ensure the success of the organization. Leaders of not-for-profit organizations who exhibit transformational leadership characteristics help give them the ability to chariot different funding resources when necessary. When leaders diversify their activities by obtaining different sources of revenue, sustainability is possible. In contrast, if leaders in not-for-profit organizations have a broad spectrum of revenue sources it is likely they can continue to operate with the loss of one funding source.

Challenges. According to Xiaodong et al., (2017) the not-for-profit sector is a change agent although it must address capacity building issues. As indicated by Gamble and Beer (2017), nonprofits provide increasing economic and social well-being contributions while facing a challenge with the number of individuals they can service. Nonprofits have to strike a balance between achieving their social goals using limited financial resources (Battilana, Sengul, Pache, & Model, 2014). If the not-for-profit plans to continue providing vital services to the community, they need to build up sustainability. In recent years, there has been a trend of constraints on government and funding sources (Routhieaux, 2015). Jungbok (2015) discovered that nonprofits typically lack access to good, quality data which a leader would find useful when fundraising or working on donor development. These changes in the not-for-profit sector created declines in funding amounts. As a result of these changes, some not-for-profit organizations had to reexamine their missions, programs, and operations ensuring that they functioned the most efficient matter possible without compromising the quality of programs and services delivered (Routhieaux et al.). Allen et al. (2016) argued that transformational leaders would need to focus on four behaviors such as charisma, inspiration, intellect, and individuals to motivate its followers to adjust to the changes required for sustainability.

Not-for-profit organizations have additional challenges to sustainability as a result of the increase in competition for limited private donations (Omura & Forster, 2014). Some nonprofits are struggling to differentiate themselves from other not-for-profit organizations due to the competitive environment for obtaining donations. Funding for not-for-profit organizations varies based on the organization size and field of service. Hu, Kapucu, and O'Byrne (2014) stated smaller not-for-profit organizations could benefit from transformational leadership as a method to overcome its weaknesses and engage in long-term planning necessary to achieve its goals. If the nonprofits, do not participate in long-term planning they may not be adequately prepared to maintain a proper level of funding.

Consequently, the government is not the sole source of fundraising sources. According to Barber and Farwell (2016), some nonprofits only receive donations as revenue for the organization which can create a level of uncertainty. However, charitable giving is often a vital component of the nonprofit's budget. Leaders of not-for-profit organizations frequently welcome donations as it brings in unrestricted funds, which can be allocated for expenses not covered under grants or contracts (Barber et al.). Covering budget shortfalls when there are insufficient funds for expenses helps keep nonprofits operating; however, some not-for-profit organizations receive earmarked donations. When the earmarking of donations occur, that allows donors the ability to control how and what the donations are used for and what projects will be funded (Toyasaki & Wakolbinger, 2014). The strict enforcement of earmarked donations can lead to problems for the not-for-profit organizations that receive them. According to Viader and Espina (2014), the board of nonprofits is held accountable to their stakeholders which includes those who provide funding and donors which can be a challenge if they have varying ideas for the use of funds. Cicmil and O'Laocha (2016), explained that funders are looking for accountability that their donations will be used wisely through executed programs and projects.

One of the challenges that nonprofits face is how to measure the success of nonprofits including nonmonetary performance along with their mission and objectives (Čačija, 2016). A strategy that nonprofits use in attracting donors is the hosting of special events that help raise funds in support of their mission while attracting donations and creating value through the events (Tysiac, 2016). Nonprofits also use technology to tell their story in creative and charming ways while thanking their donors. According to Mucai, Wanijiku, and Murigi (2014), not-for-profit organizations that depend upon the kindness of individual donors to contribute to the organization's revenue, typically engage in a cycle of seeking funds to operate regardless to whether the funds align with the mission and vision statement of the organization. In such cases, Allen et al. (2016) believe transformational leaders are best suited for organizations where change is constant because of their abilities to change, adapt, and take the risk. Cheney, Merchant, and Killins Jr. (2012) ascertain that grants enable the organization to accomplish a goal, but after that, the funds no longer exist. The uncertainty of grant funding creates a challenge to achieve sustainability when working with funds used for a specific purpose, but it is not used to create long-term sustainability. Leaders of not-for-profit organizations could benefit from the identification of a long-term funding strategy for the sustainability of the organization.

Throughout the years, the not-for-profit sector in the United States has continued to evolve with the additional demands placed on not-for-profit professionals including increased performance expectations (McCann & Kowalski, 2015). Nonprofits must be prepared to meet the extensive requirements of the not-for-profit sector while doing more work with limited resources. The subordinates in an organization will look to the leadership for direction and guidance. Kim (2014) stated that a transformational leader displays behavior that subordinates will be able to model while facilitating the acceptance of group goals to be accomplished. The transformational leader understands the best way to maximize the organization's resources. Nonprofits often have limited funds to compensate employees combined with limited benefits which can impact the quality of personnel they can hire (Heyne, Gallagher, Coughlan, & Lewin, 2016). According to a study by McCann and Kowalski, directors that received a form of education on a given topic such as fundraising were more confident in those skills versus directors that not receive any training on that topic.

Services. Kirk, Ractham, and Abrahams (2016) explained that nonprofits are critical players in society tasked with making a positive influence in the environment. Not-for-profit organizations provide valuable services to society, but they do not operate without challenges. Rinaldi, Parretti, Salimbeni, and Citti, (2015), explained that nonprofits had seen growth within the sector, but leadership could benefit from training in financial and economic management. Historically, nonprofits had to work on limited resources and organizational capacity while continuing to meet the needs of its clientele (Wade-Berg & Robinson-Dooley, 2015). Not-for-profit leaders face numerous decisions each day concerning the services provided to those in need. According to Rinaldi et al. (2015), not-for-profit leaders have the task to determine the best way to create a growing and sustainable organization. Chan and Mak (2014) stated transformational leaders inspire followers to exceed common aspirations which creates an individual level of significance that yields a connection to the organization. Not-for-profit organizations operate in an environment that involves constant changes, which require leaders to think more strategically. Wade-Berg et al., stated nonprofits dependence on philanthropy and charitable giving to fund the provision of services is a challenge that the organization needs to address. Valero, Jung, and Andrew (2015) suggested that transformational leaders have that ability to stimulate environments of organizational resiliency by identifying and inspiring actors towards a shared vision for cohesively handling disruptions or disasters. Clients depend on nonprofits to provide meaningful services. The harnessing of resources used and provided by nonprofits can ensure the organization is operating at its peak. Su et al. (2014) concluded the not-for-profit financial performance is crucial to its sustainability and goal attainment.

For-Profit Organizations. Fontes-Filho and Bronstein (2016) explained that for-profit organizations which include companies operating using short-term and long-term goals with the property allocated to shareholders combined with profits and stock value to measure performance. Morrison (2016) indicated that for-profit businesses have a level of oversight by the owners of the company, the board of directors and the stakeholders. Companies made have one owner or multiple owners who are responsible unto the company shareholders (Fontes-Filho & Bronstein). As explained by Lin-hi, Hörisch, and Blumberg, (2015), for-profit and nonprofits share a similarity in the area that they both understand the importance of trust as a part of achieving organizational goals and obtaining long-term success. According to Osula and Ng (2014), one of the significant distinctions between for-profit and not-for-profit revolves around the creation of a product or service for either making a profit or for social value. As noted by Chan and Mak (2014), in a for-profit company, it is beneficial to have a transformational leader who will hold their leader in high regard, and the leader will guide to not only achieve organizational goals but to motivate them to exceed their typical workload.

Fundraising

Jungbok (2015) discussed that fundraising is one of the most crucial business tasks that not-for-profit leaders do to operate the organization. As indicated by Osula and Ng (2014) not-for-profit leaders spend a significant amount of time and energy focusing on the fundraising including the various stakeholders such as government employees, clients, the communities, and area businesses in part to growing competition. The challenges involved in the fundraising landscape requires leaders to become transformational leaders. As indicated by Burns (1978) transformation occurs when there is an alteration in the structure or a fundamental change of the inner character. The fundamental change can be used to create a transformational leader. Beaton and Hwang (2017), stated due to the rising number of nonprofits and the ensuing levels of competitiveness helped to create a shortage of funding. The result is a decrease in funding resources for nonprofits to handle. Leaders of nonprofits are operating with limited finances and human resources while working in a competitive environment that produces a set of challenges when fundraising (Jungbok). Chen (2016) concluded that nonprofits receive funding from a diverse set of resources with donations accounting for a substantial role in generating funds. However, Bernstein, Buse, and Slatten (2015) identified a positive correlation between fundraising and board member engagement in community relations and outreach efforts. Chen stated that nonprofits receive funding from fees for products or services provided. Jungbok explained that one of the distinctive characteristics of nonprofits is that the person who benefitted from the organization is typically different than the person who contributes financial resources to the organization. Individuals usually donate due to belief in the cause or because of a relationship with a friend or colleague (Bernstein et al.). Sargeant and Shang (2016) define greatness in fundraising as a result of growth and a significant increase in funds raised. Bernstein et al. stated board members who have training are more likely to be engaged in the fundraising process. Nonprofits need to invest in not only the leadership but also the board members to receive fundraising training to help the organization achieve its fundraising goal. The impact of increased funds has a positive effect on the mission of the organizations. Organizational leadership has to make fundraising a priority to enable the organization to have stable and predictable revenue streams (Turner, Escamilla, & Venta, 2016). Fundraising greatness equals a transformational increase for the organization in proportion to the programs and content which yields to the expansion of societal impact (Sargeant et al.). As indicated by Turner et al. (2016) fundraising needs to be in alignment with the budgeting process. Nonprofits need to incorporate fundraising into the operating procedures of the organization. Sargeant et al. explained that leaders who conduct fundraising use it as an opportunity to enrich the lives of individuals who receive their services and, in the process, are acting as a transformational leader. As explained by Erwin, Landry, and Gibson (2015), a vital aspect of the fundraising process that deserves monitoring is the relationship with donors and the fact that individuals involved in the fundraising process are fundamental to the success.

Types of Fundraising Activities. Social media has redefined the ways how organizations connect with their community and fundraising activities. Researchers have found that nonprofits can use social media platforms to strengthen existing relationships with supporters and extend their reach (Garczynski, 2016). The number of connections that an organization has played a significant role in the capacity of nonprofits to fundraise on social media. Lipschultz (2015) explains that the expansion of social media has allowed nonprofits to interact with stakeholders and fundraise in a cost-efficient manner. According to Gilstrap and Minchow-Proffitt (2017), an attraction for nonprofits use of social media is that it allows them to reach a massive audience for free on a multitude of networking platforms. Transformational leaders encourage their followers to embrace unconventional thinking when responding to problems (Jyoti & Dev, 2015; Valero, Jung, & Andrew, 2015).

According to Gregg, Pierce, Sweeney, and Lee (2015) in 2012, nonprofits had an increase of 3.5% in year-over-year growth resulting in receiving $316 billion in donations. Not-for-profit organizations must gain an understanding of what fundraising strategies are most productive for their organization. An urgent issue faced by leaders in not-for-profit organizations is their ability to obtain financial sustainability through fundraising and revenue generating activities (Aschari-Lincoln & Jäger, 2016). Not-for-profit organizations must create a plan of action of fundraising activities that will bring in the needed level of funding to operate its programs and perform services. Not-for-profit organizations need qualified individuals to conduct fundraising activities. Gregg et al. stated that nonprofits need to invest in identifying which is the most effective fundraising strategy for their organization. Sargeant and Shang (2016), explained that fundraisers leaders have to incorporate their intellect and emotions to achieve the fundraising goal for their respective organization. Successful nonprofits have to maintain diversified revenue sources, develop creative fundraising strategies, and continue to grow its products and services (Aschari-Lincoln et al.). Grizzle (2015), explained that increased levels of brand recognition lead to receiving higher returns on fundraising solicitations and respected nonprofits tend to be more successful with fundraising. Performance is a crucial factor for leaders working on fundraising goals. A study by Gregg et al. (2015) revealed that individuals who had 4 or more years were more likely to be successful in fundraising effectiveness.

Nonprofits organizations deal with the challenge of how to accurately portray a need for funding to solicit funds from donors (Bhati & Eikenberry, 2016). If donors do not see a need, they are less likely to donate to a nonprofit. Due to this predicament, nonprofits have to become creative in their fundraising strategies. The leaders of the organization are responsible for identifying methods to engage potential donors who require a level of innovation. One of the advantages of transformational leadership is the fact that it spurs innovation and the overall performance as a result. Leaders can use this innovation to craft fundraising letters. Nonprofits use distinct types of fundraising letters for fundraising campaigns. Lipovsky (2016) stated the goal of fundraising letters mailed to potential donors is to convince them of the worthiness of the cause and to encourage them to contribute to the nonprofit. Since the early 1970s across the globe, the not-for-profit sector has continued to grow leading to the evolution of a highly competitive industry (Bhati et al.). As nonprofits are competing for limited donors, they must design fundraising letters that will touch the hearts of the recipients. Sentimental feelings like compassion and sympathy have previously been correlated to be critical to initiating donations which is vital to charitable giving (Lipovsky). A challenge that the not-for-profit organizations have to address is when funding is decreased or eliminated, how do they move forward. Mishra (2016), ascertains it is during these times that nonprofits could face mission drift by seeking any available funding even if it does not align with the mission and vision of the organization. The organization was initially set up with a specific purpose to operate in alignment with their mission statement. Nonprofits need to seek funding that aligns with the organizational purpose.

There are challenges involved in the oversight of the not-for-profit sector that impacts the fundraising for those organizations. Nonprofits are primarily self-regulated where the majority of the oversight occurs by the state attorney general and the Internal Revenue Service (Morrison, 2016). McCann, Kohntopp, and Keeling (2015) stated that transformational leaders recognize talent in followers and concentrates on engaging the person and transforming them from a follower to a leader. These new leaders can become brand ambassadors and help introduce the organization to others. Organizations place a high priority on reputations because they can advance the relationships with stakeholders. A negative rating can reduce the number of donations that the not-for-profit organizations receive (Grant & Potoski, 2015). Another fundraising challenge nonprofits experience is contending with is the comparison of their performance to other not-for-profit organizations. Grant et al. posited that poor performance of one organization could be associated to other similar organizations, leading to a negative impression which leads the consumers to base their decision from contributions based on the collective reputations versus the individual reputation.

Wiggers (2016) did a study on the importance of fundraising which suggests that it lessens the dependency of the local community-based organizations and nongovernmental organizations on their respective national government. Nevertheless, Naidoo and Wu (2014) argued that nonprofits leaders previously relied heavily on fundraising activities and government grants for the primary source of income. Fundraising is more crucial now as many governments have decreased their allocations to civil society organizations. According to Bucci and Watera (2014), over the last 10 years donations made to the American not-for-profit sector have increased. Local fundraising contributes to the financial sustainability of an organization and disperses financial risks. Organizations that have a variety of funding sources are more likely to be better in a better position to handle the loss of funding sources or other setbacks (Wiggers). Trmal, Bustamam, and Mohamed (2015) stated that transformational leaders are idealistic, motivational, audacious, considerate thinkers, and possess charismatic personalities found in various positions throughout the organization. It will be essential for nonprofits to have leaders at different levels able to inspire others to give through their fundraising efforts for the organization. A newer area for fundraising for not-for-profit organizations is through social media such as Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, or

Twitter. Social media can be a robust tool for increasing awareness at the same time as fundraising (Tysiac, 2016). Nonprofits need to explore ways to build followers on social media. Tysiac, explains that social media will not replace the traditional fundraising methods, but it is a common fundraising tool that can be an alternative to attract younger donors and investors.

Donor Development

Donor development is an important role to be addressed in not-for-profit organizations seeking to be sustainable. Harris-Keith (2016) explained that one of the leadership skills required for success includes fundraising and donor relations, which is also an area where additional training is needed. Donors want to ensure that contributions can obtain maximum benefit (Byrd & Cote, 2016). Chen (2016) concluded that governance of nonprofits impacts donations received. Halina and Ewelina (2015) and Harris, Petrovits, and Yetman (2015) discovered that donations coincide with strong governance, independent audits, board oversight, good management characteristics, and easy access to financial information. Donors are most likely to donate to the organization when there is accountability, governance, and transparency. According to López-Arceiz, Bellostas Pérezgrueso and Rivera Torres (2017), transparency produces the ability to attract financial resources, create strategic value, and to promote economic efficiency. Nonprofits should seek to satisfy the needs of the donors when building relationships with donors. A not-for-profit should ensure that the needed information is readily accessible to the stakeholder and done transparently, as public understanding, and trust in the organization, serve as conditions necessary to find donors (Gazzola, Ratti, & Amelio, 2017). Donors are looking for the return on their investment or assurances that their donation is having a positive impact on the organization (Tysiac, 2016).

Not-for-profit leaders need to dedicate sufficient time to building strong relationships with the donors for their organization. These donor relationships will prove to be useful when fundraising. According to Trmal, Bustamam and Mohamed (2015), stated that transformational leaders possess the skills to understand what motivates team members which enables the leaders to assign the appropriate staff to fundraising duties. Fundraising is an important aspect the leaders of a not-for-profit have to complete. A motivated employee is more prone to be successful when completing a task. In recent years, Xiaodong et al. (2017) discovered that funders are providing more attention and funding support to organizational capacity. If a not-for-profit builds organizational capacity, it can help through fundraising adequate funds to create a sustainable organization. Organizations need to manage their relationship with stakeholders because the stronger the relationship is with stakeholders, the higher the probability of success (Pressgrove, 2017). Nonprofits seeking sustainability need a developed relationship with its donors as it can lead to a stronger fundraising campaign.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an area of increasing importance as stakeholders are more interested in holding leaders accountable for not only the financial issues of the organization but also the triple bottom line: people, environment, and revenue (Stryker & Stryker, 2017). According to Lin-hi, Hörisch, and Blumberg, (2015), in the not-for-profit domain corporate social responsibility is a general term for the social responsibility of organizations. Rim, Yang, and Lee (2016) explained that the creation of a partnership with a not-for-profit to create involvement in cause-supporting activities, which will help a company to be distinctive and invoke emotions and associations related to the partnership.

Not-for-profit organizations need to be well-organized and expend money wisely. The corporate social responsibility reporting includes metrics for cost savings from efforts in energy efficiency, waste reduction, and recycling. (Gazzola, Ratti, & Amelio, 2017). Additionally, James (2015) explained the importance of nonprofits competitively positioning themselves through the engagement of sustainability reporting. Kerr, Rouse and de Villers (2015) said that sustainability reporting is becoming a common practice among organizations worldwide. Saving money is just one of the top motivations for achieving sustainability. Particularly, when dealing with fixed budgets, and leaders cannot change them. According to James, organizations have seen the value in a sustainability report as it enhances the company's ability to achieve long-range goals effectually and proficiently. Organizations have to focus on sustainability to continue providing service to its customers in the future (Kerr et al.). A leader of a not-for-profit might focus on creating a report on the core services offered by the organization and identifying steps for users to ensure the continuation of programs.

Leaders of not-for-profit organizations need to operate efficiently to prevent wasting money and resources (Gazzola, Ratti, & Amelio, 2017). There is a correlation between corporate social responsibility and transformational leadership. Corporate social responsibility has the potential to contribute to an organization having a competitive benefit (Veríssimo & Lacerda, 2015). Nonprofits operate in a competitive environment thus creating the need to differentiate the organizations from others in the same field. Sustainability is a multifaceted concept that has a variety of meanings (Pati & Lee, 2016). Bhanot and Bapat (2015) explained that it is important to note that financial sustainability is only a primary component of sustainability. James (2015) indicated that organizations of various sizes embrace sustainability as a method to preserve resources for future generations while continuing to produce value for the present generations. Corporate social responsibility includes business practices that address economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic endeavors of the organization (Kima & Kimb, 2016). Kerr, Rouse, and de Villiers (2015) stated an organization should concentrate on sustainability efforts as it works to provide ongoing services to its customers.

Sustainability

Due to economic shifts have led nonprofits to examine ways they can obtain sustainability. Sustainability means different things to different organizations; to include having economic, social, and environmental dimensions, which makes it challenging to quantify (Banerjee, 2011; Chin, Schuster, Tanzil, Beloff & Cobb, 2015; Hailey & Salway, 2016). Adams, Muir, and Hoque (2014) explain there is no one agreed upon definition of sustainability regarding performance measures as that is inclusive of stakeholder engagement, economic impacts on the organization, and financial measures in addition to the analysis of the financial accounts. According to Hailey et al. the definition for not-for-profit sustainability is the ability to continue to fulfill its mission; over time, while at the same time meeting the needs of relevant stakeholders, especially its beneficiaries and supporters. McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram, & Sullivan Mort, (2015), explained that although nonprofits face challenges to sustainability while seeking to fulfill the missions in their communities, the sector continues to have growth. Sustainability is an on-going process not a single act of achievement. According to McDonald et al. managers of not-for-profit indicate that one of the primary and urgent obstacles is the fiscal sustainability of the organization, which can prevent it from achieving its mission.

In today's business environment, leaders cannot ignore the expectations for not-for-profit organizations to operate sustainably. Consequently, nonprofits bear the responsibility to have a leader in place who is capable of transforming the behaviors necessary to meet these challenges (Allen et al., 2016; Asencio, 2016; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Fitzgerald & Schutte, 2010; Jyoti & Dev, 2015; Mozommel & Haan, 2016; Sang et al., 2016; Valero, Jung, & Andrew, 2015). There is an expectation that nonprofits will be sustainable. The desired business is when the organization can generate a profit while achieving its social objectives. As opined by Green and Dalton (2016), a financially sound organization can maintain its economic goals and social justice goals without compromises.

Sustainability is a word that is becoming used more frequently in organizations. In 2009, not-for-profit organizations spent $1.9 trillion to the nation's economy making investments in all 50 states (Williams-Gray, 2016). Thus, it is essential that not-for-profit organizations are sustainable because of the value they contribute to meeting societal needs. Most organizations have a goal to become or remain a sustainable organization.

Sustainability satisfies the requirements of the present without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their respective needs (Craig & Allen, 2013). When organizations are considering ways that will allow the organization to be sustainable, they must ensure the actions will not inhibit future growth potentials (Craig et al.).

Fifka, Kühn, Loza Adaui, and Stiglbauer, (2016) defined sustainability as encompassing the economic, social, and environmental components. Renukappa, Egbu, Akintoye and Suresh (2013) noted sustainability concerns the management of an organization’s total business including the impact on its immediate stakeholders, the society, and the environment in which it operates. One of the most significant concerns for most not-for-profit organizations is the economic or financial sustainability and the identification of strategies for development to access new funds or the ability to ensure financial viability and sustainability (Hailey & Salway, 2016). Mucai, Wanijku, and Murigi (2014) posited a project is sustainable when it can continue providing benefits to its clientele for an extended period, particularly after the financial assistance has ended. Follman, Cseh, and Brudney (2016) and Stecker (2014) explained that the leaders of not-for-profit organizations build relationships which leads to revenue that allows the not-for-profit to achieve its mission. However, not-for-profit organizations can heavily rely on external resources such as donors, which is often an inconsistent source of revenue. In some instances, funders donate to organizations based on their comfort level with the relationship with the leadership and they might not continue to donate if the leadership of the organization changes which presents a challenge for sustainability (Morgen Stahl, 2013). Mucai et al. (2014) noted some not-for-profit organizations must face diminishing resources while they attempt to secure as many donations as possible, which can lead to a decreased level of effectiveness for the not-for-profit organization.

Not-for-profit organizations are under growing pressure to rely on different sources of income such as commercial, partnerships with public agencies, and private for-profit corporations to maintain a sustainable level of funding (Valentinov & Vacekova, 2015). The lack of sufficient revenue can lead to a reduction in the services, experienced staff become laid off, and a decrease in continued education for staff (Hailey & Salway, 2016). Due to the challenges, nonprofits face they need transformational leaders who are also visionary leaders to help in the formation of an inspirational vision for the future. This new vision provides a critical role in in the development of new services and products for the organization which may be necessary for sustainability. According to Renukappa, Egbu, Akintoye, and Suresh (2013), sustainability is a multifaceted issue involving various processes executed and influenced by stakeholders that establish the tone and guide corporate decisions. Not-for-profit organizations success or failure depends on their ability to judge the business climate and evolve with the changing times. Smith (2014) explains sustainability is a trend that continues to grow, as business organizations examine diverse ways to leverage this trend. Not-for-profit organizations must understand how to undertake sustainability practices. Further, Smith states the sustainability practices include monitoring the financial performance and understanding how it relates to the strategic planning objectives.

Nonprofits can engage in creative partnerships and use shared leadership to help create a sustainable organization. The survival of not-for-profit organizations is dependent upon obtaining and maintaining of funding over an extended period (Besel et al., 2004). Not-for-profit organizations typically employ leaders who concentrate on meeting the needs of the community that are currently being unfulfilled. Not-for-profit organizations have a distinct business model (Cullom & Cullom, 2011). At times, the focus is on the mission and vision without considering the sustainability of the organization. Valero, Jung, and Andrew (2015) believed that transformational leaders could exchange ideas to meet the needs of both organizations and the communities they serve.

Routhieaux (2015) noted that in recent years, there had been a trend of constraints on government and foundation sources amongst other funding sources. These changes have created challenges for nonprofits due to the decreased funding amounts and not-for-profit allocations. Sustainability is a necessity if the organization is going to operate efficiently (Cullom & Cullom, 2011). In seeking to work efficiently, organizations that engage in shared leadership provides solutions for nonprofits to continue fulfilling their mission and vision while generating a profit. According to Ghasabeh, Soosay, and Reaiche (2015), transformational leaders' engagement in organizational innovation allows the leaders to facilitate the creation of new knowledge and ideas which may serve as motivation for employees. It is essential that the entire organization work together to fulfill the goals of the partnership. Therefore, some nonprofits have reexamined their missions, programs, and operations to identify efficient ways they can operate while building sustainability (Routhieaux). As explained by Sheremenko, Escalante, and Florkowski (2017), financial sustainability means to become financially self-sufficient versus relying on aid from donors. The collaboration between nonprofits and the business sector that will enable nonprofits to continue solving society's problem while producing revenue for their organization. As Cullom and Cullom continues, the creation of income can help nonprofits achieve a sustainable model.

Nonprofits are operating in a constrained environment where it is crucial that they maintain their economic viability and growth, and this has become a serious issue for addressing (Al-tabbaa, Leach, & March, 2014). There are a limited number of donors which raises concerns over the financial sustainability of the organization. Some nonprofits face challenges when they depend on one funding source to cover the majority of expenses for the organization (Preece, 2015). Nonprofits need to have a continual flow of revenue for the organization while being cognizant of the challenges of being heavily dependent upon limited revenue services (Ryan & Irvine, 2012). Bilodeau, Podger, and Abd-El-Aziz (2014) stated a useful strategy that nonprofits should use is the establishment of revenue generating programs, which would enable the organization to be sustainable while continuing to operate its programs and services. Having a limited number of donors can threaten an organization's financial sustainability and the ability to provide services. As noted by Preece (2015), nonprofits need to obtain a diverse set of funding sources and not be dependent upon one funding source. If an issue arises with the predominant funding source which can result in the not-for-profit receiving a decreased amount of funding causing the not-for-profit not to be able to maintain its operation with the remaining funding sources (Ryan and Irvine, 2012).

Sustainability becomes an even greater issue when governments reduce the number of grants they give in times of reduced budgets, which can create an environment of financial uncertainty. Kim (2015) and Lu (2015) explained that the government is one of the most critical sources of funding for not-for-profit organizations. There are levels of uncertainty about the levels of government funding awarded yearly and concerns about future allocations (Al-tabbaa, Leach, & March, 2014). Ryan and Irvine (2012) suggest that nonprofits avoid being over-reliant on one primary funding source such as government funding but instead have diversified funding sources. Due to the changing funding landscape, charities are relying more heavily on grants than in previous years (Su & Walters, 2013). The changes associated with the funding landscape puts not-for-profit organizations more at risk of financial instability. The long-term sustainability of nonprofits depends on their capacity to be efficient, competitive, profitable, have legitimacy, and create lasting impact in the communities in which it serves (Yu, 2016). To be successful not-for-profit organizations need to understand each funding source and how to expend it efficiently to maximize the opportunity for sustainability (Preece, 2015).

Summary and Transition

The information in Section 1 comprised the need for not-for-profit organizations to be sustainable so they can continue providing valuable services to the communities in which it serves. Section 1 included a specific business problem and a valid research question. The study may benefit not-for-profit leaders who are looking to identify specific fundraising strategies and donor development skills needed for their organizations to be sustainable. The literature review consisted of an in-depth synthesis of previous studies researchers performed to validate why sustainability is vital to a not-for-profit organization. My research study consisted of two additional sections.

Section 2 presents the role of the researcher to ensure the readers understood the responsibility the researcher used when conducting the study to eliminate bias and to provide the protection for the participants. Section 2 presented the explanation for the process to select the participants. The methodology and decision selected for the study expanded upon the reason for the chosen method and design as the best choices for this study. It also included a rationale for the proposed data collection process. Section 3 presented the findings of the study, the conclusion, and recommendations for future studies.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore the fundraising strategies and donor development skills that not-for-profit leaders used to sustain their business. The targeted population was a not-for-profit organizations' leaders in a Michigan-based not-for-profit organization that served the underprivileged, leaders who have demonstrated fundraising strategies and donor development skills that enable sustainability. The results of this study could contribute to social change by identifying strategies that can help not-for-profit organizations become financially sustainable so that not-for-profit organizations can continue providing quality services in the local communities they serve while maintaining a consistent level of employment for employees.

In Section 2, I focus on the management strategies that leaders of a not-for-profit organization used to sustain their organization beyond 5 years. Currently, there are over 1.5 million not-for-profit organizations that play critical roles in the U.S. economy (Gonzalez, 2018). However, financial sustainability remains one of the primary concerns that not-for-profit organizations face, due to a variety of factors such as fundraising efforts and budgetary issues (Gonzalez, 2018). In this section, I define the methods I used to explore the fundraising strategies and donor development skills that leaders of a not-for-organization used to sustain their organization beyond 5 years. The main topics in Section 2 included the role of the researcher, research method, research design, population and sampling, the participants, and ethical research practices.

Role of the Researcher

In this qualitative, single case study, I collected, analyzed, organized, and interpreted the data. I was responsible for the data collection for this doctoral study. The primary goal was to add value to not-for-profit organizations and their ability to achieve sustainability. Interviews and questionnaires were the primary data collection tools used for this doctoral study. Qualitative methods often rely on interviews with a subset of individuals who possess specific characteristics (Kristensen & Ravn, 2015). I used a digital recorder to capture the dialog in the interview. The interviewee's preference determined the time of the interviews. The interview process consisted of a standard list of questions that the interviewer asked of all interviewees as a part of the interview protocol. I sought to obtain consistency by asking all respondents the same set of questions. I used semistructured questions when speaking with the interviewees to allow themto expound on the data as needed to capture their lived experiences. The use of open-ended interviews allowed for self-reflection—a trademark of qualitative research (Opsal et al., 2016).

The recording of the interviews provided me the opportunity to fully engage with the interviewee without worrying about missing information in my notes. After the completion of the interview, I promptly began the verbatim transcription of the recordings. Categorization of the data ensued, according to the themes related to the research question. Key sentences and phrases had coding done for analysis purposes (Kristensen & Ravn, 2015). Kristensen et al. ensured that participants received a copy of the transcription for member checking purposes and to limit bias. Data collection continued until reaching the point of data saturation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2015).

I had extensive experience related to not-for-profit organizations and had worked in the not-for-profit community since 2002. I currently works as an executive director for a not-for-profit organization that provides technical assistance to other not-for-profit organizations. I did not have any relationship with the not-for-profit organization involved in this study. I worked with not-for-profit organizations of varying sizes in over 28 states throughout her career and continued to be active in the not-for-profit community serving on committees and being an advisor. I had experience working with not-for-profit organizations on methods to achieve sustainability for their organization. However, I did not have any direct experience with financial and donor development strategies.

I adhered to the principles and guidelines contained in the Belmont Report protocol for ethical treatment of participants. A few of the critical tenets of the Belmont Report was respect for all persons, beneficence, and justice (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). The Belmont Report outlined the standards of how to ethically treat study participants including vulnerable populations. Study participants must be able to give informed consent and receive the opportunity to determine what will or will not happen to them (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). The participants should be at least 18 years of age or older, not in prison, and not mentally incapacitated. Participants received a complete disclosure of the purpose of the study and usage of the data collected. Each participant signed informed consent form for participation with the ability to withdraw any time from the study.

Participants

There were four primary criteria that I looked for in a participant. First, the participants for this study were managers and directors of a Michigan not-for-profit organization. Second, the participants had sufficient knowledge of the subject matter of fundraising strategies and donor development skills. Third, the participant's job within the organization involved fundraising, cultivating relationships with the donor or working to create a sustainable organization. Lastly, the participants had 3 or more years of direct experience with fundraising and donor development skills.

I followed the outlined steps below to gain access to the participants. I worked to solicit a list of potential participants with the primary point of contact for the organization. The selection of participants for the study helped shape the research questions, data collection, data analysis, and findings (Reybold, Lammert, & Stribling, 2013). The participants had to be able to make a meaningful impact on the various facets of the research (Yin, 2014). All individuals identified as potential participants received notification via email for the criteria and permission to participate in the study. Before participating in the study, individuals received a written summary of the goals and objectives of the research (Habibi & Zargham-Boroujeni, 2015; Jafarzadeh-Kenarsari, Ghahiri, Ketefian, 2015; Yardley, Watts, Pearson, & Richardson, 2013). I retained copies of the informed consent form for all participants of the study. The interviews for this case study occurred at the time convenient for the interviewees (Yin). I conducted the interviews where the not-for-profit leaders conducted business. The purpose of this decision was to engage in observations of the participant in their work environment

(Petrulaitiene & Jylhä, 2015; Reybold et al., Yen, Trede, & Patterson, 2016). The observations of the participants were useful for the triangulation of the data (Abdalla, Oliveira, Azevedo, & Gonzalez, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015). In an effort, to maximize the limited time with the participants, I asked to conduct the meetings in an area outside of the workspace of the participants to minimize any distractions (Brunia, De Been & van der Voordt, 2016; Bryant, 2012; Plester & Hutchison, 2016).

I used three methods for data collection for the study: recorded interviews, handwritten notes to capture nuances, and documentation (financial records, public website data, results of fundraising campaigns, and evidence of donor development cultivation representing 5 years of growth) from the organization to triangulate the data a practice as suggested by Yin (2014). During the interviews with employees, I recorded and afterward transcribed the interview. I asked participants for oral and written permission to record the interviews and provided assurance the data usage was solely for the research study (Jafarzadeh-Kenarsari, Ghahiri, Habibi, & Zargham-Boroujeni, 2015). As suggested by Ketefian (2015), participants could withdraw from the study at any time. All information gathered from the participants would remain private and confidential. I was responsible for facilitating the conversation to accomplish the research goals while remaining unbiased (Yin).

Research Method and Design

Research Method

A qualitative study with a case study design was the research method for this study to address the research question. The use of a case study design described specific fundraising knowledge and donor development skills that Michigan not-for-profit leaders could use to build sustainable organizations. Researchers, use qualitative research to emphasize the essential nature of the investigation and questions to explore the meaning of social experiences (Sarma, 2015). Using qualitative research, I sought to uncover the mechanisms not-for-profit leaders used through their lived experiences. The choice of research method was driven in part by the research questions, foundation, and objectives (Venkatesh, Brown, & Sullivan, 2016).

In this research, I sought to obtain rapport with the interviewees to help them feel more comfortable during the interview process. In qualitative research, rapport is of particular importance due to the setting of conducting interviews as a data collection method (Hiller & Vears, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) explain the use of quantitative research is for precise measurement and the statistical hypothesis testing. I did not seek to do a precise measurement or to test a statistical hypothesis; therefore, the quantitative methodology was not appropriate for this study. Venkatesh, Brown, and Sullivan (2016) stated the use of mixed method research is applicable when the intent is to view the entire situation to explain a phenomenon for which existing research is incomplete, inconclusive, or vague. The use of mixed methods is expensive and time-consuming and is applicable when neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are adequate by themselves to fully understand (Gobo, 2015); therefore, the mixed methods methodology was not appropriate for this study.

Research Design

The researcher used a single case study as the research design. The use of the case study design allowed the researcher to gain insight into fundraising knowledge and donor development skill that not-for-profit organizational leaders in Michigan used to sustain their businesses. A properly executed case study allowed for a thorough comprehension of a particular phenomenon (Dresch, Lacerda, & Miguel, 2015). The use of case study allowed for the opportunity for the addressing of the research question to focus on the intended subject (Dresch et al.). Case studies are useful to obtain a more in-depth and inclusive intelligence of phenomena versus the use of other approaches (Henry & Foss, 2015). The case study had been determined to be an acceptable research strategy when conducting exploratory research and addressed the *how* and *why* questions (Yin, 2012; Yin, 2014). The how and why questions in case study research helped explain the reason an activity occurs.

The other possible research designs included ethnography and phenomenology. Ethnography is a distinguishing type of research and a complicated research method that focuses on human culture (Gheradi, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I did not focus on observing human culture; therefore, the ethnography design was not appropriate. Budd and Velasquez (2014) explain that phenomenology is essentially the study of phenomena where it seeks to explore the thing in which one perceives. As such there can be multiple perceptions of an object. Budd and Velasquez operate on the perspectives of outcomes first. Phenomenology does not have one mutually agreed upon definition, and it features several distinctions (Patton, 2015). A phenomenology method is an approach that entails many subtle distinctions and addressing subjective experiences (Gill, 2014). Phenomenology design is most useful for understanding the lived experiences of subjects. A participant's assumptions, prejudices, and subjective experience could introduce biases to this study; therefore, the phenomenological design was not appropriate.

It was paramount that I identify a sufficient number of participants to achieve data saturation. Typically, 15 to 20 interviews are adequate to achieve data saturation and to determine the trends from the collected materials (Martelli et al., 2015). The interviewer recognized data saturation has occurred when there is, no new information received from the participants during the interview. I was observant during the interviews to determine if any new information was forthcoming to support the phenomenon.

Population and Sampling

There were several types of sampling methods that could be potential options for the study such as random sampling, purposeful sampling, snowball sampling, or quota sampling. I selected purposeful sampling for this qualitative case study to interview potential participants that had relevant experience, knowledge of the subject matter, and successful strategies of the donor development strategies (Jones, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yilmaz, 2013). I used purposive sampling to discover, understand, and gain insight from the appropriate participants about donor development skills and financial strategies (Merriam et al., 2015; O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed & Cook, 2014; Yin, 2015). The sample size in qualitative studies is pertinent due to the complexity of data collected from participants (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Merriam et al. 2015, O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). In purposeful sampling, there is no set number of participants to interview, but instead, sample size occurs when data saturation is reached (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbon, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell; van Rijnsoever, 2017).

The definition for data saturation is the point at which the data collection does not produce any new or relevant data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Oberoi, Jiwa, McManus, & Hodder, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). I knew data saturation was complete in this study when during the interview, it yields no additional information but instead yields the same information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, & Cook, 2014; Yin, 2014). I engaged in member checking with the interviewees where they received the opportunity to review the analysis of the interview for accuracy (Hadi & José Closs, 2016; Merriam et al.; Simpson, & Quigley, 2016). I also used member checking if changes occurred to the analysis of the interview, the interviewees had a second opportunity to review the information again for accuracy (Hadi et al., 2016; Merriam et al., 2015; Simpson et al., 2016).

The sample size is small in qualitative research and not concentrated on including a certain number of participants (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). The projected target population for this study was five leaders in a not-for-profit organization that works in Michigan. The eligibility criteria for this study were (a) participant in a leadership position that is responsible for donor development and financial strategies for the organization with at least 5 years of experience, (b) at least 18 years of age, and (c) available for a face-to-face interview, (d) and was willing to participate. My approach enabled participants to share their rich background of comprehensive knowledge of successful donor development skills and fundraising strategies used to sustain not-for-profit organizations.

Ethical Research

I engaged in the informed consent process for all participants in this study, so each had adequate information about the research, thereby avoiding overt or implicit coercion so that all possible participants are enabled to make an informed decision about their involvement in the research (Parsons, 2015). According to Parsons, adequate information for the participants includes an informational sheet on the research, what it entails for participation, the fact that participation is voluntary, and the method for the data storage. The use of informed consent is to connect ethical principles for researchers and participants including the methods to use for the protection of their confidentiality (Lin, 2016; Rumney, Anderson, & Ryan, 2015). When the individuals decided, they would participate in the study they received the consent form to sign (Appendix). No participants received incentives for their participation. I received Walden University IRB approval number 07-11-18-0475144 for this study before contacting participants for the study. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) and Yin (2015) recommended asking for a statement of informed consent from participants at the onset of the recorded interview. At the beginning of the interview, I reconfirmed with participants their willing participation in the study using the same language from the consent form. I protected the anonymity of the participants when recording and transcribing the interviews (Yin). According to Greaney et al. (2012), novice researchers need to understand the requirements included in the Belmont Report to disclose participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time through a written request, through email, in person, or over the telephone. To ensure that the ethical protection of participants was adequate, I followed the guidelines in the Belmont Report (Greaney et al.).

The study represented adherence to the Walden University ethical guidelines and adhered to the Belmont Report protocols to maintain ethical standards (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov, 2015). I sought to protect the anonymity of participants. One method to ethically preserve the anonymity of participants and organizations is to use pseudonyms for the identification of participants and the organization. Pseudonyms can replace the real names of participants, including the ability for searching, and if necessary, tracing them back to real identities (Lin, 2016). The data from this study does not contain any information that could aid in the identification of any of the participants personally, or organizations because there was a need to disclose the data confidentially and explained the method of storage for the information to protect the privacy of participants (Greaney et al., 2012). For 5 years, there will be secure storage of the data, recorded interviews, and supporting documents. The maintenance of the data and information will occur in a password protected USB memory drive throughout 5 years. The location of the hard copy of the data will be in a locked box for no less than 5 years. The engagement of these steps was to ensure the protection of confidential information obtained from participants, through interviews, and from supporting documentation.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection was the first stage in the research process, which helps researchers enhance the quality of a social research study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Rimando, 2015;

Yin, 2015). The researcher can be the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research (Akaeze, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Yin, 2014). As the researcher, I was the primary data collection instrument in this qualitative single case study Merriam and Tisdell (2015); Sidorova, Arnaboldi, and Radaelli (2016); and Yin (2015) mentioned that information collection could include face-to-face interviews, semistructured interviews, interview transcriptions, and analysis of steps taken. These collection instruments can help researchers gain a situational description of the not-for-profit leaders fundraising strategies and donor development skills. I conducted a qualitative single case research study using semistructured interviews and collection of company documentation.

A semistructured interview is a method used by qualitative researchers to solicit facts and knowledge about the phenomenon through a sequence of interview questions (Mojtahed, Nunes, Martins, & Peng, 2014). The use of semistructured interviews can foster an environment for the introduction, development, and discussion of ideas and meanings at length to understand the phenomenon (Mojtahed et al., 2014). I used the interview questions as a guide which directed the qualitative interview (Yin, 2015). I used an interview protocol as a part of my data collection, which included eight interview questions designed to capture interview responses, ensured consistency, and facilitated recording of accurate transcriptions of the action taken by each leader (Appendix).

The interview questions were part of a protocol for quality control and ensured each participant received the same questions for uniformity during the interview process. Before the recording of the interview, I sought permission from each interviewee. Also, I obtained written authorization from the participant that they are voluntary participating in the study, the usage of the information collected, the methods used for the protection of their privacy, and methods for the secure storing of data. Member checking occurred by asking the interviewees to review the interview summary for reliability and validity purposes.

Data collection is the first stage in the research process, which helps researchers enhance the quality of a social research study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Rimando, 2015; Yin, 2015). As explained by Lincoln and Guba (2013); Merriam & Tisdell; Stake (2010), I will be the primary data collection instrument in this qualitative single case study. Merriam & Tisdell; Sidorvova, Arnaboldi, and Radaeli (2016); and mentioned that information collection could include face-to-face interviews, semistructured interviews, interview transcriptions, and analysis of steps taken. These collection instruments can help researchers gain a situational description of the not-for-profit leaders fundraising strategies and donor development skills. I conducted a qualitative single case research study using semistructured interviews and collection of company documentation.

A semistructured interview is a method used by qualitative researchers to solicit facts and knowledge about the phenomenon through a sequence of interview questions (Holland, 2017; Mojtahed, Nunes, Martins, & Peng, 2014; Yin, 2015). The use of semistructured interviews can foster an environment for the introduction, development, and discussion of ideas and meanings at length to understand the phenomenon (Holland; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Mojtahed et al., 2014). I used the interview questions as a guide which was used to direct the qualitative interview (Merriam & Tisdell; Yin, 2014; Yin, 2015). I used an interview protocol; as a part of her data collection instruments, which included the seven interview questions designed to capture interview responses, ensured consistency, and facilitated recording of accurate transcriptions of the action taken by each leader (Appendix).

The interview questions were part of a protocol for quality control and to ensure each participant had the same questions for uniformity during the interview process (Holland, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015.; Yin, 2015). Before the recording of the interview, I sought permission from each interviewee (Akaeze, 2016; Merriam et al., 2015; Yin, 2015). Also, I obtained written authorization from the participant that they were voluntarily participating in the study, how the information collected would be used, the ways used for the protection of their privacy, and methods for the secured storing of data. Member checking occurred by asking the interviewees to review the interview analysis for reliability and validity purposes (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Merriam et al., 2015; Yin, 2015). Appendix contains the interview protocol and interview questions.

Data Collection Technique

Walden University IRB permitted me to perform this research project before data collection began (O'Brian et al., 2014; Wenner, 2016; Yin, 2015). Upon approval from Walden University (Approval No. 07-11-18-0475144), I began the data collection process.

I did not conduct a pilot study (Dikko, 2016; Eldridge et al., 2016; Samaan et al., 2015). The primary data collection consisted of semistructured interviews, interview notes, and company document collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2014; Yin, 2015). Additionally, I reviewed brochures, financial report, and the organization's website to understand the mechanisms used for donor development and fundraising. The anticipated documentation for collection included annual reports, information from the organization's website, and fundraising reports. The interview protocol included the introduction of the interview and set the tone for the interview (Appendix). The process for the semistructured interviews consisted of an introduction, opening script, interview questions, and a closing. Before conducting the interview, I gave participants the option to select a suitable location to minimize distractions and sought permission to audio record the contents of the interview (Merriam & Tisdell; Nelson, 2016; Theil, Bagdasarov, Harkrider, Johnson, & Mumford, 2012). I began the interview stating the purpose of the research project and to build rapport with the participant. I anticipated interviewing five participants.

After the introduction and opening, I started to record each interview for accuracy and to create a thorough interview transcript (Rabionet, 2011; Theil, Bagdasarov, Harkrider, Johnson, & Mumford, 2012; Yin, 2015). I followed a scripted interview questionnaire consisting of the open-ended question while recording the response to compensate for accuracy while transcribing the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Mertens, 2014; Yin). During the interview, I watched for nonverbal cues such as facial expressions and body language as a method of data collection (Merriam & Tisdell; Yin, 2014; Yin). When applicable, I asked, follow-up questions to probe for clarity and additional information. Interpretation is a component of observation (Stake, 2010; Yin). The interviews ended with a closing and a thank you to the participants along with my contact information for any future questions or concerns. On a subsequent visit, I asked to observe the participant as they engaged in donor development activities and communications along with the usage of the donor development software. As I observed the participants, I looked for actions and behaviors that corresponded to the implementation steps the participants shared in the interview regarding donor development and fundraising strategies. The data collection occurred throughout four weeks. I recorded, transcribed, and analyzed each interview. The storage of the interview transcripts was placed on a password protected memory stick and will remain locked in a storage box for 5 years after which time permanent erasure of the data on the memory stick will occur. The audio recordings will be in a locked file cabinet for 5 years after which time permanent erasure of all audio recordings will occur.

There are various advantages and disadvantages associated with the qualitative methods of data collection and analysis in the research project. The advantages of using the qualitative research method to collect data involve allowing the researcher to conduct face-to-face interviews with in-depth commentary, take reflective notes, and gives researchers the ability to observe participants as they explore the phenomenon. (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Saldaña, 2015; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2015). Another advantage of a face-to-face interview is the collection of lived experiences and knowledge of best practices from the participants (Merriam & Tisdell; Stake; Yin). While data collection has its advantages, it also has its share of disadvantages. Observation may not always be practical as participants may not have the ability to modify their schedule for the researcher for a face-to-face interview (Bamu, Schauwer & Hove, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell; Yin, 2014). Another disadvantage of observing a face-to-face interview is determining what to observe when multiple events are occurring at one time (Merriam & Tisdell; Stake; Yin). I requested permission to shadow leaders as they use donor development or fundraising software. Shadowing will be for on-the-job learning and for career advancement which can lead to learning more about a subject matter (Jones, Okeke, Bullock, Wells, & Monrouxe, 2016; Service, Dalgic, & Thornton, 2016; Xiong, 2016). During the shadowing process, I ensured that I did not have access to any personally identifying information about donors or confidential records.

I scheduled a follow-up meeting so that the interviewee can participate in member checking through the review of my analysis of responses for accuracy and completeness. If there were any discrepancies, I would make the necessary corrections to my analysis of responses, and I would provide the interviewee with a second opportunity to review the summary of my analysis of the interview. I used member checking to ensure the collection of precise information, and member checking occurred throughout the verification of interview responses to the questions by the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2015).

Data Organization Technique

Conducting qualitative case study research involves the collection and organization of empirical data (Dos Santos Bortolocci Espejo, Portulhak, & Pacheco, 2017; Kimball, 2016; Senom & Othman, 2014; Yin, 2014). Chen, Mao, and Liu (2014), Merriam and Tisdell (2015); Yin (2015) maintained that the researcher is responsible for the data collection, storage, and analysis. The identification of themes and codes for the data analysis and the interpretation will be essential to the data analysis process (Elo et al., 2014; Yin, 2015). To obtain a clear interpretation of meaning, the coding of the themes and the organizing according to the data, concepts, and experiences obtained by the interviewees with the goal of producing high-quality data analysis.

Akaeze (2016) and Holland (2017) states it is helpful to compile data in an organized manner and qualitative researchers engage numerous methods during the data collection process. My case study research involved the collection and organization of data acquired through interview notes, a digital recording device, and the transcription of interview data collected from the face-to-face semistructured interviews that consist of 7 questions. Coding enables the researcher to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2014; Yin, 2015). The participants received a code such as P1, P2, P3, and so forth to protect the confidentiality of the participants and protect any personally identifying or confidential information contained in the interview transcripts.

I recorded, transcribed, and analyzed each interview. The storage of the interview transcripts are on a password protected memory stick and will remain locked in a storage box for 5 years after which time permanent erasure of the data on the memory stick will occur. The audio recordings are in a locked file cabinet for 5 years after which time permanent erasure of all audio recordings will occur.

Data Analysis

At the end of the interviews, I transcribed the interviews and field notes leading to the beginning of the data analysis process. Frequently in studies, qualitative interview data is the primary strategy researchers use to obtain the in-depth meaning of lived experiences of participants in their words (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, Yin, 2014). The raw data obtained from the data collection process included interviews, audio recordings, and observations for use in the data analysis process. I wrote down my observations from the interviews along with the audio recordings will become transcripts. The data analysis process for this study included coding, sorting, querying, and analysis of the data gathered from the interviews, participation observations, and field notes.

I reviewed the information readily available through the company website and company reports. I obtained methodological triangulation through the comparison of company documents with findings from the interviews and observations (Abdalla, Oliveira, Azevedo, & Gonzalez, 2018; Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Eyal & Rom, 2015). The data analysis for this single case study was methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation consisted of semistructured interviews, observations, and document collection (Cope, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2014). Triangulation is a strategy I used for credibility and internal validity, which involved the use of multiple sources of data such as observations, interviews, and private or public documents (Carter et al.; Merriam & Tisdell; Patton, 2015; Yin).

I used NVivo12 software to assist with the coding and analysis of the interviews (Houghton, Murphy, Shaw, & Casey, 2015; Nelson, 2016; Rodik & Primorac, 2015). The installation of NVivo software was on a password-protected laptop for use. NVivo software is a means to organize, store, code, and manage collected data which can improve the research dependability. I used NVivo software, for the data analysis process.

The NVivo software was a method to develop themes from the interview data and for data management. NVivo software allowed the researcher group raw data into clusters and themes based on the participant's experiences. The data inputted into the NVivo software served as a guide for the analysis process to identify focal points, shared perspectives, and distinct contributions (Waller, Hockin, & Smith, 2017). I typed up the information from the recordings by listening closely to the audio from the interviews. Next, I uploaded the transcripts into the NVivo software for coding and analysis to identify any recurrent themes based on the data collected. The NVivo software was helpful to manage, code, and report on the semistructured interview data responses when applicable. The NVivo software also allowed the researcher the ability to conduct an in-depth analysis of data through the search, query, and visualization tools which can show connections in support of my findings.

Coding is the sorting of data according to themes and topics through the assignment of simple words or short phrases relevant to a larger set of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2015). The coding process I used included the creation of a transcript of the interviews, gathering the transcribed data, review of the interview transcriptions to look for themes by identification of repeated words and phrases, formation and coding clusters of information into themes, elicit meaning from the categories of common and unique information, and to begin the member checking process (Merriam et al., 2015; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2015). Random participant codes represented each study participant as a method to preserve their identity. I incorporated the data collected from the documentation and interviews to ensure the contribution of all pertinent data throughout the data analysis process. I analyzed and summarized the study results through coded transcripts, inclusive notes, and company documentation. I reviewed and labeled all company documentation received before I begun the data analysis. I used the face-to-face semistructured interviews, website documentation, my participant observations, and audio recordings for the data coding of patterns and themes based on the perspective of the participant. As the researcher, I organized the data into distinct categories. I placed all information including interview content, content from the organization website, brochures, and the document collection used for coding of the identification of themes. The identification of the information from the data sources was used to find commonalities categorized by codes for analysis, documentation, and triangulation. The assigning of codes occurred when I sorted the data into sections for the construction of categories and themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2015). Lastly, I focused on the identification of key themes related to the literature.

The formatting of the interview questions provided me with information on the four focus topic areas of the literature review: (a) donor development skills, (b) fundraising strategies, (c) transformational leadership, and (d) not-for-profit sustainability. Coding reflected the themes of the study's central research question: What specific fundraising strategies and donor development skills do not-for-profit leaders need for their organization to be sustainable. I placed the results of the themes into a table and confirmed the alignment of these themes based on the responses received from the participants in the interviews, field notes, and website documentation.

The concepts measured by the research instrument included the nine semistructured interview questions which determined what donor development skills and fundraising strategies not-for-profit leaders use to create a sustainable nonprofit.

Reliability and Validity

I explored the role of reliability and validity in achieving a qualitative single case research study. The purpose of reliability in a study is the ability for a measure, procedure, or instrument to be replicated using the same conditions which will produce the same results (Chatha, Butt, & Tariq, 2015; Kihn & Ihantola, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Reliability

Dependability concerns the reliability of the findings of the study (Elo et al., 2014; Nelson, 2016; Powell, Overton, & Simpson, 2014). Dependability refers to the rational, traceable, and prudently documented research process (Kihn & Ihantola, 2015; Peyrovi, Raiesdana, & Mehrdad, 2014; Sharifirad, Mortazavi, Rahimnia & Farahi, 2017). The ability to replicate research is a component of dependability (Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013; Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014; Peyrovi et al.). I ensured reliability and dependability through the documentation of my steps by using a single case study design, semistructured interviews, observations, transcript review, and member checking. Through the use of standardized interview questions and the interview protocol (Appendix), I worked to ensure that the wording of the questions was consistent with the foundation of my doctoral study which added to the reliability of the study. In qualitative studies, the steps to ensure replication includes member checking and rich, in-depth description of the research process (Kemparaj & Chavan, 2013; O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, & Cook, 2014; Peyrovi et al.). I used member checking to ensure the dependability of this single qualitative case study. Each of the participants had the opportunity to review the analysis of the interview for accuracy. If I make any corrections to the analysis, the participants will have a second opportunity to review the changes made to the analysis.

Validity

Commonly referred to as the extent to which conclusions reached in the research study give an accurate description or explanation of what occurred is validity (Gaus, 2017; Kihn & Ihantola, 2015; Yin, 2015). Validity, internal and external validity, are factors of quality research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Odegard & Bjorkly, 2012; Yin). I used methodological triangulation, a tape recorder, interview notes, and member checking for validity. Semistructured in-depth interview questions (Appendix) will aid the researcher to probe and obtain detailed responses from the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Powell & Eddleston, 2013; Yin, 2014).

Credibility

Credibility, transferability, and confirmability are essential aspects of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yilmaz, 2013; Yin, 2015). Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability ensure trustworthiness for the research to measure the validity and reliability of a study (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Vermeulen, Niemann, & Kotzé, 2016; Wan, Marco, & Cheng, 2016). The credibility of research requires researchers to demonstrate familiarity with the topic, obtaining sufficient data to substantiate claims, strong logical links between observations and materials that allow individuals to decide the claims (Kihn & Ihantola, 2015).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can defensibly be generalized to other contexts (Elo et al., 2014; Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Saldaña, 2015). The foundation of transferability lies on the basis that the findings of the research can be applied to another setting or a different group of people (Elo et al., 2014). Another method used to enrich transferability is the rich and robust description of the data analysis process in this study (Houghton et al.; Peyrovi, Raiesdana, & Mehrdad, 2014; Zarshenas et al., 2014). Other researchers must be able to analyze the study to determine if the findings and interpretations are appropriate (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The primary researcher must provide adequate information about the study for other researchers to determine if the findings apply to their context (Lincoln & Guba.).

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the notion that research findings and interpretations are connected to data in a manner easily understood by others (Kihn & Ihantola, 2015). Confirmability necessitates the researcher to show that the conduction of the research occurred in good faith and that no personal values influenced either the research or its findings (Wan, Marco, & Cheng, 2016).

Data Saturation

The definition for data saturation is the point at which the data collection does not produce any new or relevant data (Merriam & Tisdell 2015; Oberoi, Jiwa, McManus, &

Hodder, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). In this study, I knew data saturation was reached when during the interview, it yields no new information but instead produces the same information (O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, & Cook, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell; Yin, 2014).

Summary and Transition

In Section 2, I discussed numerous critical elements of this study, including the reiteration of the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data analysis, reliability and validity, and transition summary.

Section 3 will include an overview of the study, presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, reflections, summary, and study conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore the fundraising strategies and donor development skills that not-for-profit leaders used to sustain their businesses. The not-for-profit sector is faced with sustainability changes and the leaders of these organizations need to use their fundraising strategies and donor development skills to build sustainable organizations. For organizational success, it is essential to link the needs of the organization with employee characteristics (Word & Park, 2015). According to Participants (P) 1, 2, and 3, not-for-profit leaders are challenged with coming up with inventive fundraising strategies in order to remain sustainable. The interview data from the current study showed that there is a need for creating a sustainable organization although it is not easy and sometimes necessitates multiple strategies.

Leaders in not-for-profit organizations are faced with sustainability challenges and rely on their knowledge of fundraising strategies and donor development skills acquired throughout the years. According to findings from the study, leaders implemented different fundraising strategies and engaged an assortment of donor development skills to maximize sustainability.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was the following: What specific fundraising strategies and donor development skills do not-for-profit leaders need for their organizations to be sustainable? After collecting data from three sources (semistructured interviews, observations, and company source documents), I transcribed the interviews and analyzed the data. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, I assigned each interviewee a pseudonym (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5) according to the order of the interviews. I confirmed that, after five interviews, data saturation had occurred; that is, no new information or themes emerged during interviews or observations (Boddy, 2016). I used NVivo12® software to analyze the data.

The results from these interviews provided interesting information about not-for-profit sustainability based on in-depth feedback from leaders with extensive experience with fundraising strategies and donor development skills. During the data analysis phase of the study, I identified three major themes: (a) relationships, (b) fundraisers, and (c) endowments. The first theme that emerged demonstrated the important role of relationships in building a sustainable organization. The second theme showcased the innovative ways leaders engaged in fundraising strategies to generate sufficient revenue for the organization. The third theme discovered was a strategy used by leaders who had experience working with an endowment program.

Participants' Background

The work experience for the not-for-profit leaders in this study varied. All participants served in a leadership role for the organization with a minimum of 5 years of experience with fundraising strategies and donor development skills. One of the participants served in a consultant role for the organization. I followed the interview guidelines (see Appendix) when interviewing participants remaining in compliance with the Belmont Principles for ethical behavior for human subjects. After I completed the transcription of the interviews, I e-mailed the interview summary to the participants, allotting them a week to provide any feedback such as comments, changes, or additional feedback. I used NVivo12® software to assist with the presentation of findings to participants for member checking to confirm the findings, Participants were given a week to provide feedback, but at the end of that time, only 2 participants had additional feedback.

Table 2

Professional Background of the Participants

Participant responses	Years of experience	Percentage of totals
5 years, but less than 10	1	10
More than 10 Years	4	90
Totals	5	100

Theme 1: Relationships

The first strategy that the leaders of the not-for-profit organization used to create a sustainable organization was to work on building relationships. As explained by Gazzola, Ratti, and Amelio (2017), it is essential for not-for-profit organizations to not only know their stakeholders but to understand them as well. P1 stated relationships that needed to receive nurturing included those of board members which serve as volunteers to the organization. Board members are also one of the stakeholders of the organization. As explained by P1, leaders of the organizations jointly worked with the board members to cultivate new relationships by encouraging the members to bring out new people to special events to introduce them to the organization. Leaders maximize existing relationships while forming new relationships. The additional exposure to new stakeholders helps to broaden the number of relationships that the leaders of the organizations have which is instrumental when you are looking to build a sustainable organization. The quality of the not-for-profit organization's relationship with the various stakeholders correlates to the worth of the organization (Gazzola et al., 2017). P5 worked in tandem with the board member to establish the fundraising goals for the year. Whereas, P2 stated that there is a belief that fund development starts from the board members first and spreads out. P2 continued that total engagement occurs when there is agreement with the fundraising goals.

Relationships have proved to be a critical component of the leaders fundraising strategy throughout the years. This approach was supported by Appelbaum, Calcagno, Magarelli, and Saliba, (2016) who indicated the building of relationships is critical for sustainability within an organization. P1 elaborated that the board members are encouraged to invite other people with them to events to introduce new individuals to the organization. Relationships are taken very seriously and managed intentionally according to feedback from P3. As the research instrument, I had the opportunity to observe the excitement of the volunteers in action as they prepared for a gala fundraiser. They excitedly prepared for the evening's festivities as they worked with the various staff members. Managing relationships with board members is a central component of the fundraising plan used by engaged leaders in the organization to achieve sustainability.

The second and final part of the relationships strategy was the efficient management of the organization's communications as a part of its sustainability plan. According to Gazzola, Ratti, and Amelio (2017), the capacity of an organization to communicate effectively, especially with its central stakeholders, may be vital to its long-standing success, sustainability, and growth. Likewise, P1 supported effective communication through the implementation of having a good communication plan in place to provide updates and share relevant information about the organization with stakeholders. Communication was beneficial in building and maintaining relationships. Also, P4 stated as a part of her communication strategy she will send handwritten notes or text messages as a component of her plan to regularly communicate with stakeholders. Appelbaum, Calcagno, Magarelli, and Saliba, (2016), posited that communication and action are essential components to building internal relationships which is necessary for sustainability. P1 states that a critical function in the organization is getting accurate communication out which supports promotions and sales so people can attend events but also so people can know what is going on within the organization. P1 further elaborated that when you are working to create a sustainable organization, it was important to not only raise funds but to have a robust communication plan. Leaders integrated communication into its sustainability plan for the organization. Table 3 identifies the different revenue sources for the not-for-profit organization. The table reflects what component of the revenue source makes up of the percentage of the total budget.

Table 3

Sources of Revenue

Revenue source	Percentage of total budget
Ticket sales / promotions	15
Contributions:	
Grants, individual, corporate	85

Total	100

Theme 2: Fundraisers

Fundraising is a strategy that the leaders of the not-for-profit organization employed to ensure the organization remained sustainable. Currently, financial sustainability is one of the deep-seated problems facing the not-for-profit sector (Gajdová & Majdúchová, 2018). Gajdová et al. explained that not-for-profit organizations could not rely on support from public sources only but instead need to seek a diversified source of funds to maintain financial stability and sustainability. P1 explained the leaders took a strategic approach in the identification and application for grants as a method to generate revenue which has been successful. P4 explained that the leaders execute an array of fundraising activities including special events, grants, and cultivation events. P2 stated that the leaders of the organization currently focus on four major fundraising events each year. However, P1 stated she is considering reducing the overall number of major and minor fundraising events, to better use staff resources and providing stronger financial impact. Organizations need to be mindful of the impact on staff resources that are needed and make adjustments to enable the achievement of fundraising goals. Currently, the organization's revenue comes from an assortment of fundraising strategies which has proved to be successful in achieving sustainability (See Table 3 on top of page 82).

Volunteers played a significant role in the fundraising plan as outlined by leaders throughout the organization which has been a successful strategy. In this section, volunteers' reference parents of program participants. P5 stressed the importance of having a personal connection with the volunteers who are working with the organization on fundraising efforts. Additionally, P1 disclosed that a large part of the fundraising strategy of the leaders of the organization came from volunteer engagement. Pati and Lee (2016) supported this approach, explaining that fundraising primarily comes from supporters and friends of the organization through donations. P3 worked to bring in volunteers to create a fun experience while they are volunteering at major events. This approach proved to be successful as the donors gained a fun experience while sharing their expertise and time at fundraising events. Scholars have indicated that the involvement of the organization's senior leadership, governing body, and board members participation in the planning and fundraising activities are critical for the success of fundraising (Rohayati, Najdi, & Williamson, 2016). P2 emphasized the importance of establishing clear fundraising goals and involving volunteers in sharing the goals with the community. When everyone has the same vision, it is easier to get the fundraising goal accomplished. P1 stressed that fundraising is a team sport involving the staff and volunteers. Influence from the level of success obtained from fundraising results in the capacity of the organization to maintain and cultivate social relationships (Rohayati et al.). The not-for-profit organization continuously refined ways to engage its volunteers as part of its fundraising strategy of leveraging relationships to create a sustainable organization.

A third component of the fundraising strategy used by leaders of the organization was raising revenue through sales. Sales and user fees are considered integral steps towards an organization gaining financial sustainability because it is an ongoing source of income (Das, 2015). P1 explained that the leadership places a large amount of effort on selling tickets to events which creates a source of revenue that is complementary to their other funding sources. P5 discussed the impact of the rebranding of one of their programs which led to increased ticket sales for the organization. When organizations find ways to increase revenue, improve operating margins, or free up cash flow, it creates financial sustainability (Das, 2015). The leadership of the not-for-profit organization developed creative fundraising strategy of raising revenue through sales.

Theme 3: Endowments

The third and final strategy that the leaders of the not-for-profit organization used to create a sustainable organization is to work on establishing endowments for the organization. Organizations typically create endowments for financial sustainability (Păceşilă, 2018). Throughout the course of the research, P2 and P3 discussed the benefits and some of the nuances associated with having an endowment. P2 explained that with endowments you are involved in a continuous cycle of raising funds. P2 continued stating that the endowments need management and it can become a central focus of your sustainability efforts. Richardson (2016) explained that an endowment is a permanent financial trust created to earn revenue to generate income for some type of charitable purpose. The creation and development of endowment is a long-term endeavor (Păceşilă). P3 stated that a large part of her role is managing relationships with donors and endowments. P3 is pleased when she receives a notice from a donor that the organization is now a part of their estate plan. It is a reflection of the efforts working on endowment efforts. Endowments are a tool that not-for-profit organizations can use to build a viable organization.

As leaders of not-for-profit organizations face numerous challenges and opportunities, it can result in interest to learn tools that are used for organizational sustainability (Sebastian-Ion, Eduard-Gabriel, Orzan, Cristian, & Marin, 2017). While the establishment of endowments is an asset for a not-for-profit organization, the organization will need to allocate sufficient resources such as staff who have the necessary experience working with endowments. Leaders will need to establish the goals for the endowment. P2 evaluated which programs would most benefit from the endowment or an increase in the endowment amount based on her 30 years of experience working with not-for-profit organizations. Leaders of the organizations need to be cognizant that endowments will require individuals with specific skill sets while working to minimize costs to the organization (Păceşilă, 2018). P3 has over 30 years of experience in planned giving thus having all the skills needed to run the endowment program for the organization. Previously, P3 worked in the trust department at a financial institution. Additionally, P2 works with raising funds for endowment using her vast experience in fund development strategies, endowment revenue, and helping organizations to define what sustainability means for them. P4 spends time always looking for hints for causes donors might be willing to contribute funds to the organization for a new or existing cause. As the leaders of organizations explore the benefits of creating an endowment, they will need to ensure they have the necessary staffing in place to manage the endowment and examine the most cost-efficient manner to complete the tasks.

Lastly, the establishment of an endowment can create a financial foundation for a not-for-profit organization to be sustainable into the future. P5 warns that fundraising options is not one size fits all but varies based on the needs of the organization. Therefore, organizational leaders should determine if it is a feasible option for their organization because while it provides ongoing financial support to the organization, it requires ongoing human resources to be successful. Păceşilă (2018), stated that the endowment would provide financial stability to the organization to create an ongoing legacy of support. The endowment will hold the donated funds in perpetuity with the investment income to fulfill the specified purpose (Richardson, 2016). P4 stated that the endowment is a component of the long-range financial planning strategies. To maintain a successful endowment program leaders need a sufficient level of funding. Additionally, P3 stated that she works on creating a donor cultivation plan in conjunction with the endowment planning. Not-for-profit leaders can engage in the creation of endowments as a tool for their long-term sustainability plan.

Applications to Professional Practice

Sustainability has become an integral benchmark of the overall vitality of an organization (Shafiq, Klassen, & Awaysheh, 2017). The findings of this study revealed several successful strategies that leaders in not-for-profit organizations applied to maintain a sustainable organization. Using information gained from the research question, the analysis of interview answers with the assistance of NVivo12® software, and reading company documentation, and literature about the industry, I identified three main themes (a) relationships, (b) fundraising, and (c) endowments. These findings may be relevant to leaders of not-for-profit organizations wanting to ensure the organization is sustainable for years to come. The findings may be helpful for not-for-profit organizations looking for criteria to include in job descriptions for new leaders. Organizations who are looking to fundraise or start endowment funds need staff with a certain level of expertise. Not-for-profit organizations can benefit from this study as they often spend a significant amount of time fundraising and identifying potential funding sources. The results of this study might provide leaders of not-for-profit organizations additional tools to allow them to be efficient in their fundraising strategies and identify training opportunities for leadership effectiveness. Data from this research could add to prior and existing research regarding strategies to have sustainable organizations.

Upon entering the organization, I noticed the excitement and flurry of activity as various employees and volunteers prepared the last-minute touches for one of the biggest fundraisers it holds each year. I could see the impact of the established relationships that had been built by the staff members with the donors. The organization relies on the support from the board members to help with the planning and implementation of fundraising goals such as helping to plan and execute various fundraising events held throughout the year. P5 stressed the importance of maintaining relationships with donors and having a personal connection which is integral to the fundraising process. Milde and Yawson (2017) explained that not-for-profit organizations have individuals or entities committed to the organization it can lead to receiving donations, donors make contributions to the not-for-profit organization with the goal of helping the organization remain viable (Milde & Yawson).

As I continued my interviews on different days with various leaders, I observed how they managed relationships and the level of importance they placed on relationships with donors and volunteers. For instance, P2 expounded upon the importance of not only cultivating long-term relationships but nurturing the relationships as well. Volunteers should not be treated as transactional. Organizations can benefit from understanding the true value of volunteers. Volunteers are not only giving their time and expertise but are committed to the organization according to P2. Thus, leading me to the first theme that emerged from this study which consisted of developing and strengthening relationships with donors to achieve sustainability. According to McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram, & Sullivan Mort, (2015), it is important for the not-for-profit organization to build individual relationships with the donors as it has a direct correlation to the donations received. During my research, I learned the importance of maintaining contact with donors, learning about their interests, and keeping all leaders informed of the status of any updates about donors. Having a relationship with a donor is fundamental when soliciting funds from donors. There was a dual focus with updates for the donors when you found out their interest as it was helpful when you were looking for funding for a project. Also, when the leader took the time to stay in regular communication with the donor, it demonstrated they cared about the donor as a person and not just because they contributed to the organization. One of the components of their fundraising software was a feature that allowed the leaders to post updates about donors so that everyone could remain updated. Leaders of not-for-profit organizations in Michigan and throughout the country could benefit from the implementation of these strategies. The responses received from the participants validated the researchers' theories on donor engagement to confirm the significance of creating an environment where donor engagement is encouraged. The fundraising strategies used have allowed this organization to grow the programs and services offered and for the organization to continually flourish for over a decade.

A common on-going issue that is faced by not-for-profit organizations is either the loss of or lack of sufficient funding which the organizations need to ensure they have the needed level of funding for operations (Milde & Yawson, 2017). Due to the insufficient level of funding, not-for-profits face the challenge of having to fundraise to make sure they can fulfill their budgetary line items. While fundraising is not new to organizations, the ability to be able to fundraise successfully was imperative for organizations to learn. Therefore, the second theme exposed the urgent need for leaders to engage in efficient fundraising strategies to ensure sustainability. P1 who was new to the organization was reviewing the current fundraisers the organizations were doing and was examining ways they could be done more efficiently to minimize resources and maximize returns on investments. According to Das (2015), financial sustainability occurs when the organization has a sufficient flow of funds to operate. The leaders in the study supported the need to establish different revenue sources to ensure there were sufficient income streams for operations for longevity. When organizations can diversify their funding sources, it leads to an increase in the organization's independence guaranteeing viability for the future (Păceşilă, 2018). If the organization depends on one primary funding source and loses that funding source, it could cause the agency to cease operations. Leaders in the not-for-profit organizations continuously sought opportunities to increase revenue to maintain a sustainable organization.

Endowment funds provide financial support to the organization while creating an ongoing legacy of support and protecting the organization (Păceşilă, 2018). Endowment funds is a tool that could be used by not-for-profit organizations, for long-term sustainability while providing funds continuously. It’s important to note that this strategy may not be applicable for every organization and it requires on-going support. Smaller not-for-profit organizations may not benefit from this strategy due to the high level of labor intensity and staff experience that is needed. Hence, the discovery of the third theme in the research was the value of having endowments to create a sustainable organization. Organizations could benefit from an endowment as it provides a dependable and continual source of income for the organization (Păceşilă). The leaders in not-for-profit organizations in the study showed the benefits of having endowments established for their programs as it provided a steady source of income to help support the organization’s operations. However, the research highlighted the necessity of having either staff or board members with the necessary experience and knowledge of operating endowments for program success. If the organization does not have the staff or board members with the capacity to create and maintain the endowment funds, the organization could hire an outside entity to handle that responsibility. Endowments are a great resource that not-for-profit organizations can use as a tool to help build sustainability, but it requires staff to have sufficient knowledge to operate the program and to maximize its effectiveness. Also, when an organization has an endowment, the fundraising cycle is perpetual.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study have the potential to contribute to social change in leaders of not-for-profit organizations as well as the clients and communities that the not-for-profit organization services through the providing of needed services. Scholars and academic leaders alike have noted the importance of sustainability on the longevity of both organizations and the communities in which they serve (Galpin, Whittington, & Bell, 2015.) The participants of this study consisted of five leaders in a not-for-profit organization in Michigan who used successful fundraising strategies and donor development skills that led to organizational sustainability. The intention of this study was to research the successful strategies leaders used when fundraising and employing donor development skills to increase sustainability opportunities for organizations which would allow the organizations to continue to meet the needs of the community.

To create a sustainable organization, leaders of not-for-profit organizations need to be proficient in fundraising and possessing the necessary donor development skills. As indicated by Erwin, Landry, and Gibson, (2015), fundraising is built upon the establishment of relationships with donors to enable the engagement of individuals with fundraising which are critical factors to the success of fundraising. Organizations need to identify desired attributes and skills of leaders who have the responsibility of forming relationships with donors as part of their fundraising efforts. As fundraising becomes increasingly critical for the sustainability of not-for-profit organizations, it will become paramount that individuals have the necessary training and develop the skills needed for fundraising success (Ebede & Edginton, 2018). The fundraising strategies and donor development skills successfully employed by the leaders in this study has the potential to be incorporated into any not-for-profit organization. An organization will need to invest in getting training for leaders who wish to implement an endowment program if they do not have previous experience or volunteers who can guide with the endowment program.

Recommendations for Action

The following recommendations from the findings of the current study can facilitate decisions of leaders of not-for-profit organizations, social service agencies, grassroots organizations healthcare organizations, arts organizations, and community-based organizations, Leaders of not-for-profit organizations focus on sustainability; however, they could benefit from learning some additional fundraising strategies and donor development skills. Cavaleri and Shabana (2018) posited that there is a correlation between sustainability performance and financial performance. Leaders of not-for-profit organizations may need to invest in getting training for establishing an endowment if they do not have leaders or board members who have the training and experience in this area. As not-for-profit leaders are designing their fundraising strategies, they should consider if the strategies and approaches would be feasible for their organization. Some leaders may not feel these strategies are valuable for their organization; however, I recommend that leaders of not-for-profit organizations develop fundraising plans and work to further their donor development skills to create viable organizations. Charitable organizations such as not-for-profit organizations cannot afford to lose any donors due to lack of efficacy in fundraising (Ni, Chen, Ding, & Wu, 2017). As leaders of not-for-profit organizations are exploring opportunities to create sustainability for the organization, they might find benefit from learning about these fundraising strategies and donor development skills.

The results of this study are significant to the ability of a not-for-profit leader to fundraise and engage in donor development as they examine strategies to create a sustainable organization. The dissemination of these findings for not-for-profit leaders will be beneficial as they explore options on how to equip their organization with the tools to become sustainable. As explained by Fenge, Jones, and Gibson (2018), research that makes an impact never fully concludes and dissemination go further than a couple of academic journal articles. All participants will receive a final copy of the study via email after the approval process for the study. I will also notify interested stakeholders such as social service agencies or community organizations to discuss the study and the findings of the study at their premises. Dissemination of the study would occur after publishing in the ProQuest platform. Lastly, I plan to write a journal article for my peers to review and make presentations to local not-for-profit organizations and at conferences for not-for-profit organizations.

Recommendations for Further Research

The research study focused on sustainability from a financial standpoint. There are multiple ways that you can define sustainability within an organization. P5 stressed that sustainability is not always related to finances. During this study, the participant response primarily focused on financial attributes to sustainability. I recommend that the novice or seasoned researcher explore further successful strategies that not-for-profit leaders engage in for sustainability. Lastly, I would recommend future research on the benefits of a not-for-profit receiving mileage as a fundraising strategy. P2 and P4 disclosed the significance of the mileage that the organization will receive for the next 10 years that is a continuous source of revenue. Currently, there is no research available that addresses the benefits or challenges of using mileage for a fundraising strategy. There are still additional areas for further research in the areas of sustainability for not-for-profit organizations.

The primary limitations of this study resulted from the (a) small sample size, (b) restricted access to participants, and (c) limited geographical scope. Although not-for-profit organizations face sustainability challenges, it can vary depending upon the local conditions. Also, there are various types of not-for-profit organizations with varying structures which may benefit from the use of having leaders with different fundraising strategies or donor development skills.

Reflections

When I began on this doctoral study journey, I was not sure what to expect. There were countless times that I felt overwhelmed and wondered when I would able to complete this journey. I have spent a large part of my professional and personal life writing, but nothing could have prepared me for the rigorous requirements of the DBA doctoral study program. The earning of my doctoral degree has been an extremely challenging but rewarding process. I can recall feeling periods of frustration as I grappled how to move forward in the program. I completed the program a humbled individual from the experience and opportunity.

One of the lessons that I learned early on in the program is that you need a strong support system and its okay to reach out to other people for guidance and support. I have been extremely blessed to have encountered some extremely spectacular individuals along this journey who have been excellent sounding boards. I decided at the conclusion of my master's program to immediately begin the doctoral program to avoid losing any momentum. I count this as one of my greatest accomplishments.

The purpose of this study was to explore what strategies and donor development skills that leaders of not-for-profit organizations could use to create a sustainable organization. I selected this topic based on the sustainability challenges faced by not-for-profit organizations to learn knowledge from experienced leaders. Not-for-profit organizations who service low-to-moderate income communities experience challenges with fundraising (Gazzola, Ratti, & Amelio, 2017). I sought to understand what leaders could do to help organizations be viable. I gained a great deal of insight from the participants during the research study.

I have worked in the not-for-profit sector since 2002, but I did not have any personal connections with the organization that participated in the study. I have seen the challenges faced by not-for-profit organizations of various sizes who lack leadership that is well versed in fundraising and do not have sufficient donor development skills. I was not sure how much I would learn through the level of knowledge shared during the interviews. My preconceived notions thought the information shared would relate to primarily grants as the fundraising strategy as not-for-profit organizations frequently depend largely on grants to meet their budgetary needs.

After completing the study, I learned some new fundraising strategies and donor development skills that could be useful to leaders of not-for-profit organizations. However, I would note that leaders without experience in endowments would need training or mentoring from an individual with extensive experience creating endowment campaigns. I gained valuable knowledge that I can share with other not-for-profit leaders who are working in organizations facing sustainability challenges.

Conclusion

The purpose of the qualitative single case study was to explore successful fundraising strategies and donor development skills leaders of not-for-profit organizations used to bring sustainability to their organization. According to Beaton and Hwang (2017), the American not-for-profit sector is massive, and it continues to grow which creates challenges with limited resources for not-for-profits to compete. Not-for-profit leaders' ability to identify tools that can be used for viability and meets the needs of their organization is essential. The use of semistructured interviews was held to obtain a better understanding of fundraising strategies and donor development skills that not-for-profit leaders used for organizational sustainability.

I used methodological triangulation for this study which consisted of semistructured interviews, observations, and document collection. The methodological triangulation enabled me to analyze the data collected through interviews and documents analysis. Three themes emerged from this study: (a) value and impact of relationships on fundraising success, (b) fundraising strategies leaders used, and (c) the establishment of endowment funds as a tool used by leaders for organizational sustainability. The findings from this study revealed not-for-profit leaders who can leverage relationships, employ various fundraising strategies, and use endowment funds could enable the organization to have longevity. Also, the information revealed in this study defined proven fundraising strategies and donor development skills employed by seasoned not-for-profit leaders, to engage stakeholders, increase revenue opportunities, and establish long-term funding sources.

Fundraising performance is an essential measurement of not-for-profit organization performance (Erwin, Landry, & Gibson, 2015). As the number of nonprofits continue to grow (Beaton & Hwang, 2017) which has led to an increased demand for limited resources (McDonald, Weerawardena, Madhavaram, & Sullivan Mort, 2015), Leaders of not-for-profit organizations could benefit from learning successful fundraising strategies and donor development skills due to their responsibility with ensuring the organization has the necessary resources in place for longevity. Successful fundraising depends on the efficacy of available human resources within the organization (Rohayati, Najdi, & Williamson, 2016). The results of my research demonstrated how leaders strategically leveraged relationships, engaged in innovative fundraising strategies and maximized endowment funds to generate revenue which places the organization in a position to be sustainable.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Research Study Title: Strategies for Not-for-Profit Sustainability

Research Question: What specific fundraising strategies and donor development skills do not-for-profit leaders need for their organizations to be sustainable?

Interview Procedures

I will present a brief overview and introduction that reiterates the IRB requirements

1. The interview will occur face to face.
2. The interview will be digitally recorded.
3. The interviewee or interviewer may choose to end the interview at any time.
4. The interviewee will have the opportunity to read the interview transcript upon completion of the transcription process.
5. There will be no compensation for participation in this interview.

Interview Questions

1. How does your organization define the term sustainability?
2. What steps do you take in your organization to ensure it is sustainable?
3. What are the current fundraising strategies that your organization uses to cover operational costs and remain viable?
4. How do you cultivate relationships with your donors and volunteers?
5. How do you influence or motivate donors and volunteers to meet the fundraising goals?
6. What are your long-range financial planning strategies for organizational sustainability?

7. What additional information would you like to share about your success at running a sustainable not-for-profit organization?

I have read the interview protocol. I have received and signed the informed consent form. My signature on this form grants my permission for my participation in this recorded interview and my full understanding of this interview protocol.

Researcher's Name	Participant's Name
__________________________	_________________________________
Researcher's Signature	Participant's Signature
__________________________	_________________________________