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Advancing Diversity in Nonprofit Boards

Barbara Doyle
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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Barbara J. Doyle

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Walden University

2019

Abstract

Advancing Diversity in Nonprofit Boards

by

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MS, Capella University, 2013

MA, Metropolitan State University, 1991

BA, Metropolitan State University, 1981

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

May 2019

Abstract

Nonprofit organizations play an important role in improving their communities. Their ability to meet community needs can be limited due to lack of diversity in their boards of directors, which can also affect equity, performance, and social justice. Procedures for harmonizing the diversity of nonprofit boards with their served community demographics are not well understood. This Delphi study investigated what strategies and practices nonprofit organizations could employ to promote greater diversity in their boards of directors. The study's conceptual framework was based on the theory of diversity management. Twenty-five participants from various nonprofit boards answered open-ended questions in a 3-round through SurveyMonkey. Secondary data were obtained from each participant's nonprofits to provide insight into their practices, policies, and records. These documents worked as substantiation for participant claims. Analysis of the data revealed 6 themes: getting to know the community, involving the community, widening the network to include more groups of people, accurate assessment of the community, creating representation and gaining insider perspective, and having a pool of candidates and board members fit for the position. These themes show a diversity-based strategy for the overall success of a nonprofit organization, which is based on how effectively a nonprofit board of directors establishes networks and maintains positive relationships with their served communities. The results of this study can foster positive social change by illustrating how increasing the diversity of a nonprofit board can enhance organizational effectiveness, extend the organization's reach, enable the organization to serve its chosen communities better, and reduce socioeconomic inequality through new perspectives.

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this dissertation in memory of my husband, John Edward Doyle Sr., who was my best friend and inspired and encouraged me to follow my dreams to continue my education. His spiritual guidance and love motivated me to complete this doctoral journey, and he raised my level of confidence throughout my academic career. Although John is no longer here physically, his spirit will always be with me, and for this I am grateful.

I also dedicate this work to my sons, Mark, Marlon, and John, Jr. who have been the highlight of this journey and always expressed how proud they are of their Mom. I pray that they will continue being such wonderful sons and they are such a blessing in my life.

Last, although certainly not least, I am so thankful for my parents, Harry and Genevieve Ballard, who were the greatest influence in my life. They inspired me and always taught me to remember that with God in my life that all things are possible. Their spiritual guidance has helped me through some challenging and difficult situations; however, with prayer and perseverance, I was able to complete this doctoral journey. Although my parents are no longer here physically, as with my husband, I am blessed to continue the spiritual connection with them, and I can imagine their smiles and saying how proud they are of what I have accomplished.

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First, I give all honor and glory to God for granting me the opportunity to develop academically and for all else he has blessed me with in life. I thank Him for making this doctoral journey possible.

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I would be remiss if I did not thank all of the participants and organizations that contributed to my study to the completion of this dissertation. They participated in all three rounds, and I appreciated their insightful responses and personal interests in the result of my study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

There has been an ever-increasing awareness of the need for improving diversity and representation in various organizations (Galinsky et al., 2015; Groggins & Ryan, 2015; National Council of Nonprofits, 2017; Sharma, 2016). Various studies have indicated that more representational demographics within public and private organizations can lead to both improvements for nonprofit organizations and benefit larger society through improving factors such as socioeconomic concerns of minorities (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Burke & Steensma, 1998; Gazley, Chang, & Bingham, 2010). This is because a more diverse organization has a better chance of including (a) more specifically-skilled individuals; (b) a variety of views that can aid in problem-solving, innovative thinking, and decision-making; and (c) people who can raise concerns or needs of others within their given demographic (Andrevski, Richard, Shaw, & Ferrier, 2014; Hafsi & Turgut, 2013).

Due to the valuable role nonprofit organizations play in society and how nonprofits often directly respond to minorities' needs, it is necessary that nonprofit boards and leaders are representational of the same diversity as that which is evident in society, particularly the communities for which they are responsible (Fyall & Allard, 2016). A more diverse board could likely lead to better community relations, improved identification and understanding of specific community needs, and enhance overall organization performance (Andrevski et al., 2014; Hafsi & Turgut, 2013). There is, however, little current research regarding nonprofit board diversity and leadership or its effect on such organizations' performance.

Chapter 1 includes the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research question, nature of the study, and significance of the study. This chapter also contains the framework and rationale for the study and the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 includes the literature review and theoretical foundation. Chapter 3 consists of the research method, design, and rationale. Chapter 4 includes the results, and Chapter 5 consists of the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations.

Background of the Study

The definition of diversity has overlapping and conflicting meanings (Qin, Muenjohn, & Chherti, 2014). Cox (2001) described diversity as reflective variations in social and cultural identities among people in an employment setting. Bond and Hayes (2014) defined diversity as containing membership in traditionally underrepresented groups of identities in the workplace. Nair and Vohra (2015) defined diversity as the varied perspectives and approaches to work of members of different identity groups, specifically racial and ethnic groups. Griffin and Hart (2016) defined diversity differences as coming from a wide range of ethnic, cultural, physical, psychological, and gender backgrounds in different areas and sectors of society, including the work arena. Groggins and Ryan (2015) noted that a more diverse workforce increases organizational effectiveness and enhances productivity. As diverse workforces in organizations tend to perform better if their workforces reflect the demographics of the populations they serve (Schwabensland & Tomlinson, 2015). Understanding the complex nature of diversity as represented by these definitions is necessary as to ensure successful diversity for the

improvement of organizations (Schwabensland & Tomlinson, 2015). For this study, the term diversity was understood to mean the racial and ethnic minority composition of a workplace (Bernstein, Buse, & Bilimoria, 2016).

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 set forth clear directions to build a foundation for addressing diversity in the workplace in the United States (Nielsen, Nelson, & Lancaster, 2010). The Title VII requirements included efforts by organizations to meet governmental and legal requirements to encourage the development of a diverse workforce by melding perceived differences among workers to achieve maximum productivity (Sharma, 2016). Ghorashi and Sabelis (2013) suggested that the concept of diversity includes dealing with racial, ethnic, and gender representation in organizations. By addressing these challenges, diversity in the workplace can redress social injustices and benefit both organizations and the greater society (Harris, 2014; Schwabensland & Tomlinson, 2015).

As with any work environment, organizational health, performance, and outcomes of nonprofits depend on the racial and ethnic diversity of the organization (Burns, Barton, & Kerby, 2012). In the United States, demographic changes in the population, civil rights legislation, and affirmative action programs have created unprecedented diversity in the American workforce (Mor Barak, 2015). As demographic changes in the general population occur, nonprofits and other organizations must reflect the increased racial and ethnic diversity within their workforce (Fidler, Wind, & Mor Barak., 2007). Despite the Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting that minorities entering the workforce would increase by 43% in 2013 since 2012, the nonprofit sector workforce demographics have

not changed to reflect this trend (Hayes, 2012). Additionally, nonprofit boards have in no way significantly increased their diversity or improved their demographic representation between 2015 and 2017 (BoardSource, 2017; Walker, 2017).

The BoardSource (2017) survey of nonprofit boards found that the majority of board members were white males, with 27% of the total boards surveyed reporting all white members. An earlier survey by the Stanford Graduate School of Business in collaboration with other organizations determined that a lack of diversity often translated into members not being sufficiently versed and skilled in or adequately engaged in understanding and/or meeting community needs (Larcker, Donatiello, Meehan, & Tayan, 2015). A less diverse board could also mean that members are not as invested in the organization or meeting the organization's ends, with a hyper focus on fundraising to the detriment of other important functions, such as proper financial management or efficient strategy implementations within the organization (Larcker et al., 2015). Such neglect of important duties could lead to lower levels of financial health for nonprofits, which could negatively impact their ability to serve their communities effectively (Haas, 2010). Ineffective management due to a lack of leadership diversity may also be detrimental to nonprofits themselves, with such organizations having to close their doors due to unsustainable practices (Altman, 2016; Donshik, 2018).

It is clear to many on nonprofit boards that diversity is necessary yet attempts at improving board diversity are not often high on such organizations' priority lists (Wallestad, 2017). Some organizations have already begun to make improvements toward board diversity, yet more is still needed to improve both individual and national

diversity averages on nonprofit boards (Biemesderfer, 2017). This study may aid in this regard, as it may provide practical means for nonprofit leaders to begin to work actively toward improving their board diversity. This study may also determine what boards need to improve their diversity and ways in which steps toward diversity can be efficiently and effectively implemented.

Problem Statement

Nonprofit organizations often lack diversity in their staffing and governing boards (Dubose, 2014). This situation has existed for many decades due to perceptions, behavior, and demographics (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013). Recently, however, nonprofit organizations are facing growing pressure to become more diverse, substantively and symbolically (Galinsky et al., 2015; Garrow, 2014; Groggins & Ryan, 2015; Sharma, 2016). The lack of diversity in nonprofit organizations has funding implications (Gross, 2015). Diversity can lead to improved performance (Galinsky et al., 2015; Garrow, 2014; Groggins & Ryan, 2015; Sharma, 2016). The general problem was the limited understanding among some nonprofit boards and leadership of how to successfully diversify (Garrow, 2014; Groggins & Ryan, 2015; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015).

Diversity, as this term is used in this study, is racial and ethnic minority composition in the workplace (Bernstein & Bilimoria, 2013). Hafsi and Turgut (2013) noted that nonprofit organizations with racially and ethnically diverse leadership and boards might produce increased economic benefits and improved performance. The specific problem was that some nonprofit organizations struggle with having board and

leadership positions that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve (Gross, 2015; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the proposed modified Delphi study was to develop a process for increasing diversity of nonprofit boards to emulate community demographics. The study purpose was to fill, at least partially, gaps in the literature regarding diversity in nonprofit organizations and their leadership structures, and to support the potentially positive impact that improved diversity might have on these organizations' performance (see Bond & Haynes, 2014; Buse, Bernstein, & Bilimoria, 2014; Gross, 2015).

The study was focused on how diversity in nonprofit organizations may influence the effectiveness of nonprofit performance. I researched how increasing diversity in nonprofit organizations may improve their effectiveness in carrying out their functions and serving their communities (see Flatau, Zaretzky, Adams, Horton, & Smith, 2015). The improved effectiveness and increased diversity may have meaningful consequences to both nonprofits and the broader communities they serve, as more representational leadership may equip nonprofits with necessary insight into how best to meet the needs of differing and unique populations (Andrevski et al., 2014).

To conduct this study, I selected a qualitative Delphi technique (see Brady, 2015; Cuhls, 2001). I confirmed the Delphi findings by conducting observations and reviewing participants' nonprofit organization documentation. Such substantiation ensured higher study validity (see Noble & Smith, 2015). Through the selected modified Delphi technique, I gained consensus among expert participants who began, with varying

degrees of success, to promote and improve diversity within their nonprofit boards and organizations. These experts also explained why increasing diversity was important, how improved diversity might positively influence nonprofit performance, and ways in which nonprofit organizations might practically implement changes toward diversity.

Specifically, I used this study to gain and analyze data on providing a process definition including specific criteria for (a) process parameters; (b) implementation guidelines; and (c) likely influences on community relations, identification and understanding of specific community needs, and overall organizational performance. I may aid in closing research gaps related to nonprofit organizations, board leadership, and diversity through this study's findings (Buse et al., 2014; Bond & Haynes, 2014; Gross, 2015). I present practical solutions for the specific problem of many nonprofits' boards and leadership that are not reflecting the diversity within the communities that they serve, which may limit nonprofits' performance success (see Gazley et al., 2010; Gross, 2015).

Research Question

I conducted this study around one central research question:

RQ: What strategies and practices could nonprofits employ to promote diversity in their organizations' boards?

Conceptual Framework

I based the conceptual framework for this qualitative study on Bunderson and Sutcliffe's (2002) diversity management theory and model. Diversity management theory relates to how organizations might improve minority representation and overall diversity in their workforce, as well as how to use diversity to the organization's advantage

(Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002). The theory states that diversity can and should assist in an organization's success, rather than produce discord or failure (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002). In this study, the framework aided in understanding where and how diversity could improve nonprofits' performance.

Bunderson and Sutcliffe's (2002) theory of diversity management addressed how intrapersonal functional diversity improves information sharing and organizational performance. Burke and Steensma (1998) suggested that intrapersonal functional diversity is as important for management teams as it is for individual managers and workers because management teams with people of wide-ranging backgrounds (e.g., racial, ethnic) have broader perspectives that promote organizational effectiveness and innovation. Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002) created the model to include the role of information sharing in mediating the relationship between different forms of functional diversity and performance outcomes. For information sharing, management team members exchanging work-related information to keep team members aware of organizational activities and developments (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002). Thus, Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002) created the theory to show that diversity (when managed well) within an organization may improve information sharing across the organization, which, in turn, could lead to a more effective and efficient organizational structure and output.

I used this framework to identify ways in which nonprofit leaders and experts attempt to promote information sharing within their organizations. Additionally, I used the theory to understand how improved information sharing might result from improved

diversity, as more diverse teams could promote better sharing and, thereby, better performance. I added to using this model as a framework by applying it in the understudied field of nonprofit board leadership (Buse et al., 2014). Thus, the framework not only aided the research, but the research could also further strengthen the given model.

Nature of the Study

The nature of the study was a modified Delphi research design, with substantiating observations and document reviews. This qualitative design is common for gathering data from participants when the research requires consensus and practical solutions for addressing problems (Davidson, 2013; Jorm, 2015). Therefore, the modified Delphi technique was an appropriate approach for this study, as the purpose was to establish practical ways of addressing the current lack of diversity in nonprofit leadership boards (Carnochan, Samples, Myers, & Austin, 2013; Davidson, 2013).

To use the modified Delphi design, I sought opinions and suggestions from expert individuals regarding strategies and best practices that promote diversity in nonprofit organizations (Davidson, 2013). These experts included nonprofit board members who actively participated in successful attempts at promoting their board's diversity. I identified such experts based on their board representation (i.e., I confirmed how diverse their current board was before contacting participants regarding their participation). Board diversity and representation could be found online, usually on a nonprofit's webpage. For the Delphi section of the study, I conducted three rounds of data collection from a maximum of 25 experts who were members on nonprofit boards. Three rounds

were generally accepted practice for gathering enough Delphi data (see Cuhls, 2001).

These participants answered questions in a series of iterated rounds based on the Delphi technique (Davidson, 2013).

The Delphi technique was first used in the 1950s to establish long-term predictions (Cuhls, 2001). The Delphi technique is best used for studies concerned with policy-development or determining/predicting long-term effects and outcomes of a relatively new phenomenon (Cuhls, 2001). Additionally, researchers can use the Delphi technique to promote participant collaboration without subjecting participants to interpersonal communication, which can mitigate potential negative influences on results due to dominant personalities or a desire to formulate responses to meet group sentiment regardless of how an individual participant feels (Cuhls, 2001). A Delphi study comprises an initial round of questioning, which the researcher adjusts, as per participant responses, to guide the group toward consensus (Brady, 2015). For this study, I designed question rounds to facilitate participants' discussion in reaching consensus as to the most effective processes and implementations for promoting nonprofit board diversity.

I used a modified version of the Delphi technique. Participants reviewed their own and other participants' answers through SurveyMonkey, rather than through post or telephone conversations (Habibi, Sarafrazi, & Izadyar, 2014). I aimed for participants to reach agreed-upon strategies and best practices for improving nonprofit board diversity. However, they presented various alternative strategies, and after all three rounds were completed, they did not meet any consensus. I reported the findings accordingly. Participants also met agreement on why improving diversity is important, and how it

might positively impact nonprofit performance. However, their views continued to differ throughout data collection, and I reported such differences as part of the results. In this way, the Delphi technique might be an effective means to add to the noted gaps in the literature about nonprofit leadership diversity and whether and how increased leadership diversity could improve nonprofit performance (Davidson, 2013; Habibi et al., 2014).

As noted previously, I confirmed the Delphi findings with observations (i.e., witnessing participants and their organizations' practical implementation of diversity strategy and practices) and document reviews. The secondary data sources provided insight into how practices and implementations functioned, as well as confirmed claims that participants made regarding their organization's board diversity and its impact on community and organizational performance. By using substantiating data sources, I confirmed the rigor and validity of the study findings (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Other qualitative approaches such, as a case or phenomenological study, would not have allowed for such practical solutions, as these researchers would focus either on a phenomenon or solution within a specific setting (i.e., examine a phenomenon within a specific case) or try to define the phenomenon and individuals' experiences of it (Silverman, 2016). Phenomenological researchers can gain practical insights into best practices (Silverman, 2016). Other qualitative methods rely on participants' personal experiences and/or perceptions of a phenomenon; conversely, researchers of the Delphi technique focus on the collaboration of participants. I conducted the three rounds of the Delphi technique to allow the participants to work together in developing a clearer and uniform understanding of diversity and means of improving nonprofit board diversity.

Quantitative approaches would not have met the purpose of this study, as statistical representations or numeric trends would only have worked to confirm established research that nonprofits lacked diversity in leadership (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Participants could not have shared scenarios, practices, and implementations that they employed or learned through their attempts at improving board diversity, which was needed to meet the purpose of this study. Thus, quantitative results would not provide any practical solutions for addressing the problematic lack of diversity in nonprofits, further negating such an approach for this study (Neuman, 2014). As a quantitative study would not add anything new to the research or meet the purpose of this study, I also discounted a mixed methods approach due to containing both qualitative and quantitative methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, a qualitative Delphi technique was best suited to meeting the purpose of this study.

As noted previously, this Delphi study was conducted in three question rounds. The three-round model was standard practice in Delphi studies (Brady, 2015). All questions for each round were open-ended to gain the most comprehensive responses from participants. The first round consisted of open questions to establish scenarios from participants' actual experiences and knowledge regarding the processes, implementations, and results of the boards' diversity attempts. The second and third rounds incorporated these scenarios for the participants to provide further reasoning and suggestions for ways in which diversity could be improved in such cases. Questions for the first round of the Delphi study are presented in Appendix A. Once the three rounds of data collection from the 25 experts were completed and consensus reached, I analyzed the data. I conducted

thematic analysis, as often used in Delphi studies (see Brady, 2015), using NVivo 10 software, where recurring themes, suggestions, and solutions were compared (Castleberry, 2014; Noble & Smith, 2015).

To substantiate the findings, I collected secondary data through organizational diversity-related documents, including but not limited to their diversity policies, board meeting minutes, financial and employee records, and community projects. Additionally, I conducted on-site observations of five participants and their nonprofit organizations and boards. I compared participant answers and suggestions in the Delphi study with their respective organizations' documentation and observed practices regarding diversity improvement to see if and where there was alignment and/or if and where further improvements toward diversity were necessary. I concluded the thematic and comparative analysis between participant answers and the documentation to present the findings and provide practical solutions, strategies, and best practices that experts have highlighted for improving nonprofit leadership diversity. I gave recommendations for future research based on these findings. I provided nonprofits with substantiation for why addressing issues of diversity could benefit both the organizations and the communities they serve.

Definitions

The following is a list of terms related to diversity and nonprofits to clarify meanings within the study.

Demographics: Demographics refers to a statistical view of a population, generally including race, ethnicity, age, gender, income, education, and occupation (Guillaume, Dawson, Otaye-Ebede, Woods, & West, 2017).

Diversity: Diversity refers to the representation of individuals from a broad range of cultural, physical, and psychological categories with emphasis on individuals who are historically underserved or underrepresented (Cox, 2001; Griffin & Hart, 2016; Qin et al., 2014).

Experts: Experts are individuals who serve on nonprofit boards who have made active and deliberate strides toward promoting and improving their board's diversity, with varying degrees of success, and who have practical knowledge of the influence such moves toward diversity have had on their organizational performance and the communities they serve.

Inclusion: Inclusion is the action that follows the concept and practice of diversity by creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection (Mor Barak, 2015). Organizations harness the richness of employees' ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives to create business value and need both diversity and inclusion to be successful (Mor Barak, 2015).

Nonprofit organizations: Nonprofit organizations refer to businesses with tax-exempt status from the U.S. Internal Revenue (e.g., educational, religious, scientific, or social service organizations; Foohey, 2012).

Organizational effectiveness: Organizational effectiveness refers to the efficiency with which an association meets its objectives (i.e., an organization that produces outcome accountability and overhead minimization), according to Gazley et al. (2010).

Underrepresented: Underrepresented refers to the deficiency of racial and ethnic minorities in work establishments (Fyall & Allard, 2016).

Underserved: Underserved refers to socioeconomically disadvantaged populations who require access to social services but are not receiving some of these services (Benenson & Stagg, 2015; Cox, 2001).

Assumptions

In research, assumptions are related to any aspects or a study that are generally presumed and accepted as true and plausible but cannot necessarily be demonstrated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I assumed that participants who were directly involved in promoting and potentially successfully achieving board diversification might have enough knowledge and understanding necessary to highlight what nonprofit leaders need to do to promote diversity. Another assumption was that participants would be willing to take part in the study due to the potential benefits it may pose for nonprofits and communities. I also assumed that participants who understood the potential value of this research would give honest and forthright responses to questions. I assumed that building a rapport with participants would further aid in ensuring open and honest answers (Mattson & Haas, 2014).

As the research was not gender-based, I did not purposefully make any distinction regarding participant answers depending on gender. However, I assumed that differences

in answers due to gender would be naturally highlighted and consensus reached through the modified Delphi technique (Azmat & Rentschler, 2015). Finally, I assumed that nonprofit leaders must change and improve their representation to reflect and meet the needs of the communities they served and the changing demographic landscape of the United States (Groggins & Ryan, 2015). Specifically, diversity needs to improve regarding ethnic and racial representation (see BoardSource, 2017). This assumption was based on previous research, indicating that nonprofit organization leaders, especially their board and leadership structures, showed little diversity (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Groggins & Ryan, 2015).

Scope and Delimitations

The scope and delimitations of research are the boundaries that a researcher puts in place to focus the study toward a specific area and purpose (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The scope of the research extended to a maximum of 25 nonprofit experts in various social service nonprofit organizations in the Midwest. I defined experts for this study as anyone who (a) worked on a nonprofit board, (b) had been or was currently directly involved in promoting and improving their board's diversity, and (c) had practical experience of the influence board diversity has had on a nonprofit's ability to meet the needs of its community.

Qualitative studies require small sample sizes, and 25 participants were enough for conducting the Delphi section of this research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I present more details about the sample size adequacy in Chapter 3. For the observation section, I deemed five participants and their nonprofit organizations enough. I present more details

regarding this sample size in Chapter 3. The selected sample sizes were also practical, as these were manageable for gathering data and maintaining order during the different online survey question rounds in the Delphi section and visiting various nonprofits across the study location (Noble & Smith, 2015). The location was convenient for me, as it is where I live and work, and it consists of many social service nonprofits from which to gain participants.

I made no distinction between male and female participants, but I noted any significant differences in answers as part of my findings and conclusions. I excluded individuals who had not been actively involved in improving their nonprofit board's diversity from this study, as they would not be able to provide data regarding the processes and implementations followed to promote board diversity. Such individuals were also less likely to provide relevant information noting the impact improved board diversity has had on meeting community needs or on the organization's overall performance. Additionally, I did not include individuals who served on boards that did not at least intentionally, deliberately, and actively attempt to promote diversity. However, I did allow participants who had not been successful in their deliberate attempts to improve diversity to take part, if such individuals desired to do so. In such cases, these individuals could provide necessary information regarding how and why their attempts failed, and what they believed they should have done instead. In this way, I could highlight different suggestions for improvement, identify if and where one approach to diversity might work in some instances and possibly not in others, and generally gain a more comprehensive understanding of approaches to improving nonprofit board diversity. Additionally, I

excluded potential participants not based in the Midwest as they could not speak to this area's nonprofit context.

The scope only concerned addressing issues around and finding solutions for nonprofit leadership diversity related to ethnic and racial considerations, as there was a noted lack of research related to nonprofit organization leaders, their diversity, and its effect on performance (Bond & Haynes, 2014; Buse et al., 2014; Gazley et al., 2010; Gross, 2015). Extending the scope of this study to also include gender diversity considerations would have made the study's focus too broad and might have convoluted the processes and purpose of this study. The scope of the research sampling, location, methodology, and the problem being addressed might limit the transferability and application of its findings to other settings (Noble & Smith, 2015). Future researchers may wish to extend this study's scope and improve transferability by including various locations, gender concerns, or other such considerations.

Limitations

A limitation in research is anything that potentially undermines or weakens the overall study and its results (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One limitation was that participants came from a single nonprofit human services field. A single nonprofit field from which I obtained the sample of 25 participants could limit findings. The participants' views and suggestions (in the Delphi section) only corresponded to the human service nonprofit context.

Similarly, when I observed the five participant sites, the observations only reflected the practices and policies within the individual sites and the relevant nonprofit

field. In this way, the study findings would be less transferable to other nonprofit sectors. To mitigate this, I used purposive sampling to gain as diverse a sample as possible within the study parameters (Guetterman, 2015). The location was another limitation, as nonprofits in other areas may differ regarding diversity. The qualitative nature of this study also limited the transferability of its findings. Future research is needed to address these limitations. Another limitation was that participants might be majority White males due to the limited number of minorities in leadership roles in nonprofits. If these individuals have been actively involved in promoting and successfully improving their board's diversity, this limitation should not be too substantial in relation to the study findings. However, to mitigate a weighted white male perspective, I, again, used purposive sampling to gather a more diverse sample.

The exclusion of gender as a study parameter limited this study. Although diversity includes gender issues, addressing this along with ethnic and racial diversity may become too complex given the study time and scope. Future researchers can address this limitation. Additionally, the study might be limited if experts used conflicting definitions of diversity, which was likely considering the wide number of definitions presented earlier in this chapter. To mitigate this potential limitation, I specified that the definition of diversity as understood in this study extended to race and ethnicity of nonprofit board members and excluded gender.

A final limitation of this study was potential researcher bias, which could undermine the dependability and trustworthiness of a study's findings (Noble & Smith, 2015). Although researcher bias could not be completely avoided, I made every endeavor

to ensure its reduction by employing (a) three rounds of questioning, (b) participant reviews of their answers, (c) expert panel reviews of all question protocols before each round, and (d) reflexivity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Noble & Smith, 2015). I present more detail regarding reducing researcher bias in Chapter 3.

The Significance of the Study

Organizations benefit from having a diverse workforce (Andrevski et al., 2014). Therefore, organization leaders should recognize and accommodate the needs of unique employees (Choi & Rainey, 2010). The following subsections present how and why this study may be significant for theory, practice, and positive social change as related to organizations improving diversity.

Significance to Theory

The study may help reduce the knowledge gap in the literature regarding how nonprofit organizations can increase diversity in their leadership and boards (Bond & Haynes, 2014; Buse et al., 2014; Gross, 2015). The theoretical perspective of Glass and Cook (2017) defined board diversity as associated with organizations' best practices for increased community engagement and stronger responsiveness to the diverse communities they serve. Despite this theoretical perspective and the evidence of the benefits of board diversity of racial and ethnic minorities, Glass and Cook (2017) argued that less researchers focused on factors that guided or inhibited selection of minority board members. This lack of research was evident within the nonprofit sector.

By gathering data from nonprofit experts on why diversity in these organizations' boards and leadership was important as well as practical means for improving such

diversity, I added knowledge a heretofore underresearched area. I also providing information for future researchers to conduct more qualitative and quantitative research into nonprofit diversity and its influence on communities and organizational performance. Thus, not only was this study significant in its attempts to fill noted gaps in the literature, but it could also provide a valuable stepping stone from which future researchers could conduct even more relevant studies into this currently sparse area of research.

Significance to Practice

Through this study's findings, I provided guidance to develop strategies and practices that advance diversity in nonprofit organizations' leadership. Diversity in nonprofits is vital, as these organization leaders often need to meet the needs and serve within diverse and often minority-based communities (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Harris, 2014). These organizations must, therefore, increase racial equity and inclusion among leaders and board membership to better reflect the broader communities in which they operate (Gross, 2015). Underrepresentation of minorities in leadership may also cause nonprofits to inaccurately identify or miss valuable opportunities for meeting diverse community needs, as they will not have first-hand knowledge of and insight into such needs (Burns et al., 2012; Gazley et al., 2010). Furthermore, when nonprofit leaders do not seek to support these valuable members of the community, they miss opportunities to learn and improve their organizations through knowledge sharing (Andrevski et al., 2014; Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; Gross, 2015).

As the portion of minorities in society increases, nonprofit leaders must recognize that the impending racial/ethnic population changes can create an environment that values individuals and cultures. Van Ewijk (2011) suggested that leaders should develop specific policies to facilitate the inclusion of diversity in organizations. According to Van Ewijk (2011), the historical context for diversity policy resulted from antidiscrimination legislation, contract compliance, and affirmative action. Through the study's findings, I provided nonprofits with valuable insight into improved adherence to such legislative policies.

Bond and Haynes (2014) studied policy implications of workforce diversity and found that despite its challenges and opportunities, organization leaders must cultivate an organizational climate to support practices for inclusion of diverse individuals. An examination of the factors that influence the organization's ability to understand the benefits of diversity in the workplace reveals that demographic diversity is an unpleasant fact that cannot be ignored (Mor Barak, 2015). Thus, there is an opportunity to build awareness and practices into organizational policies and culture (Bond & Haynes, 2014). This study might offer nonprofits practical ways of building such awareness and incorporating such practices.

Demographic changes also contribute to the increased racial and ethnic composition of the labor pool, which requires nonprofit leaders to reflect these changes to work in communities (Taylor, 2010). The nonprofit sector must adapt to reflect such changes, particularly because U.S. demographics are becoming increasingly diverse (Hayes, 2012). This study might offer deeper insight into these changes and counter the

currently limited understanding of some nonprofit boards and leaders on how to successfully diversify. The study might also assist these organizations with better handling and actively addressing the increased pressure for improving diversity among boards and leadership (Glass & Cook, 2017). Additionally, the study results might provide insight for nonprofits that have yet to address the issue of broader diversity of the board and the benefits diversity could bring by providing practical examples, strategies, and practices for improving diversity and exhibiting the organizational and community successes that might result. In all, this study might offer significant information to nonprofit leaders for their practices in increasing diversity, thereby potentially improving their overall performance, productivity, and effectiveness (Glass & Cook, 2017).

Significance to Social Change

The study results might help nonprofit organizations to maximize the benefits of diversity among leaders and board members to improve organizational performance (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Gazley et al., 2010; Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013). Such benefits could have various implications for positive social change. Positive changes might include better performance of nonprofit organizations overall, equity and redressing previous minority inequality and social injustice, and aid to the communities served by these organizations (Galinsky et al., 2015; Groggins & Ryan, 2015; Sharma, 2016).

There are 1.6 million nonprofit organizations in the United States (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2013). These organization leaders contribute more than \$700 billion to the U.S. economy, and the sector is worth more than \$1 trillion in assets (Foohy, 2012). Understanding the root causes of the current state of diversity and

recognizing the need for improving diversity in nonprofits will accelerate social change, which can further the economic and social contribution of this sector (Gross, 2015). Nonprofits can also increase their competitive edge by engaging people with diverse backgrounds, skills, and experiences, which can further contribute to positive social change (Burns et al., 2012). As Ute, Patterson, Kelly, and Mair (2016) noted, organizations play an important part in transformational processes that influence societal well-being and this social structure of which nonprofits form a part can contribute to positive social change and be beneficial to individuals, communities, and the society.

The 2008 Census Bureau projected that minorities would constitute over 50% of the population by 2042, which will create a majority-minority nation (Craig & Richeson, 2014). The racial and ethnic minorities will be the majority and white Americans, the minority. As early as in 2009, four states (Hawaii, California, New Mexico, and Texas) and the District of Columbia already had majority-minority populations (Craig & Richeson, 2014). Therefore, considering diversity and ensuring that nonprofit organizations reflect the changing demographic trends within the larger U.S. society could stand these organizations in better stead to meet the needs of a changing populace and ensure the organizations' sustainability over time (Gazley et al., 2010; Gross, 2015).

Moreover, leaders of both governmental and organizational policies for facilitating diversity within organizations can promote the organizations' diverse members to have an impact on internal and external governance practices, thereby further improving organizational and general societal equity (Buse et al., 2014). This research study might help nonprofit leaders have an increased understanding of the positive

influence that diversity might have on the effectiveness of their organization's performance, as well as how their changes toward diversity might promote positive social change. The research might also provide insight into what racial and ethnic diversity entails and how it could create positive social change in nonprofits and broader society.

Summary and Transition

In Chapter 1, I presented an overview of the background to and the specific problem faced by some nonprofit organizations struggling to achieve board and leadership positions that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve (Gross, 2015; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015). I also noted that the purpose of the study was to define a process for increasing diversity of nonprofit boards to match the demographics of the communities served. The research question that I used to guide the study was the following: What strategies and practices could nonprofits employ to promote diversity in their organizations' boards?

I framed this study in Bunderson and Sutcliffe's (2002) diversity management theory and model. In this qualitative study, I used a modified Delphi technique together with supporting observations and documentation to gather data from a maximum of 25 experts. These experts included individuals who served on nonprofit boards and actively participated in promoting and improving their board's diversity. In this chapter, I noted various operational definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations of the study. Finally, I established ways that I would address potential researcher and sample bias, as well as how this study might be significant in aiding nonprofit leaders to

serve their communities better in the future. Chapter 2 includes the literature review strategy, analysis, synthesis, and conceptual framework.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The research problem was that some nonprofit organization leaders struggled with having board and leadership positions that reflected the diversity of the communities that they served (Gross, 2015; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015). The purpose of the modified Delphi study was to develop a process for increasing the diversity of nonprofit boards to match served community demographics. Prior researchers have identified how nonprofit board performance is impacted by racial and ethnic diversity. Researchers have found that by increasing diversity, board governance can be improved (Bernstein et al., 2016).

Furthermore, leadership can use diversity to enhance nonprofit performance and improve the implementation of best practice in diversity management and diversity initiatives designed to improve organizational culture (Harris, 2014). Therefore, diversity within boards and leadership must occur so that organizations can reap such benefits. Therefore, I examined the perspectives of nonprofit experts regarding the relationship between board member and leadership diversity and the effect on organizational performance.

In this chapter, I present a comprehensive literature review along with the chosen theoretical framework used in this study. Chapter 2 also includes identification of a gap in current literature related to nonprofit diversity strategies and practices. The chapter also includes a discussion of theories of diversity management and how diversity positively affects organizational performance. The chapter ends with a summation of the review findings.

Literature Search Strategy

In conducting the research, I used the following databases: *ABI/Inform Complete*, *Business Source Complete*, *SAGE Journals*, and *ProQuest Dissertations, and Theses*, as well as other journal sites, such as *Elsevier* and *JSTOR*. Additionally, I used the *Google Scholar* website for seminal works to guide my search for references to the theoretical basis of my research. I selected relevant articles that directly traced the history of diversity and nonprofits from the Civil War to Burke and Steensma's (1998) and Bunderson and Sutcliffe's (2002) framework. All references in the literature review are primary sources.

Additionally, I used the library *SocIndex* database in my search for sources. I conducted a search for current research on racial and ethnic diversity in nonprofits and organizational performance. I also sought to include Delphi studies as part of my review, to substantiate my chosen methodology. Through my initial library and search engine searches, I used these sources for additional reviews. I used this strategy to gather and review sources from a variety of schools of thought related to diversity and nonprofits.

I applied the following list of key search terms in gathering the relevant peer-reviewed journal research: *nonprofit organizations*, *diversity*, *diversity management*, *diversity strategies*, *ethnic/racial diversity*, *nonprofit organizational performance*, *affirmative action*, *board diversity*, *organizational effectiveness*, *Delphi study*, and *underrepresented and underrepresented populations*. The literature search included an evaluation of 88 sources, of which 77 (87%) had publication dates from 2014 to 2018.

The remaining 13% of the literature included seminal works that provided a historical context and/or the theoretical framework for the study.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the theory of diversity management, as posed by Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002) and Burke and Steensma (1998). I chose this framework as managers need to find ways to effectively manage an increasingly diverse workforce, as presented in Chapter 1 (Choi & Rainey, 2010). Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002) approached diversity management by regarding the ways intrapersonal functional diversity positively affects information sharing and organizational performance. Burke and Steensma (1998) addressed diversity management regarding intrapersonal and interpersonal functional diversity. Burke and Steensma (1998) theorized that leader-subordinate and coworker diversity in relation to race and ethnicity could all work to improve organizational effectiveness and innovation, while Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002) determined that effective knowledge sharing amongst diverse groups could improve performance.

By combining these two approaches to the diversity management theory as part of this conceptual framework, I gained a more comprehensive understanding of diversity management theory in which to frame the study. Through this framework, I explored whether diversity in nonprofits positively affects organizational effectiveness and performance. I used both Bunderson and Sutcliffe's (2002) and Burke and Steensma's (1998) theoretical underpinnings to determine if, where, and how nonprofit boards and leadership might improve their diversity and knowledge sharing through better

understanding the positive roles diversity could play in their organizations. I used the theory of diversity management to form the basis for understanding the need for diversity at nonprofits, specifically for staff in board and leadership, while providing insight into aspects relating to how improved nonprofit board diversity might lead to addressing broader social justice and equity issues.

I used both Bunderson and Sutcliffe's (2002) and Burke and Steensma's (1998) understandings of and elaborations on diversity management theory in this study as substantiated through other studies' applications. For example, Guillaume et al. (2017) applied and extended diversity management theory to determine that factors, such as inclusion-positive work environments and leadership, organizational diversity policies, and how top management approached diversity could all positively influence diversity outcomes. Similarly, Peretz, Levi, and Fried (2015) applied and extended diversity management theory by asserting that culture could play a dominant part in how organization leaders approached diversity, as well as the level to which successful diversity occurred. In their study, the authors used the theory to frame and understand the influence of diversity management in relation to 5,000 different organizations across the world, and how leaders' ability or inability in managing diversity could influence performance aspects, such as absenteeism and turnover (Peretz et al., 2015).

Braunstein, Fulton, and Wood (2014) used diversity management theory to find ways of bridging cultural differences through establishing common practices, such as prayer. Although the findings of the Braunstein et al. (2014) did not relate directly to this study, as I focused on religious organizations, the findings extended the use of the chosen

theoretical framework and the need to determine other bridging practices that managers might employ for improving diversity. Furthermore, Trittin and Schoeneborn (2017) determined that communication and active interactions to address diversity and social justice issues were important to consider when dealing with diversity management. These authors used diversity management theory as a basis from which to create opportunities for improving perceptions and decision-making processes related to improving organizational diversity (Trittin & Schoeneborn, 2017). Similarly, Holvino (2014) used diversity management theory to create a model aimed at improving diversity in an organization. This multicultural organizational development model followed the multicultural stage process where organizations moved from being nondiverse to wholly inclusive (Holvino, 2014).

These studies indicated the clear and helpful application of the chosen theoretical framework for studying organizational diversity issues, such as nonprofit board diversity improvement as presented in this study, which was further rationale for choosing this theory as the study's framework. Researchers could also use these studies when evaluating the findings of this study for increased understanding and application of diversity management theory by using cultural and communication awareness and models/processes toward achieving diversity. I built on diversity management theory, as these other researchers did, by focusing the theory specifically on nonprofit boards' diversity management. The posed research question of this study—What strategies and practices could nonprofits employ to promote diversity in their organizations' boards?—

might expand diversity management theory to include practical strategies and practices for improving diversity.

I used the chosen theoretical framework to gain a clear understanding of both the need for and ways of implementing positive diversity management, including how diversity management might aid nonprofit boards in improving diversity. Diversity management theory was also used to frame the Delphi questions and answer the overall research question posed in this study. Using this framework might also lead to expanding upon practical strategies for improving diversity, which could further build on the diversity management theory. Thus, this chosen theoretical framework was beneficial as a basis for this study.

Review of the Literature

The following section presents a review of the most relevant literature related to my study topic. The review has been divided into the following subsections: Diversity Management, Diversity and Organizational Performance, and Diversity as a Strength and Benefit for Nonprofits. The literature is presented in detail in the relevant sections. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings and noted gaps in the reviewed literature.

The demographics of the U.S. workforce will continue to become more diverse (Groggins & Ryan, 2015). The changes are partially due to small improvements in education and job opportunities for minorities and increased immigration changing the face of the U.S. population (Benderly, 2014; Cohn, 2015; Klawe, 2015; Ozgen, Nijkamp, & Poot, 2017). The literature showed that some organization leaders lacked knowledge of

diversity management and the potential benefits of integrating this concept into their organizations (Andrevski et al., 2014; Gross, 2015). Statistics vary, but there is evidence that diversity disparities are especially evident in the nonprofit sector among leaders and board members (Gross, 2015; Hayes, 2012). Although there are various dimensions of ethnographic diversity, I only focused on racial and ethnic diversity because there was evidence that nonprofit boards were often predominantly or even 100% White (BoardSource, 2017), with Craig and Richeson (2014) suggesting that changing board demographics might be difficult as some members might see the change as a threat to the status quo.

I provided ways of promoting racial and ethnic diversity in such boards and insight into how and why diversity would benefit rather than threaten individuals, organizations, and the broader community. Janssens and Zanoni (2014) found that fostering ethnic diversity could hold great benefits to an organization. However, the authors asserted that for diversity to be effective, it would need to become part of the operating culture within an organization and not simply a case of using or employing individuals to be representations of their social group (Janssens & Zanoni, 2014). Creating an inherent culture within an organization toward diversity is key considering how an organization's internal culture can influence its overall performance (Pinho, Rodrigues, & Dibb, 2014). The more positive an organizations' culture, the more likely it will maintain stakeholder support, retain staff and volunteers, and accurately position itself within its market (Pinho et al., 2014). These factors can lead to overall better performance of an organization (Pinho et al., 2014).

Diversity might likely play a key role in creating a positive nonprofit culture. I provided insight into how nonprofit boards might foster such a diversity-culture by first addressing and improving their diversity, and then employing similar strategies to foster ethnic diversity throughout the organization. Some researchers also included discussions on gender diversity (Buse et al., 2014; Ntim, 2014). They spoke about the larger issues of diversity, which future researchers might wish to address.

I added to research related to organizations' leadership, as there was a current tendency in the literature for researchers to focus on employees rather than leadership structures in relation to diversity management (see Kulik, 2014). Kulik (2014) noted that leaders often did not know how and when to employ different diversity management strategies. Although the author was more focused on for-profit contexts, nonprofit leaders likely experienced similar issues with trying to put diversity management into practice, especially when considering that their boards, which would be responsible for such management, were often not diverse themselves (BoardSource, 2017; Kulik, 2014). I provided valuable practical strategies for board leaders to improve their diversity; by extension, leaders could improve the diversity and diversity management of their general nonprofit structures.

Diverse populations of people create productive environments in the workforce, but there is little knowledge of which practices are most effective in managing diversity (Benschop, Holgerson, Van Den Brink, & Wahl, 2015). Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015) described *diversity management* as changing organizational practices and climates to manage a diverse workforce effectively. This change in basic assumptions may help

organization leaders understand how to diversify nonprofit boards and leadership positions successfully, which could positively affect organizational performance. Bond and Haynes (2014) referred to diversity management as the effective management of diverse workforces. Deshwal and Choudary (2012) explained that diversity management was a tool for promoting and implementing diversity in organizations. Özbilgin and Tatli (2011) explored the concept of diversity management regarding the gap between diversity discourse and practice noted a dichotomy between equal opportunities and diversity management. Özbilgin and Tatli (2011) suggested that diversity management must focus on business performance. Martins and Olsen (2016) concluded that diversity management included individuals from underrepresented minority populations.

Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002) examined the performance effects of diversity and suggested two different forms of functional diversity: dominant functional diversity and intrapersonal functional diversity. These forms had different implications for team management and organizational performance, but Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002) argued that intrapersonal functional diversity had a positive impact on organizational performance. Burke and Steensma (1998) explained that intrapersonal functional diversity was important for individuals and teams.

As noted in the Conceptual Framework, Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002) created the diversity management model to suggest that intrapersonal functional diversity had positive implications for group performance beyond information sharing. For example, teams with diverse individuals make better-informed decisions, individually and collectively, compared to teams with functionally similar individuals. Walker and Stepick

(2014) made similar assertions by noting that while diversity might cause initial difficulties in implementation, organization leaders could benefit from diversity overall. Griffin and Hart (2016) substantiated these claims, stating that including a diverse group of individuals into an organization could be beneficial.

Nair and Vohra (2015) extended the understanding of diversity to the concept of “inclusion;” where racial-, gender-, and age-related minorities were included into an ever-increasing sphere of influence within society and organizations. Mor Barak (2015) noted that while inclusion was often mandated within different organizations, its practical outworking had not yet been successfully established, with minorities often still meeting with many difficulties in attempting to attain better positions. On the one hand, organization leaders seemed to understand the value of diversity to performance; on the other, many still did not successfully adopt or implement diversity policies (Mor Barak, 2015).

Fredette, Bradshaw, and Krause (2015) asserted that for organization leaders to improve diversity successfully, they must address board and leadership diversity. A vital component for achieving such board diversity improvement was not simply seeking better general representation but also actively including diverse groups and individuals into organizational operations (Fredette et al., 2015). Therefore, leaders of nonprofits and other organizations must find ways of improving diversity within their leadership structures, and I might aid in this endeavor through the presentation of my findings.

Galinsky et al. (2015), Groggins and Ryan (2015), and Sharma (2016) promoted the idea that diversity could improve performance, while a lack of diversity in nonprofit

organizations negatively influenced funding. Hunt, Layton, and Prince (2015) studied gender and ethnic diversity's impact on organizational performance in countries, such as Canada, the U.K., and across Latin America. The researchers asserted that management could use diversity to promote improved performance. Nonprofit leaders tend to struggle to diversify successfully; therefore, many fail to maximize the benefits of diversity among leaders and board members that can improve organizational performance (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Gazley et al., 2010; Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013).

Improvements in organizational performance within the nonprofit sector are increasingly necessary due to demographic shifts within the greater U.S. society (Craig & Richeson, 2014). There is also an ever-increasing trend toward globalization, which promotes social interactions and nonprofit workings with, for, and within dynamic and changing demographics (Drori, Höllerer, & Walgenbach, 2014). Such globalization and local demographic changes can lead to increased dichotomies needing to be addressed (Craig & Richeson, 2014; Drori et al., 2014). Due to nonprofit leaders' social and political responsibilities, their reflection of societal demographics may either aid or hinder general societal transformation and upliftment (Abdullah & Ismail, 2017; Gross, 2015; Harris, 2014; Kim & Kim, 2014; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015). Considering the potential for diversity to cause contention and divides within societal structures, nonprofit leaders' ability to reflect diversity and cohesion may not only better address minority and underrepresented communities and groups' needs but may also fulfill a larger function of building unity within and across different sectors of society (Craig & Richeson, 2014; Flatau et al., 2015).

Cottrill, Lopez, and Hoffman (2014) examined the benefits of authentic leadership and inclusion in organizations; they emphasized the importance of leadership in diversity management. The authors determined that organizational leaders must model diversity, alter rules for acceptable behaviors, and create a climate for dialogue regarding intrapersonal differences. Similarly, Sabharwal (2014) indicated that leadership might improve workplace diversity through their actions, such as when leaders actively worked to promote employee inclusion by valuing diverse employee input, practicing employee inclusion during decision-making, and attempting to improve employee self-esteem (Sabharwal, 2014). Cottrill et al. (2014) contributed to the literature on theoretical understandings of relationships between authentic leadership, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) by revealing the importance of leadership in improving organizational performance. Sabharwal (2014) provided practical means for achieving diversity ends through leadership. The authors also both highlighted that diversity affects relationships between individuals and groups, which influenced organizational behavior and performance.

Leaders must ensure that diversity within organizations and between members is managed correctly to gain the most out of a diverse setting (Guillaume et al., 2017). Bernstein et al. (2016) noted the key role that nonprofit chief executive offices (CEOs) could play in promoting organizational change. While Sessler Bernstein et al. (2016) did not address diversity alone, more diverse boards and leaders, such as CEOs, could advance organizational change and improvements in more ways than more homogenous structures (Walker & Stepick, 2014).

Hawkins (2014) extended the responsibility of leadership for promoting diversity to include managing resources, as well as taking stakeholder needs, including improving diversity among employees, into account. Wellens and Jegers (2014) made similar assertions, noting that including a variety of stakeholders, not only in terms of board diversity but also from within staff and community members, could further work to improve performance. Diversity may also aid in assisting particularly smaller nonprofits in providing valuable services to their communities, as it is not so much the size of the organization that determines its service-delivery capabilities, as it is its understanding of community needs (Paynter & Bernier, 2014). Improvements in service delivery come by broadening the perceptions and considering and valuing differences that would otherwise not be voiced, which could likely present a valuable insight into a problematic area, as well as solutions (Hawkins, 2014; Wellens & Jegers, 2014).

Nonprofit leaders should also seek to undo historical, social discrepancies, and they could properly manage diversity within their organizations to assist in this regard (Hawkins, 2014). Beginning to address diversity issues within nonprofits could extend and meet diversity-related needs in the greater community, thereby aiding in promoting increased levels of equity (Bond & Haynes, 2014). Glass and Cook (2017) believed that organizations had to consider how their boards were structured, whether homogeneity was due to the nonprofit sector's overall homogeneity, and whether diversity was influenced by the organization's physical location. Homogenous nonprofit boards might need to gather diverse members from outside their immediate location/community as a means of improving both individual organizations' diversity, as well as diversity within

the sector (Glass & Cook, 2017). Additionally, nonprofit leaders' ability to adapt to a changing and ever-increasingly diverse society could also ensure better chances of the organizations' sustainability (Bond & Haynes, 2014).

Finding what causes nonprofits to work or fail is also key to improving their longevity (Helmig, Ingerfurth, & Pinz, 2014). Helmig et al. (2014) noted that diverse factors were involved in nonprofits' success or failure. Hahn, Pinkse, Preuss, and Figge (2015) confirmed one such factor by noting that successfully managing diversity could improve organizations' sustainability. Although their study focused on the corporate environment, nonprofits could improve their sustainability in similar ways. However, to achieve such sustainability, managers would need to identify if, where, and how diversity management might be problematic—either through a lack of diversity or due to a failure of managing misunderstandings that might arise within a diverse workforce—and find means of addressing these problematic areas (Hahn et al., 2015). I aided nonprofit managers in this regard through the presentation of my results.

Diversity and Organizational Performance

Researchers have found that diversity may positively influence organization leaders' performance (Buse et al., 2014; Choi & Rainey, 2010; Harris, 2014). For example, Harris (2014) examined the influence of board diversity on nonprofit performance by surveying nonprofit colleges and universities regarding board member characteristics that influenced financial and nonfinancial success. Harris (2014) found a link between board member diversity and expertise, as well as how well a studied college or university performed, overall. This finding indicated that leaders with diversity played

an important role in nonprofit success, as leaders from diverse backgrounds might be better able to predict and find innovative ways of meeting needs.

One such innovation can be seen in Europe's social entrepreneurship trends that aim to improve service delivery (Borgaza & Galera, 2014). Improving web presence and, in the process, reaching more diverse and potentially beneficial stakeholders may be another innovative approach to consider (Kirk, Abrahams, & Ractham, 2016). Using the internet may also provide easier opportunities for donor payments and/or gaining more representational volunteers; both can improve overall nonprofit performance (Kirk et al., 2016; Lee, 2018; Rotolo & Wilson, 2014).

Kirk et al. (2016) found that creating user-friendly websites could be beneficial in improving the service delivery of organizations to the public. They also determined that a web-presence aided in public awareness and could improve the number of transactions in relation to products and services (Kirk et al., 2016). Although their study revolved around e-business and websites for United States and Thailand government departments, their study was still useful to this study in noting how technological innovation could open doors for organizations (e.g., nonprofits) in promoting public awareness, raising funds, and delivering necessary services.

One key way of raising awareness and improving nonprofit marketing is through internal marketing (Hume, 2015). Nonprofits that market new services and strategies directly to staff and volunteers can often gain more support for initiatives (Hume, 2015). Through internal marketing, individuals within the organization will gain a better understanding of the organizations' identity and mission, which they can then more

actively and accurately promote to those outside of the organization (Hume, 2015). In this way, nonprofit leaders might improve their diversity strategies by working from the inside-out; in this regard, I might assist board members with my findings.

Another innovation is racially diverse management teams that can generate more ideas to meet organizations' competitive challenges, thereby further leading to increased organizational performance (Andrevski et al., 2014). De Leeuw, Lokshin, and Duysters (2014) determined that using technology and incorporating collaboration and diversity within and between organizations could improve their innovative approaches and overall performance. Diversity and positive relationship building within and across organizations can also aid in improved performance and service delivery (De Leeuw et al., 2014).

Skelcher and Smith (2015) suggested that hybridity in nonprofits might benefit their performance. The authors found that diversity in management approaches and the joining of various functions within and between different organizations (i.e., creating a kind of organizational hybrid) could lead to a more functional organization (Skelcher & Smith, 2015). Although the researchers did not specifically consider how diversity within leadership might impact on creating such an organizational hybrid or aid in the collaboration between different units within and across organizations, I provided information on such areas. I further explored these and other approaches toward improved diversity and consequent service delivery.

In Buse et al.'s (2014) quantitative study of 1,456 nonprofit board chief executive officers, the researchers found that diverse boards could experience additional problems, due to board member differences. However, when boards were diverse in both gender

and race, there tended to be fewer problematic areas compared to if boards were only racially diverse (Buse et al., 2014). This finding indicated that gender diversity might play a mitigating role in diffusing racially-charged differences. Although I did not focus on gender diversity, future researchers might wish to conduct further studies into this gender-race interplay. Furthermore, although diversity might produce potential issues for nonprofits, particularly if diversity was not well-managed, more diverse organizations were more likely to perform better in key nonprofit areas, such as fundraising, capacity building, and outcome/service efficiency (Medina-Borja & Triantis, 2014; Ntim, 2014).

Jung (2015) established that diversity could successfully aid fundraising initiatives, as diverse board leaders appealed to a wider pool of potential donors and more actively sought to meet varied donor requirements. Thus, leaders of diverse organizations are in a better position to extend their networks, which can aid in gaining necessary resources and meeting greater needs for which they can provide aid (Gross, 2015; Lockhart & Campbell, 2008; Medina-Borja & Triantis, 2014). Leaders should find ways of appealing to the more general and diverse public for funding; hence, funding could lead to improved resources (Jourdan & Kivleniece, 2016). Focusing fundraising initiatives toward the public and communities could also improve relationships between nonprofits and their communities, which could further improve the organizations' functioning (Jourdan & Kivleniece, 2016).

Traditionally, funding has been seen as and predominantly practiced by the wealthy White demographic (Jung, 2015). By diversifying funding to be more inclusive—from local community members to promote giving in other leadership and

demographic spheres—organization leaders could likely gain more funds (Jung, 2015). Diversity in funders would then also be possible for nonprofits to remain financially healthy and maintain their independence in reaching their organizations' commitments (Kim, 2016). By having a wider range of regular and community-based funders, nonprofit leaders would not need to worry about the consequences of an individual contributor stopping aid or having to align their core values and practices with those of a few large donors to the potential expense of their communities (Kim, 2016). However, Jung (2015) noted that organization leaders would need to be sensitive to cultural differences when attempting to broaden their funding scope to best reach a more diverse range of potential givers.

Bridging cultural gaps and being aware of cultural differences also extends beyond mere funding (Braunstein et al., 2014). Nonprofit leaders who can manage to overcome cultural and socioeconomic differences within their organization are also more likely to aid diverse communities in doing the same (Braunstein et al., 2014). Although Braunstein et al. (2014) studied how faith-based organization leaders managed to overcome cultural and socioeconomic differences, Braunstein et al. still lent credence to this study by showing how nonprofit leaders should consider cultural and socioeconomic factors when managing diversity and attempting to collaborate with other organizations and the broader community.

Lockhart and Campbell (2008) examined race from the perspective of national youth-serving nonprofit organizations and found that the lack of diversity in this group influenced student outcomes, poverty, the economy, crime, and the justice system.

Lockhart and Campbell (2008) gathered data regarding racial demographics of leadership and staff at the local, state, and national levels, and argued that understanding a network's racial make-up is fundamental for the organization leaders to seek racially equitable solutions for racially diverse clients, leadership, and staff. Lockhart and Campbell collected quantitative and qualitative data about the nonprofit organization through a survey of state directors and local affiliate executive directors and found that board and staff members did not reflect the demographics of the community and students. Nonprofit leaders of color expressed concern that access to funding is challenging for minorities and that philanthropists are rarely minorities (Lockhart & Campbell, 2008). These leaders expressed concerns highlight the necessity for including more minority-representative leaders on boards, as such concerns may go unnoticed, or not be a priority for most leaders (Ntim, 2014).

Board diversity could also result in a better market or financial value for nonprofits (Ntim, 2014), which implies that nonprofits with more diverse boards may be more likely to receive donations and generate economically viable programs (Ntim, 2014). Such economic potential may be due, in part, to members coming from more diverse geographic locations, which can extend both the reach and representation of nonprofits and provide even more innovative solutions to problems (Van Beers & Zand, 2014; Young & Lecy, 2014). Including more diverse members, and incorporating members from various locations, could also assist organizations in making use of a better range of valuable skills and knowledge present in members (Van Beers & Zand, 2014).

Board diversity alone may not be enough to ensure proper nonprofit performance (Weisinger, Borges-Mendez, & Milofsky, 2016). Rather, nonprofit leaders should aim to achieve board diversity, which then filters into other departments' diversity and approaches to inclusion, and then extends into the broader community (Weisinger et al., 2016). By actively focusing on bridging gaps and valuing and employing diversity across all sections of a nonprofit, organization leaders will likely present with better outcomes and build diversity-valuing behaviors similarly within larger society (Weisinger et al., 2016).

Van Beers and Zand (2014) made similar assertions in their study related to research and development (R&D) within Dutch organizations. These authors found that nonprofit leaders who expanded their staff across both race and geography (e.g., through collaborating with similar organizations in different parts of the world) might see similar performance improvements. This assumption was grounded on similar findings by Young, Neumann, and Nyden's (2017) Chicago-based study that indicated the benefits of collaboration. These authors determined that merging similar organizations, especially when such organizations served differing geographically-located communities, could extend nonprofits' reach, promote diversity, and establish better connections within communities (Young et al., 2017). Through a 9-year study of 315 companies' R&D departments, Lin (2014) similarly established that diversity was a key factor in innovation. The more diverse a company's human resources, the more likely it was to also present with overall better performance (Lin, 2014). Although Lin (2014) did not address the nonprofit sector, the study remained relevant to this current study by

revealing the interplay between diversity, innovation, and improved performance that might well be present within the nonprofit context.

I provided more insight into how diversity and collaboration might influence overall nonprofit performance. I highlighted how collaboration could positively influence board diversity. Additionally, I tried to substantiate Eaton and Weir's (2014) findings that private-public collaboration might work to ensure better service delivery and create a more diverse pool from which services can be managed. In their review of public-private health care collaboration in California between 1980 and 2010, Eaton and Weir established that using such collaboration could aid health care providers in better meeting community needs and offer higher levels of service. Specifically, collaboration could aid in filling labor and skills gaps, close service gaps that could otherwise have a negative influence on public perception of the industry, and provide better service delivery using broader marketing and access channels (Eaton & Weir, 2014).

Hockers (2015) and Fyall and McGuire (2014) noted that organization leaders should establish where they might be met with heretofore hidden competition or obstacles and actively aim to work with similar organizations. Both Hockers (2015) and Fyall and McGuire (2014) provided insight into how organization leaders (e.g., nonprofits) might find barriers and ways of working with other nonprofits to improve diversity and ensure better service delivery. Additionally, collaboration with other nonprofits or private/public institutions could aid in such diversity and service endeavors (Eaton & Weir, 2014).

Government collaboration might also play a key part in how well nonprofits perform. For example, Garrow (2014) examined government funding of nonprofit

organizations that served underrepresented groups and noted that nonprofit human service organizations in high-poverty areas depended on the government to support any programs. Garrow (2014) explained that contemporary researchers of nonprofit resource environments often ignored race. The author stated that a better understanding of the influence of neighborhood racial composition on government allocations to nonprofit organizations in deprived areas would show the underlying mechanisms that could cause an uneven distribution of resources (Garrow, 2014). By better understanding the racial makeup of communities in which nonprofit leaders operate and providing funding accordingly, the government might provide nonprofits with valuable assistance for expanding leaders' interests, as well as improving their performances (Shea & Hamilton, 2015).

There was evidence that nonprofits were often too reliant on government funding, thereby limiting other potential income streams or more diverse donor considerations; however, Fyall (2016) highlighted that such close collaboration could present nonprofits with key powers to influence governmental policies. Government-nonprofit collaboration could provide innovative service delivery, which might be more effective and sustainable than if governments or nonprofits worked separately (Fyall, 2016). Collaboration of various types—nonprofit-nonprofit, for-profit-nonprofit, or government-nonprofit—might provide better opportunities not only for improved nonprofit performance and service delivery but also for promoting opportunities for improving diversity within these organizations at both the leadership and staff levels (Fyall, 2016; Garrow, 2014; Hockers, 2015; Young et al., 2017).

These various collaborative constructs (i.e., nonprofit-for-profit-governmental) might be further beneficial due to often-similar approaches to management and design (Ben-Ner & Ren, 2015). For example, Ben-Ner and Ren (2015) found that leaders of nonprofit, governmental, and for-profit nursing homes often ran their organizations in similar ways and gave their nurses similar amounts of authority. However, nonprofit leaders tended to rely on community networks, and for-profit leaders tended to more actively utilize incentive programs (Ben-Ner & Ren, 2015).

Similarly, Viader and Espina (2014) determined that for-profit and nonprofit boards often operated in similar manners. Although Viader and Espina did not achieve the desired data collection from all 285 companies contacted for the survey, the authors gathered enough data to determine that nonprofit and for-profit boards fulfilled similar functions, performed similar roles, and held meetings on similar issues. Thus, hybrid collaborations might occur for each respective sector to learn from and aid each other in making improvements in similar areas or addressing similar problems (Viader & Espina, 2014).

Based on the reviewed literature, collaboration between these different entities might start from where each organization presents with common ground, and then allow leaders to work within their unique frames and differences to adapt or adopt different operations as presented in their collaborative partners. However, more research was needed to ascertain the validity of such an assertion. I indicated how nonprofits might benefit from collaborating with for-profit organizations' boards to improve their diversity.

Diversity also has numerous other benefits for organizations, communities, and nations. Hafsi and Turgut (2013) addressed the meaning of boardroom diversity in strategic management literature and whether there was a significant relationship between boardroom diversity and corporate social performance. Measures of an organization's performance included financial and social performance. Hafsi and Turgut (2013) found that improved social relationships with an organization's constituencies produced economic benefits; ethnically diverse boards improved these relationships and resulted in superior performance. Minority directors also offered insights from sources not easily accessible to an ethnocentric board, which led to innovative behavior and enhanced performance (Hafsi & Turgut, 2013; Van Beers & Zand, 2014).

Hafsi and Turgut (2013) found that diversity increased creativity and innovation, promoted higher-quality decisions, and promoted economic growth. Indeed, boards greatly benefited by having a diverse team when making decisions. Guillaume et al. (2017) and Hahn et al. (2015) determined that diversity aided decision-making by offering unique perspectives that could aid the process. Lu, Chen, Huang, and Chien (2015) also found that within Taiwanese manufacturing settings, age diversity could promote better decision-making by balancing experience with innovation.

Similarly, gender-diverse teams could also make better decisions and see better outcomes, as female-led teams often experienced higher levels of independence, which led to more collaborative decision-making (Abdullah, 2014). In their study of approximately 800 business units across two companies, Badal and Harter (2014) established that more gender-diverse units presented with better financial performance. In

their comprehensive review of 140 studies related to gender diversity and financial performance, Post and Byron (2014) substantiated Badal and Harter's (2014) claims. They determined that, while studies presented with mixed results, firms with more females on their boards tended to exhibit higher levels of positive financial performance on average (Post & Byron, 2014). This finding was particularly true for companies operating in countries where stakeholders and shareholders actively required board diversity and motivated boards to use diverse and extended sources of knowledge and experience (Post & Byron, 2014).

Although Post and Byron (2014) did not specifically address performance in the nonprofit sector, a similar diversity-performance effect might exist. I concluded, based on the reviewed sources, that not only could more diverse teams promote better decisions but these could also become more economically viable over time (see Abdullah, 2014; Badal & Harter, 2014). I provided insights on how ethnic and racial diversity might make such promotions. Future researchers might wish to explore the effect of gender-diversity in relation to decision-making and economic viability further.

Shea and Hamilton (2015) specifically highlighted diversity, as well as the inclusion of all stakeholders, into nonprofits' decision-making, as a way of making better strategic decisions and improving nonprofit performance. Diversity in age could also benefit organizations, as a more age-diverse team could likely improve an organization's social exchange and reduce employee turnover (Boehm, Kunze, & Bruch, 2014). More age diverse teams could also aid in filling skills gaps to improve overall organizational performance (Boehm et al., 2014). Evidence indicated age diversity at the board level

might be less beneficial, especially in terms of seeing financial returns (Ali, Ng, & Kulik, 2014). More experienced board members might have better insights into managing financial returns, but more research was needed to ascertain exactly why fewer diverse-in-age boards fair better in this regard (Ali et al., 2014). Ali et al. (2014) determined that although age diversity might not be effective at the board level, gender diversity was beneficial—especially in relation to improving employee productivity. If nonprofit leaders could begin to see the benefits of diversity of all kinds and actively work toward incorporating diversity into their structures, their overall performance should improve (Shea & Hamilton, 2015). I began to aid nonprofits in their diversity improvement endeavors by presenting the findings in my study.

Diversity as a Strength and Benefit for Nonprofits

Managing and navigating opposing views and realities expressed in diverse organizations may be difficult but can lead to great organizational strength (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; Hahn et al., 2015; Hawkins, 2014; Helmig et al., 2014). Heitner, Kahn, and Sherman (2013) examined what constituted success in diversity initiatives to illustrate such success. Heitner et al. used web-based data collection from a panel of internal and external stakeholder groups. Heitner et al. determined four concepts for measuring success: (a) employee perceptions; (b) organizational climate/culture; (c) employee lifecycle data related to attracting, developing, and retaining employees, including employee demographics; and (d) internally focused measures. Organization leaders could use awareness of these themes to assess their effectiveness in building and sustaining diversity initiatives.

Another measurement approach to determine success was that of a balanced scorecard (Boj, Rodriguez-Rodriguez, & Alfaro-Saiz, 2014). Organization leaders could use this scorecard approach to determine the diversity and organizational performance success through how well they managed and implemented both tangible (e.g., employee diversity and infrastructure) and intangible (e.g., employee knowledge and experience) assets (Boj et al., 2014). Marshall and Suárez (2014) presented another measurement approach, namely that of monitoring and evaluation, where nonprofit leaders could measure their success through monitoring and evaluating factors (e.g., resource dependence and how embedded within society the organization had become).

Lee and Nowell (2014) and Ebrahim and Rangan (2014) reviewed several different performance measurement approaches and determined that nonprofit leaders followed an integrated framework to assess their performances, particularly regarding short- versus long-term outcomes, scope, and lasting social change. Lee and Nowell (2014) further purported that leaders extending a better understanding of current measures could aid in predicting and advancing performances in the future. Similarly, Ebrahim and Rangan (2014) noted that some nonprofit organization leaders would benefit more by focusing on long-term performance measures, while others would benefit more from focusing on short-term measures. Thus, future researchers must still determine different measures exist that can be actively used by organization leaders to determine their successes and improvements (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014; Lee & Nowell, 2014).

However, leaders in for-profit and public sectors have developed many such measures, making these less viable for the nonprofit arena (Carnochan et al., 2013).

However, some for-profit measures, such as CEO incentives linked to personal performance, have seen the operation and benefit within the nonprofit sector (Sedatole, Swaney, Yetman, & Yetman, 2015). Leaders of such measures and incentives tend to work differently within traditional and commercial nonprofits, but leaders of both tend to promote better overall performance and financial health of such nonprofits (Sedatole et al., 2015).

Carnochan et al. (2013) suggested that nonprofit leaders should adjust to current performance measures to focus more specifically on how well their organizations adapted to change, levels of skill presented in their staff, and their organizations' approach to knowledge-sharing and data access. A more diverse leadership and general organizational staff would aid greatly in meeting such performance measures and improving nonprofits' outcomes (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; Carnochan et al., 2013; Galinsky et al., 2015; Groggins & Ryan, 2015; Sharma, 2016). I provided insights on how such performance measures could be met through improved nonprofit diversity.

Leadership plays a key role in various measurement and success levels; therefore, nonprofit boards need to make every attempt at ensuring board success, which includes improving board diversity (Glass & Cook, 2017; Harris, 2014; Marshall & Suárez, 2014). Diverse leadership within nonprofits may also work to uphold moral dealings and behaviors within such organizations, as a more diverse leadership may be better able to hold others to account through their varied perceptions and interpretations of policies. Additionally, such leadership can establish better codes of conduct that meet the concerns of a wider population, such as women's rights or unique minority considerations

(Andrevski et al., 2014; Bromley & Orchard, 2015). By being able to measure success, nonprofit leaders may be able to ascertain if, where, and how their policies and practices regarding diversity in board leadership might need improvement. I provided insight into additional factors to consider and address to promote diversity further and glean the benefits from within the nonprofit sector.

Another factor related to how diversity might benefit or be an asset to organizations is through its ability to address and improve social justice issues (Buse et al., 2014; Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013; Groggins & Ryan, 2015; Gross, 2015). Leaders can use diversity to ensure higher levels of accountability within nonprofit organizations (Bromley & Orchard, 2015). A more diverse leadership could place a more comprehensive code of conduct and other related accountability policies to ensure that the nonprofit leaders met financial, social justice, and general ethical responsibilities (Bromley & Orchard, 2015). For example, Ghorashi and Sabelis (2013) discussed the issue of diversity in organizations from the perspective of social justice and inclusiveness and suggested leaders of diversity must address problems of ethnicity, gender, and other levels of inclusion in organizations. In the early 1990s, the authors noted that researchers associated economic benefits with diversity and developed instruments to reduce institutional exclusion or bias (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013).

However, diversity cannot be understood in purely economic terms. Rather, organization leaders need to understand the political and social implications for their organizations, as well as the broader communities in which they operate (Kim & Kim, 2014). Fyall and Allard (2016) studied 1,205 nonprofits across the United States and

noted that these organizations played key political roles, particularly in aiding low-income communities. Similarly, Ute et al. (2016) determined the valuable impact both for-profit and nonprofit organizations could have in promoting positive social change.

In a study of over 3,000 counties across the United States, Kim (2014) indicated nonprofit leaders tended to serve in-need communities and fulfilled a valuable service delivery function if and where governmental institutions might be lacking. To improve such service delivery, Bromley and Meyer (2014) presented that nonprofits should avoid making such clear distinctions between types. Finding ways of working with other nonprofits, regardless of which category they fit into (e.g., religious organizations and social service agencies), could be of great assistance to both communities and organizations themselves (Bromley & Meyer, 2014). Better understanding the community structures and demographics, as well as what other nonprofits function within such communities, could work to improve diversity and cause nonprofits to better reflect changing demographics and meet their political and social mandates (Bromley & Meyer, 2014; Fyall & Allard, 2016; Gross, 2015; Paynter & Bernier, 2014).

By using economics as the (almost) sole measure for why diversity should occur, Ghorashi and Sabelis (2013) argued that measures could become rigid or only focus on short-term solutions. For example, U.S. affirmative action was a temporary measure to promote numbers of people in *other* groups to develop a diverse workforce (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013). Similarly, South Korea's supply-and-demand approach to diversity also led to shorter term solutions that did not hold significant benefits over time, as political and social issues were overlooked in the diversification process (Kim & Kim, 2014).

Flatau et al. (2015) measured diversity outcomes for the community sector in Western Australia and suggested that when community organization leaders measured their impact and effectiveness, they could track the impact of funding from the government, philanthropists, and investors. This concept was interchangeable with nonprofit organizations. For example, Flatau et al. (2015) explored the relationship between funders and community organizations to establish an outcome measurement framework for diversity and inclusion. Similarly, in 2014, leaders of the Non-Profit Finance Fund conducted a comprehensive survey of U.S. nonprofits that included 5,019 organizations across every state. The surveys confirmed findings from the UK and Canada regarding organizations collecting data and using outcome measurements, but there were significant barriers to effective outcomes measurement and evaluation for diversity within organizations (The Non-Profit Finance Fund, 2014).

Schwabenland and Tomlinson (2015) studied solutions to some such barriers and general challenges of diversity in daily organizational practice. They believed that organizational managers lacked the commitment to include minorities. Schwabenland and Tomlinson (2015) argued that recognizing and valuing diversity formed a basis for the business case for diversity. Failure to do so could result in the inability of organizations to recruit and retain a workforce that mirrors the demographics of the communities the organization serves (Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015). However, Groggins and Ryan (2015) suggested that leaders of diversity initiatives did not necessarily produce reliable results; rather, the positive diversity climates might enhance organizational effectiveness. More diverse boards, particularly ethnically diverse boards, can be one means for

generally promoting more positive diverse climates (Abdullah & Ismail, 2017).

Ethnically diverse organization leaders often report higher levels of financial and nonfinancial success, which can promote more positive environments and lead to greater community and organizational upliftment (Abdullah & Ismail, 2017). Therefore, embracing the importance of diversity can add value to nonprofit organizations, as well as improve the general economic and social climate of the organization and the community that it serves.

One should understand the ideas and cultural assumptions that underline successful diversity development within an organization (Berrey, 2014). By understanding that workplace and, by extension social, inequality is a social construct, organization leaders can undo these constructs (Berrey, 2014). If leaders become better able to undo hierarchies within their organizations and focus more on developing and valuing the egalitarian view and value of the individual, they can improve diversity within their organizational structures (Berrey, 2014). To do so, leaders first need to become aware of their own biases toward improving diversity, and then find ways of countering these biases to develop a more diverse organization. I provided practical means for developing plans, employing such approaches, and viewing diverse members as part of a collective, rather than through the lens of hierarchical structures.

Hawkins (2014) examined nonprofit leaders' approaches to diversity initiatives and the impact of mission-driven initiatives on innovation and experimentation. The author explored whether an exclusive focus on strict adherence to mission statements inhibited the progress of nonprofits regarding racial inequity (Hawkins, 2014). Through

the study, the author determined that promoting diversity rarely mitigated racism's institutional effects; moreover, leaders of organizational diversity programs focused on changing individual attitudes but not on changing the organization's culture or business practice (Hawkins, 2014).

Leaders of diversity initiatives and nonprofit missions should transform the organization by addressing social inequities through capacity-building for social change. Hawkins (2014) claimed that transformative change could decrease social inequities by developing strategic intent mission statements to ensuring social justice occurs in nonprofits. Leaders must understand the causes of racial problems and recognize the need for talent diversity to accelerate social change. Social change is particularly necessary within the nonprofit sector. As Gross (2015) explained, minorities represent 30% of the American workforce, but only 18% of nonprofit staff is comprised of minorities. Nonprofit leaders rely on existing staff who are predominately White and network with homogeneous groups (Gross, 2015). Hence, nonprofit leaders often fail in their endeavors to reach and reflect demographics of minority communities in which they operate (Gross, 2015; Paynter & Bernier, 2014).

Choi and Rainey (2010) conducted a quantitative study on a nonprofit organization regarding the influence of demographic diversity of individual attachment and organizational unit performance using a hierarchical regression model. People of a sample of 26 units of a regional restaurant chain participated. Choi and Rainey (2010) found that at the individual level, diversity climate influenced organizational commitment. From the organizational perspective, diversity climate influenced

organizational productivity and return on profit. There was inconsistent empirical evidence regarding this phenomenon, which supported the need for further research on the influence of diversity on organizational performance (Choi & Rainey, 2010). There was a need for research into how gender diversity influenced commitment and other performance-related factors in nonprofits (Ward & Forker, 2017). Although I did not address gender diversity, future researchers might wish to determine how my study might relate to gender diversity improvement, as well as how gender diversity might influence nonprofits' productivity and return on investments (Ward & Forker, 2017).

Gazley et al. (2010) discussed whether board diversity influenced organizational performance and claimed that limited research on board diversity resulted in conflicting findings among scholars. Gazley et al. (2010) used a sample of 170 community mediation nonprofit agencies from across the United States to test the associations between organizational characteristics, interorganizational linkages, and performance. They integrated the literature on diversity and representation to determine whether an organization's governance structure had symbolic importance regarding building interorganizational linkages necessary for success. Limitations consisted of a small sample size from a single service sector and dependence on a cross-sectional analysis of relationships that change over time. Gazley et al. (2010) recommended future researchers should examine internal versus external benefits. I worked to heed this request for more research.

Conflicting findings in the research were not the only reason for conducting more studies into nonprofit diversity issues or how diversity might benefit nonprofits. Such

studies might also aid nonprofits in improving the competitiveness within the sector. For example, Andrevski et al. (2014) examined the relationship between managerial racial diversity and firm performance; the researchers found that competitive actions (e.g., a racially diverse management team) generated more ideas to address competitive challenges. Therefore, organization leaders should tap various cultural resources to gain new insights to increase competitive intensity; leaders could use more diverse volunteer groups and improve diversity on nonprofit boards (Andrevski et al., 2014; Lee, 2018).

To promote diversity and foster improved service delivery to minority communities, improved management and use of volunteers may further aid in improving nonprofit performance, overall governance, and financial support (Lee, 2018). The more heterogeneous volunteers, who are usually more visible to the broader community than what board members may be, become a reflection of nonprofits' attempts toward diversity (Lee, 2018; Rotolo & Wilson, 2014). Volunteers are also usually more reflective of their communities, and volunteer rates may be either positively or negatively affected by how representational volunteers are in relation to both their communities and the organizations in which they serve (Rotolo & Wilson, 2014).

If minorities see more minority volunteers, they may more likely to associate these observations positively with the given nonprofit; therefore, they may even volunteer themselves (Rotolo & Wilson, 2014). Volunteers can also aid low-income individuals and communities in improving their standing, as they will gain valuable access to social, human, cultural, and political capital through nonprofits (Benenson & Stagg, 2015). Such access could provide opportunities to those from lower economic backgrounds to partake

in their own and others' upliftment actively (Benenson & Stagg, 2015). However, volunteer rates are often determined by economic status and volunteer type, where those from lower incomes often fail to volunteer or use upliftment avenues that volunteering might present (Benenson & Stagg, 2015; Rotolo & Wilson, 2014). Thus, nonprofit leaders wishing to improve diversity both in relation to board structures, and "on-the-ground" volunteers would need to consider economic and social factors to improve diversity structures within both spheres.

Organization leaders may also need to work on improving their overall brand to appeal to a more diverse and committed volunteer base (Curran, Taheri, MacIntosh, & O'Gorman, 2016). Nonprofit leaders with clear and long-standing brands that are easy to identify and speak clearly to potential volunteers are more likely to gain new volunteers and retain those already signed on to help the organization (Curran et al., 2016). In the current social climate, particularly among millennial volunteers, potential volunteers may see diversity as part of a nonprofits' branding and be more willing to commit to such an organization (Curran et al., 2016; Evans, n.d.; Jenkin, 2015; Taylor & Keeter, 2010). I presented aid in this regard, at least regarding improving board diversity. Future researchers might wish to build on my study to find ways to improve volunteer diversity.

Better financial and interorganizational resource management could also benefit the growth and success of nonprofits, as nonprofit leaders could learn from and diversify their influence on greater communities and, by extension, further increase potentially beneficial resources (Malatesta & Smith, 2014). Willems, Jegers, and Faulk (2015) established that creating and maintaining a reputation for positive performance could

improve nonprofits' standing. The authors found that nonprofit leaders who exhibited effective performances and interactions with their various stakeholders were more likely to have better relationships, resource management and access, and overall stakeholder trust (Willems et al., 2015). Although Willems et al. (2015) did not focus on diversity, the study remained relevant to the current study because the findings indicated how proper management and leadership, which could extend to diversity management within nonprofit boards, could assist nonprofits in improving various aspects of an organization and ensure continued performance and stakeholder satisfaction.

Nonprofit Business Advisor (2012) explored the benefits of board diversity and emphasized the importance of nonprofit leaders to meet the needs of their communities and stakeholders. For example, Pennel, McLeroy, Burdine, and Matarrita-Cascante (2015) established that nonprofit hospital leaders should conduct regular community health needs assessments (CHNA) to meet better the medical needs of the communities they serve. In such cases, nonprofit leaders might benefit from diversity within their leadership and community stakeholders by tapping into different perspectives and backgrounds (Guillaume et al., 2017; Pennel et al., 2015; Wellens & Jegers, 2014).

Similarly, Azmat and Rentschler (2015) studied the relationship of ethnicity and gender to corporate responsibility of nonprofit arts boards. To measure the benefits of diversity in this sector, the researchers interviewed 92 board members and stakeholders sitting on 66 artboards in Australia. Azmat and Rentschler (2015) found that ethnic and gender diversity on nonprofit boards provided credibility and integrity, which was important for stakeholders in the context of economic uncertainty of nonprofits. Lin and

Wang (2016) supported this view regarding how nonprofit leaders managed to stay operational during the Great Recession. These authors found that equity and diversity, along with good financial relationships with donors, assisted nonprofits in remaining operational (Lin & Wang, 2016). Part of the reasoning for why equity assisted nonprofit leaders in maintaining their stakeholders' involvement and ensured continued financial assistance was that diversity assisted nonprofits in generating new avenues of revenue (Lin & Wang, 2016).

However, increased publicity and success might lead to lowered sustainability likelihood for nonprofits, as donors might have perceptions that the organization was in less need (Charles & Kim, 2016). Thus, boards would need not only to consider equity concerns but also other perceptions and donor concerns to ensure sustainability (Charles & Kim, 2016). Increased diversity within nonprofit boards might aid with addressing such concerns, as the board would have access to a wider variety of options and suggestions due to the unique angles present within diverse groups (Andrevski et al., 2014; Choi & Rainey, 2010).

Despite findings of how diversity could practically advance nonprofit ends and although the concept of diversity was an integral aspect of many organizational policies, Knoppers, Claringbould, and Dortants (2015) asserted that women and minorities continued to be underrepresented as managers due to senior managers' construction of diversity and homogeneity. The relevance of Knoppers et al.'s (2015) study was that nonprofit experts who were participants in my study provided insight regarding how organizations could become more diverse among their board and leadership positions, yet

many of these members were likely to be White men, which might limit their ability to discuss diversity issues fully. Knoppers et al. (2015) explained that the European concept of diversity management was to work actively against ethnic discrimination and promote higher levels of inclusion. The United States has a similar stance, noting that more needs to be done in the improvement of governance and inclusion of minorities (Lu, 2016). There was an assumption that acceptance of social differences could successfully contribute to both organizational and general social productivity and efficiency (Knoppers et al., 2015; Lu, 2016). However, some nonprofit boards reflected limited diversity and do not acknowledge how organizational change might have a positive influence on performance, which I aimed to begin to correct.

The need for addressing this current lack of diversity in nonprofits was further substantiated by Hunt et al. (2015) study; the authors found a statistically significant relationship between levels of diversity and company financial performance. Although not a causal link, the findings indicated that performance and financial success improved for companies with diverse executive teams. This finding was true for ethnic diversity's positive effect on economic gains within the U.S. context (Hunt et al., 2015). These findings showed support for previous authors' findings that also indicated the economic and general performance value that diversity could hold for nonprofits (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; Choi & Rainey, 2010; Gazley et al., 2010; Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013; Hafsi & Turgut, 2013).

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 contained the literature search strategy and the conceptual framework based on diversity management posed by scholars for identifying how an increased racial and ethnic workforce might improve organizational effectiveness and innovation to identify ways to promote diversity in nonprofits effectively. This review also provided themes and how to incorporate better diversity into nonprofits to aid these organization leaders to fulfilling community needs effectively. Various sources indicated themes around the need to improve such diversity within nonprofits, particularly within nonprofit leadership structures and boards. Some sources also presented potential ways of improving diversity, particularly through making better use of stakeholder collaboration and volunteering. The review showed that when the nonprofit boards were diverse, leaders could identify issues to address the needs of demographics within the communities that they served and help the diverse stakeholders.

The reviewed sources highlighted a gap in the literature regarding ways in which to create diverse climates through good leadership. Although some sources presented means for improving diversity through volunteering, there was not yet sufficient study into how leadership could positively influence changes toward diversity. The literature review indicated a gap for improving nonprofits' board diversity. Chapter 3 includes the methodology and the rationale for its selection used to meet these study requirements.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this modified Delphi study was to develop a process for increasing diversity of nonprofit boards to match served community demographics. This research might increase understanding among nonprofit boards and leadership regarding how to successfully diversify their boards to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. Due to the close ties that nonprofit leaders often share with the communities that they serve, a lack of representation and diversity on nonprofit boards that reflect these communities may negatively influence overall effectiveness and performance (Carnochan et al., 2013; Glass & Cook, 2017). Therefore, nonprofit leaders require strategies to aid them in improving their boards' racial and ethnical diversity (Ostrower, 2007).

I aimed to gain expert insight into such strategies through a modified Delphi technique. This Delphi study was supported with data from observations and organizational documentation. In this chapter, I provide information about how this modified Delphi study is conducted and the rationale for the selection. The role of the researcher and a comprehensive discussion regarding the methodology, including participant selection, instrumentation, and various study-related procedures, then follow. Finally, I present aspects of trustworthiness and ethical considerations. I end the chapter with a summary of the main points.

Research Design and Rationale

I used the following research question to gather insight from and consensus between nonprofit experts for helping nonprofits improve diversity in their boards and

leadership structures: What strategies and practices could nonprofits employ to promote diversity in their organizations' boards? I provide a detailed discussion regarding the study sample and the definition of experts used in this study later in this chapter. As for this study's design, I selected a qualitative modified Delphi technique to answer the research question (see Davidson, 2013; Habibi et al., 2014). I supported and triangulated the Delphi data with observations and a review of the respective nonprofits' records, including diversity policies and employee, financial, and community project documentation. The Delphi research design is an iterative process for collecting anonymous judgments from a group of experts using a series of processes for data collection and feedback from the participants (Davidson, 2013). Stakeholders can use this approach to aid in better defining and making decisions around a given phenomenon (Brady, 2015). Through the Delphi information-feedback process, as well as participants' access to other experts' answers, participants might hone and adjust their judgments and answers to reach higher levels of consensus between participants, which could work as the basis from which a set of practical strategies and suggestions could be presented (see Davidson, 2013).

Traditional Delphi researchers conduct these information-feedback sessions in a discussion format, often with all participants engaged in either a video-conferencing or in-person discussion panel (Davidson, 2013). Older forms of the Delphi technique included participants answering questions via post (Brady, 2015; Cuhls, 2001). A modified technique, as presented in this study, referred to the plan to gather data through online surveys (using SurveyMonkey), rather than direct voice communications (Habibi

et al., 2014). However, the information-feedback principle still applied, as participants read and answered the initial questions in written form, and then were provided with other participants' answers prior to a second. Then, a third round of questioning occurred, during which they reviewed their and others' answers to determine a consensus (see Habibi et al., 2014).

The modified Delphi technique was selected for use because of I used it to obtain input from experts in the nonprofit field to provide insight into diversity. Data were gathered related to these experts' experiences of advancing racial/ethnic diversity among boards and leadership in their organizations. As Habibi et al. (2014) noted, the modified Delphi technique usually improves the initial round response rate. The effects of bias might also be reduced because of anonymity among the participants. Thus, I used a Delphi technique to fill a noted gap in the literature around how and why nonprofit leaders should and could improve their board diversity, as well as practically aid such organizations to achieve diversity improvements.

Delphi studies can be especially beneficial for a new research phenomenon that would likely have a long-term impact (Cuhls, 2001). Additionally, researchers use Delphi studies to hone and define policies surrounding a phenomenon (Cuhls, 2001). As nonprofit board diversity is a relatively new concern, with many nonprofits only recently beginning to promote diversity (Biemesderfer, 2017; Hayes, 2012), diversity must be defined, and practical processes and implementations for improving and promoting nonprofit board diversity should be established. Hence, processes and implementations would be policy-related and require expert consensus about the most effective practices

and implementations; therefore, a Delphi technique best suited the needs of this study. I further supported the Delphi findings through collecting and analyzing observation and document data, thereby ensuring higher study validity (Noble & Smith, 2015) and confirming that participant suggestions would lead to improved board diversity and consequent organizational and community benefits.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Silverman (2016) noted that other qualitative designs, such as case studies or phenomenological inquiries, would not provide necessary practical suggestions or solutions. Researchers use case studies to investigate a phenomenon in depth. In this study, I explored the phenomenon of the lack of diversity in boards on a specific organization through the experiences of those impacted by the phenomenon. Neither of these approaches would provide the necessary solutions for addressing the lack of ethnic and racial diversity that currently existed (BoardSource, 2017), which was the purpose of this study. However, I could use the Delphi technique to accomplish a solution to this problem (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Davidson, 2013).

Other qualitative approaches, such as ethnographic or grounded theory, would also not suffice, as I did not attempt to develop a new theory, as with a grounded theory approach, nor did I study how ethnic or cultural aspects might influence a phenomenon (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Although I did concern myself with improving ethnic diversity, I did not study, for example, how a specific minority group experienced or worked within the nonprofit sector. Future researchers might wish to conduct other types of qualitative studies related to this topic in the future. However, for this study, a qualitative Delphi technique was best.

A quantitative methodology was also inappropriate for exploring the opinions of nonprofit leaders who had experience and expertise in advancing diversity in their respective organizations. One could not quantify opinions, experiences, and suggestions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Neuman, 2014). Researchers of a mixed-methods approach use both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As quantitative data would have not benefited this study, a mixed-methods approach would have not been a useful approach. Therefore, a qualitative Delphi technique was best suited to answering the posed research question and meeting the purpose of this study.

Role of the Researcher

I was actively involved in the planning and processing of documents for institutional review and for gaining permission to collect data from participants. I was also directly responsible for setting questions for each round of the Delphi interviews, as well as analyzing the data once all data were collected. In this way, I played the role of a participant in the study.

I included opinions, experiences, and practical suggestions from a maximum of 25 nonprofit leaders to gain insight on their experiences for advancing diversity in the social service nonprofit field. All experts were directly involved with successfully improving their boards' diversity. Experts also included individuals who have attempted to improve board diversity, but who have failed. The key was to include individuals who have been directly involved in finding strategies, developing processes, and implementing guidelines in the hopes of improving their board's diversity. I could then

compare and present findings of their successes and failures to provide an answer to the posed research question about which strategies and practices may be most effective for promoting board diversity in nonprofits. Individuals who were not directly involved in promoting board diversity or served on nonprofit boards that took no steps to improve their diversity were excluded from this study; I sought only to gain data from experts with practical experience and knowledge in the successful (or possibly unsuccessful) strategies and practices for improving board diversity.

As a board and staff member for nonprofits, I had access to some social service nonprofit organizations in the local area. These indirect relationships aided in my identifying known experts, either through having a personal contact or by my being able to confirm expertise through fellow nonprofit leaders and/or staff. These indirect relationships had little to no adverse effects on the interview process, as the interviews were conducted online using SurveyMonkey, rather than in-person, which would have limited the potential for me to ask leading questions or for the participants to feel comfortable in answering questions honestly (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). I did not conduct the study solely within my nonprofit setting, thereby limiting any potential conflicts of interest.

Along with my role as a participant, I played the role of observer. I made observations with little to no active involvement or participation. To ensure unbiased annotations and that participants did not feel pressured to perform during my observations, I created an observation protocol and selected participants from organizations with which I had limited to no previous contact. The observation protocol

(see Appendix B) ensured that I observed and made notes of the same aspects when observing each of the participants, their board meetings, and general organizations' operations. I collected comprehensive and comparable data, thereby making the findings for this section of the study more valid (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Selecting participants and nonprofits where I have little to no prior relationship also ensured that participants would not feel that their behaviors or what occurred during the board meeting and general organizational observations would somehow influence their relationship with me or their organization's relationship with the nonprofits with which I was involved. Thus, I observed more open and honest behaviors. I limited my direct interaction (e.g., asking questions) with the participant and others in the organization. Thus, I ensured that I performed only an observer function, which mitigated potential swaying of results that might occur should my presence be too participatory (Noble & Smith, 2015).

I identified the participants through my contacts and LinkedIn. I was responsible for recruiting participants through e-mail. I ensured data were accurately based on participant responses by limiting potential researcher bias. Research bias was limited through me using panel evaluations of my questions before commencing data collection, participant answer reviews, and personal reflexivity (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Additionally, I mitigated researcher bias by substantiating the Delphi findings and analysis with secondary data collection and analysis. After completion of the data collection and verification, I analyzed and evaluated the information for recurring themes or patterns.

Throughout the data collection and analysis processes, I played the roles of both observer and participant. I was an observer during all three data collection phases. As participants were responsible for answering and honing their responses during the Delphi section, I observed their statements and how they came to a consensus. Additionally, I only merely observed practices and processes during my organizational visitations, and I observed if, where, and how documentation supported the Delphi and observation findings. However, I actively created questions and protocols, as well as read and found relevant documentation data. I analyzed and interpreted the final data. Such activities made me a participant in the results.

Participant Selection Logic

The populations from which I sampled participants were leaders and board members of nonprofits within the Midwest area. I identified the sample through my contacts and LinkedIn. Through my contacts, LinkedIn, and general internet research, I identified diverse nonprofit boards from which to recruit participants. The sample did include nonprofit experts who work as board members within nonprofits.

To gain a diverse sample, I required the participants to be nonprofit board members, who actively participated in (successful) attempts at promoting their board's diversity, and to be experienced with advancing racial and ethnic diversity among board and leadership positions in their organization. The participants were required to be from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds, and all were experienced with developing strategies and best practices in promoting ethnic and racial diversity in their organization (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Additionally, I endeavored to include a gender-diverse sample, to

further ensure representational data collection. However, I did not make any distinctions about their answers. I excluded gender diversity as a concern in my study; therefore, I only made a note of experiences and suggestions related to male versus female participants when I discovered that men and women provided notably different responses to the three rounds of questions. I made a note of such differences in Chapters 4 and 5 of the study.

I also allowed experts who fit the given criteria but who failed in their endeavors to promote board diversity to partake in the study. If I had evidence (through organizational records and internet research) that the participant was involved in deliberately finding and applying strategies for improving their nonprofit board's diversity, then I included them in my sample. In doing so, these participants explained how or why they could not deliver desired changes toward diversity based on their chosen strategies. I compared these revelations with suggestions from successful board members to determine better the strategies and practices that would be best effective for promoting nonprofit board diversity in the future.

I excluded participants who served on nonprofit boards where neither they nor other board members, made any attempts or took any deliberate steps toward addressing board diversity issues. I determined the role that participants played (or did not play) in promoting board diversity by determining how diverse and ethnically/racially representational their organization's board was by conducting internet research and perusing their organization's employee records. The participants reported perusing open board meeting minutes and agendas regarding diversity promotion, as well as confirming

the participants' involvement in strategies and implementations by talking to other members of the organization or broader community to confirm their roles.

I excluded any individuals who did not work in the nonprofit sector. Although for-profit board members who have successfully promoted diversity in their boards could provide valuable information, such data were already available through previous studies (Carnochan et al., 2013; Kulik, 2014; Viader & Espina, 2014). Leaders of the for-profit sector also face different diversity challenges and concerns compared to that of the nonprofit sector, and what could work for leaders of for-profits for improving diversity may not translate to leaders of nonprofit boards (Carnochan et al., 2013; Sedatole et al., 2015). Extending my sample to include other population representatives, such as those working in for-profit, would have distorted my study. I would then need to gather far more supporting data to compare suggestions for strategies and practices between for- and nonprofit respondents, which would not necessarily provide the clear process, implementation, and influence findings necessary for my study. Future researchers might wish to address this limitation in my study but keeping my population and responses strictly within the scope of nonprofits would be the most practical approach for conducting and finding valuable data for this specific study.

My final sample might not consist solely of male participants due to the lack of gender diversity within nonprofits (Gross, 2015; Paynter & Bernier, 2014). Similarly, my sample might include predominantly White participants, as leaders of many nonprofit boards reported high levels of White members (BoardSource, 2017; Walker, 2017). Therefore, I noted sampling bias (Smith & Noble, 2014; Tuckett, 2004). Sampling bias

refers to when a study consists of a single, nonrepresentative sample or when a researcher does not select participants with the most relevant knowledge, credentials, and insights to provide accurate data (Smith & Noble, 2014; Tuckett, 2004). In such cases, findings may be weighted or not sufficiently representative of the broader population, thereby making the findings less valid and transferable and limiting the overall study (Smith & Noble, 2014; Tuckett, 2004).

I made every attempt to mitigate such sampling bias and ensuring a representative sample by identifying and gaining participants from diverse nonprofit boards within the study location and field. I used purposive sampling and contacted diverse individuals who met the study criteria and made use of secondary substantiating data from observations and documentation. I ensured that participants had been or were actively involved in improving board diversity to ensure that even if sampling bias occurred, I might still gain valuable data regarding strategies, processes, implementations, and community and organizational impact. I could only confirm sampling bias once I gained my final sample. Should such bias still occur after my endeavors to avoid it, I noted this study limitation and its potential negative effects on my results in Chapter 5.

To gain participants who met the given criteria and gain at least some diversity within my sample, I conducted purposive sampling to identify the most qualified participants from within the larger population (Guetterman, 2015). I used purposive sampling to ensure only experts who could provide necessary and relevant information for the study were included, thereby increasing the overall trustworthiness of the study results (see Guetterman, 2015). This insurance came through this sampling, as

participants were identified and selected based on their knowledge, experience, and ability to communicate opinions on the studied subject matter (Guetterman, 2015). Through the purposive sampling method, I identified diverse nonprofit boards and contacted a diverse array of potential participants who fit the study participant criteria. In this way, I ensured that my sample included an ethnically and racially diverse mix of participants, which was necessary for this study. I would not have been likely to achieve such representation and diversity if I used another sampling method, such as random or snowballing, where I would have less control over the kind of participants that would ultimately participate in my study (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013; Tuckett, 2004). I verified those potential participants met the set criteria by consulting their LinkedIn profiles and contacting their respective organizations for confirmation of their positions and involvement in diversity improvement.

In total, the sample for the Delphi section had a maximum of 25 experts. This total was appropriate for a modified Delphi study, as qualitative researchers tended to have smaller samples than quantitative studies (Noble & Smith, 2015). Researchers can conduct an effective Delphi study with a sample of between seven and 30, with an average of studies utilizing around 20 participants (Giannarou & Zervas, 2014). Considering the number of nonprofits operating in the study location and the relatively small number of these organizations' boards that would present with diversity, a maximum of 25 participants was adequately representational for this study (see Giannarou & Zervas, 2014).

I supplemented and supported the data gained through the Delphi study participants with observations and organizational records. I discussed these secondary data collection processes in more detail later in the chapter. However, I conducted my observations at five different nonprofits. I selected these nonprofits from those within which Delphi participants operate. I selected five different participants from the Delphi section who all worked on different nonprofit boards within the study region. I ensured that I had had little to no prior dealings with either these participants, apart from their participation in the Delphi section, or their respective organizations. I ensured that leaders of all the sites that I visited successfully managed to implement and promote board diversity. I did not conduct observations at nonprofits where participants had tried but failed to promote diversity. Due to the small Delphi sample and the additional requirements for the observation phase, five to 10 observations were enough for gaining the necessary substantiating data. However, I did ensure that I reached data saturation (i.e., I no longer made new observations regarding practices and implementations within the different organizations and board meetings) before settling the final number of observations (see Fusch & Ness, 2015).

To ensure protection for participants, I sought permission from the Walden University IRB (Approval Number_07-31-18-0408131) before conducting the study. Emails were sent to approximately 85 potential participants until I reached the sample size of 25. Fifteen participants might meet the parameters of the study; however, for a study to be rigorous, it should reach a point of data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Although some researchers have debated on the concept of saturation, Fusch and Ness

(2015) pointed out that the theory suggests that added information would emerge as researchers continue to examine their data, which may result in additional information to the study. In other words, saturation is about the depth of information uncovered for and within a study, and the sample size should be selected that has the best opportunity to reach data saturation and provide such necessary depth (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Thus, I concluded that fewer than 25 participants were necessary.

Recruitment strategies for participants included emails, phone calls, and some required face-to-face requests (Silverman, 2016). A more comprehensive presentation of the participant recruitment process is presented later in this chapter. Based on the qualitative modified Delphi technique, data were collected from open-ended interviews conducted via the online survey site, SurveyMonkey. I contacted participants during each round's analysis to clarify some of their answers. I conducted such communication through either email or telephone. Each participant also needed to share any documents the organization used to establish best practices for racial and ethnic diversity among board and leadership positions. These documents included but were not limited to policy documents, employee and financial records, and community projects. Such documents were used to substantiate suggestions and final study results. The data collection and analysis process are described in a later section of this chapter.

Instrumentation

I created the interview questions protocol to capture data from participants during the Delphi phase of this study (see Appendix A). I created this instrument as the questions needed to be specific to diversity within the nonprofit, specifically the Midwest

context. I created the first protocol, which I used to gather necessary data to establish scenarios to be used in subsequent question rounds. Hence, I only included the initial protocol, with the subsequent protocols to be added as and when I created these according to participant responses.

The construction of interview questions requires multiple influences on the quality and quantity of data obtained (Brewerton & Millward, 2002). As these interviews were conducted through the online survey site, SurveyMonkey, as opposed to in-person or verbally, the protocol took a similar form to that of a qualitative questionnaire. The difference was that I could contact the participants either through email or telephonically to verify answers before the second round of questioning. In addition, the participants accessed questions online rather than through email, post, or telephone. The participants had access to the anonymous answers of other participants so that they might use their fellow participants' insights for honing their answers and reaching consensus (Mattson & Haas, 2014).

The question protocol consisted of open-ended questions, which allowed participants to write out comprehensive answers directly in the survey site. Open-ended questioning is widespread practice in general qualitative studies, as well as in Delphi studies, as these provide participants with the opportunity for fully expressing their thoughts and reasoning (Brady, 2015; Jorm, 2015). I used open-ended questions to elicit answers to inform the other two questioning rounds that followed in this modified Delphi study, thereby assisting in creating scenarios, honing participant answers, and increasing the potential for consensus (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Mattson & Haas, 2014). Thus, I

used the initial protocol (see Appendix A) and follow-up protocols (created upon participant responses to the first round of questioning) to meet the purpose of the study and answer the central research question. Furthermore, I conducted the interviews through SurveyMonkey for experts to answer the questions at their convenience. Participants were also easier to locate, as their participation was not reliant on their ability to access a physical location. Although participants were located virtually anywhere, they still needed to work within Midwest nonprofits to partake in this study.

Several types of information were obtained through question protocols. Thus, some statistical information was also included, over and above the open-ended interview questions, to make data collection and analysis easier. For example, I included gathering statistical information on participant demographic/background data. Such information helped in ensuring that participants met sampling criteria, as well as confirming that nondiversity was evident within the nonprofit sector. I was aware of the sensitivity of questions related to age; therefore, a range of these groupings was used. The instrument also included race/ethnicity. Although this kind of statistical data did not form part of the study findings, it aided me in coding collected data correctly, ensuring more accurate data analysis (Saldana, 2009). The same such demographic-related data applied for the observation protocol (see Appendix B). Again, this demographic data did not form part of the final findings but worked to show whether the participants' claims for board diversity success were true.

Through the researcher-developed interview and observation protocols, I could ensure consistent data collection. Each participant was asked the same questions using

the same wording and in the same order as all the other participants (Neuman, 2014). The structured interview is more efficient, as researcher subjectivity and bias are limited, and the researcher controls the topics, which makes it easier to code, compare, and analyze data (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Similarly, I ensured that I made observations of similar aspects during my organizational visitations, thereby collecting accurate and comparable data during this phase, which could assure higher study validity (Noble & Smith, 2015). In this way, I ensured that higher data collection validity occurred during both the Delphi and observation phases (Noble & Smith, 2015).

A panel of experts could evaluate the interview questions before the Delphi study commenced, further limiting researcher bias (Noble & Smith, 2015). The subsequent rounds of questioning and scenarios in the Delphi section were then designed based on the initial answers provided by participants. Each consecutive round of questioning had a protocol and followed the same question-information-feedback structure to conform with how Delphi studies are conducted (Davidson, 2013). The panel of experts was also asked to evaluate the second and third-round protocols to further ensure instrument validity (Noble & Smith, 2015).

I used two secondary data sources to collect and triangulate data to ensure the study's validity (see Neuman, 2014). Data triangulation refers to collecting data from various sources, to substantiate and validate each source's findings (Neuman, 2014). A substantiated study leads to more confirmable, accurate, and rigorous results and increases the validity of the study (Neuman, 2014; Noble & Smith, 2015).

The first of the two secondary data sources were any organizational documentation on the practices and policies of participants' nonprofits regarding improving diversity. Documentation also included any organizational records related to an employee, financial, and community project documentation that could substantiate Delphi participants' claims about their boards' diversity and the influence that such diversity had on their nonprofits' performances and the communities that they served. However, this source did not require an instrument to be designed. These documents were also used as part of the analysis to compare to what extent current policies and practices matched participant suggestions and where additional improvements in these practices and policies were needed to aid nonprofit organizations in improving their diversity in the future.

The second of the secondary data sources were practical observations of a subset of the Delphi participant's boards. I arranged to visit five participants' respective nonprofit organizations. The smaller subset was enough for observation purposes as it was not practical for me to visit as many as 25 different nonprofits. Due to the number of nonprofits within the study location, some participants might have come from the same nonprofit boards. I included participants with failed attempts in the study and used their organization's records; however, I did not observe their practices. This exclusion further limited the potential number of observations I could have performed. Five observations or until data saturation was reached met the purpose of my study.

For the observation phase, I observed a board meeting to examine the diversity of the board and the interaction between members. I also spent time observing the daily

operations of the participating board members with respect to their strategies and practices for promoting diversity within their organization and their interactions with community members. For these observations, I set up an observation protocol (see Appendix B) and made notes about the answers to protocol questions regarding diversity strategies and practices. I used this observation protocol to look for the same considerations within each organization and board meeting that I visited to ensure accurate and comparative findings.

I maximized the credibility of the data that I collected by using various sources of data (Neuman, 2014). I ensured the trustworthiness of the respective Delphi and observation protocols by having a panel of experts review the protocols before commencing the study (see Noble & Smith, 2015). Using an evaluated follow-up protocol, participant feedback that naturally occurred in Delphi studies, and substantiating document data, I ensured the findings were trustworthy and accurate; additionally, I ensured the chosen instrumentation did gather information relevant for answering the central research question (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The participants consisted of a group of nonprofit experts who were (or are currently) actively involved in promoting diversity within their nonprofit boards. All participants were from the Midwest. Data were collected through three online questioning rounds, with each round consisting of its question protocol designed to elicit participant responses relevant to answering the research question and reaching consensus between participants. Each round took approximately 45 minutes to complete, with participants

given 3 days from receiving the protocols to complete and return their answers. For the first round, I asked questions to elicit the practices, processes, guidelines, implementations, and results of the participants' attempts at diversifying their nonprofit boards. From there, I created question protocols including scenarios that participants could discuss what practices and implementations might be most effective within the given scenarios for improving board diversity.

There was a 2-week delay between each round, wherein I analyzed the data; return collated data to the respective participants for review and conducted follow-up phone calls or emails regarding answer clarification. In this timeframe, I also set the next round's protocol and designed scenarios that a panel of experts evaluated before I placed the questions and scenarios online for participant responses. Once the panel had confirmed that the questions and scenarios were relevant, clearly formulated, and without bias, I uploaded the next round's questions, along with a summarization of participant responses for the participants to review and then answer through SurveyMonkey. By conducting the Delphi phase online, I made it easy for participants to access the questions and provide their responses at their convenience. I could access their answers directly from the site and download the raw data for thematic analysis. This process made the Delphi data collection and analysis phases more efficient. In all, data collection took 8 weeks to complete.

For secondary data collection and analysis, I asked each Delphi participant to supply me with any relevant documentation regarding their organization's board diversity and results thereof. Such documentation could include employee records, diversity

policies, and community projects. I then selected five participants with whom I have had no prior interactions apart from their Delphi participation, and who all work at different and on successfully diverse nonprofit boards. I emailed these participants to arrange a day and time to follow them around as they conducted their daily activities at their organization. I observed them on a day when their board was meeting and when they had activities that included community interactions. In this way, I gained a clear understanding of their and their organization's daily operations and practical outworking of diversity. I made notes during my observations, as per the observation protocol (see Appendix B). I uploaded my notes, along with all documentation data collected for thematic analysis. It should be noted that I thematically analyzed each data set (i.e., Delphi responses, documentation, and observations) separately, and then compared the themes found across the three sets with one another to establish my final findings.

Recruitment

After the potential participants were identified through my contacts, general internet research, and LinkedIn, I solicited their involvement through an introductory email explaining the purpose of the study, criteria for inclusion, and information about the Delphi rounds taking approximately 45 minutes of their time for each round of questioning. In this email, I explained that some participants would be contacted to allow me to observe them and their organizations for a day to determine the practical outworking of board diversity, as presented in their Delphi responses. I noted that participants were required to provide me with any relevant organizational documentation regarding board diversity and evidence to the results of promoting diversity within their

organization. As most of these documents should be public (for investors, as part of promotional material, or so forth), there was little to no ethical issues with gaining such documentation.

I used the emails to explain the voluntary nature of participation, the participant withdrawal process, and other information regarding their roles and rights in the study. Participants could exit the study at any time. To do so, they had to send me an email stating their exit wishes. All data collected related to the existing participant would be destroyed, and none of their data would form part of the final study. Should it have been necessary to replace an existing participant, depending on data saturation requirements, I would have conducted a second round of recruitment by emailing other potential participants who met the study criteria. Additionally, attached in this initial email was an informed consent form that willing participants, having read and understood the study and their rights needed to sign and email back to me before being allowed to partake in the study.

Data Collection

As noted previously, I collected data from three various sources. First, I collected data through a modified Delphi technique. I then collected documentation from each of the Delphi participants regarding their respective nonprofits' practices, policies, and records. These documents worked as substantiation for participant claims. Finally, I conducted observations at five different nonprofits where I could observe board and customary practices. These observations further worked to substantiate the Delphi and

document review findings. I provide more detail regarding the data collection process for each data source in the following subsections.

Modified Delphi. After I obtained informed consent from potential participants to be part of this study, as well as confirmation from their respective nonprofits regarding their meeting the study criteria, I sent the respective participants an email with the link to the SurveyMonkey site where they accessed the first round of questions (see Appendix A). Participants could answer and save their answers on the site, and I could access these answers directly once participants completed their questionnaires. All three rounds of questions were focused on gaining insights and consensus regarding the processes, implementation, and potential influence on communities and organizational performance of promoting board diversity. I followed this email up with a phone call to the participants to discuss any questions they may have had before completing the first round of questions. I gained access to both participants' email and phone numbers through LinkedIn, their organizations' websites, or my contacts.

Depending on the responses from participants, I needed to add certain lines of questioning to the second (or third) protocol to ensure that all concerns were addressed, relevant scenarios were created, and the research question was answered appropriately. As I could not know what and how participants would respond until they had answered the first round of questions, I only created these subsequent protocols after I had completed the first round's analysis. I included these subsequent protocols as and when I created and had them evaluated by a panel of experts as part of my final dissertation.

I conducted the same preinterview phone call before participants answered the second and third rounds of questions as well, to ensure that participants were comfortable with the questions, how they would need to respond and use the provided scenarios, and their roles throughout the study. After each round, I conducted a manual thematic analysis of the participants' answers. I collated these findings to determine which areas required further discussion, new areas of concern to be addressed, scenarios to consider, and where consensus remained lacking. This analysis worked to inform my second round of questioning. The same process was applied for the third round of questioning. After completion of all three rounds of questioning, I conducted a comprehensive thematic and comparative data analysis using NVivo 10 software. The analysis process is presented in more detail later in this chapter.

Before conducting any of the rounds, each round's protocol was evaluated by a panel of experts, consisting of two nonprofit experts (as per this study's definition thereof), as well as an expert in qualitative question design, to ensure instrument accuracy and to limit research bias. After I had received and coded participant answers, I sent the answers back to the respective participant for review. I also conducted a follow-up phone call to discuss participant answers for each question round and ensure clarity of meaning before conducting the thematic analysis. Having participants review and confirm their answers ensured higher levels of data analysis accuracy (see Noble & Smith, 2015).

For the second and third round of questioning, participants received a summation of other participant responses, particularly where consensus had not been reached. Questionnaire summaries are key in Delphi research, as participants can read and

understand other participants' views regarding the study topic (Franklin & Hart, 2006). Participants can also use these summaries to compare and hone their own answers, thereby creating an opportunity for participant collaboration without risking swayed results due to dominant personalities or a desire of participants to match group sentiment even if they disagree, which may occur in face-to-face collaborative attempts (Franklin & Hart, 2006). The questions for the second and third rounds concerned solving these discrepancies and discussing presented scenarios evidenced through the first round's answers and related to participants' actual knowledge and experiences of addressing and promoting board diversity. Each round was adopted as per the previous round(s)'s responses, and participants had access to each round's summations to hone their responses in subsequent rounds further. I provided all participants with the same definition of diversity to ensure they all answered questions with the same understanding. In this way, I could elicit responses that were relevant to the research question and would be better able to highlight differences and reasoning for participant answers that could feed into the results.

At each stage of this data collection phase, I stored and collated participant responses and the thematic analyses. Once all three rounds of questioning were completed, I compared the findings and themes from each round. This final analysis formed the Delphi results of my study. I also used these themes in a cross-thematic analysis with the substantiating data, to form my final study results. A fuller discussion regarding data analysis is presented later in this chapter.

Documentation. Documents regarding the respective participants' organizations' policies and practices around diversity formed secondary data informing this study. These documents included but were not limited to financial and employee records, policy documents, board meeting minutes regarding diversity issues, and community projects. Each participant provided me with these documents. I used these data to substantiate participants' answers, as well as to compare if, where, and how current policies and practice already met or still failed to meet the final suggestions and solutions proposed by the participants. I used these documents to track the levels of the successful outworking of board diversity. I used the documents to supplement the Delphi findings and show the processes, implementations, and potential impacts of improving nonprofit board diversity. For example, I used employee records to substantiate participants' claims that their attempts at promoting board diversity failed by noting that little to no ethnically or racially diverse board members were employed to the board in recent years. Similarly, I used community project documentation to determine if a participant's claim that because their board diversity improved, they could better meet community needs was true. Thus, these data worked in a secondary, confirming capacity during the final data analysis to substantiate participants' proposed solutions to the research problem better.

Observations. I selected a subset of the participants whom I observed. I ensured that each participant served on a different nonprofit board so that I would observe five different nonprofit organizations. I ensured that all participants in this subset were individuals who had seen success in improving and promoting diversity on their boards.

In this way, I could observe practical practices, strategies, implementations, and results/impact on communities and organizational performance of board diversity.

With each chosen participant, I arranged for a convenient time within the study period to conduct my observation. The observation day needed to include a board meeting so that I could actively witness the demographic representation of board members and their interactions. I also needed to see how the participating board member and others within the organization practice diversity, and how diversity considerations influence their community interactions. Thus, I observed participants during their routine operations, as well as their interactions with community members. I made observation notes throughout my visitation, which lasted a full day. I ordered my notes according to an observation protocol (see Appendix B) to ensure I collected consistent data across each observation.

I did not make any audio-recordings during my observations, as these would negatively influence board proceedings and/or general interactions. Recordings might also gather unnecessary and potentially sensitive data, which might lead to ethical concerns. The protocol was enough in ensuring that I collected all necessary and relevant data for the study without leading to ethical concerns. As I also had access to the respective organization's documentation, I confirmed my written observations with these documents, thereby ensuring that my observations remained accurate. I transcribed and uploaded my notes for thematic analysis. I used the themes gained through this analysis as part of a cross-analysis with the other data sets to form my final findings. In so doing, I could triangulate my data and ensure credibility (Neuman, 2014).

Throughout the three rounds of online interviews, observations, and the reviewing of organizational documentation, I made personal notes. I used these notes to highlight participant consensus; participant disagreements (particularly during the final analysis, as these must be addressed in my discussion on my findings); how consensus was reached; and if, where, and how policies and practices matched or differed from participants' practical experiences and suggestions for improving diversity. These notes were used to keep track of the data and findings. However, I used notes to remind me of findings and processes, which added to my final discussion and analysis of the study results.

Data Analysis Plan

The data collected during the Delphi section of this study were thematically analyzed after each round of questioning. I conducted a final thematic analysis of all three question rounds to finalize the Delphi section's findings. Therefore, I conducted four rounds of thematic analysis related to the Delphi section of this study. The first three rounds were a thematic analysis of participant responses to the respective question protocol, to inform the questions and scenarios for the next round. The last round was a full thematic analysis of all three question rounds to present the overall themes and present the most effective practices and implementations for promoting board diversity, as noted by the participants. For this four-round thematic analysis process, I used each participant's code, such as Ex1 (for Expert 1), which was generated through SurveyMonkey once participants had completed their first-round answers. This code was used to identify all the answers related to the relevant participant, while also maintaining

participant confidentiality. More regarding participant confidentiality and anonymity is presented later in this chapter.

To conduct these Delphi-related thematic analyses, I reviewed the responses, as well as my notes to identify common themes and patterns. Brewerton and Millward (2002) suggested that researchers must understand how to analyze data to assess the effectiveness of the research design and to draw conclusions or recommendations from it. Each round of questions-and-answers was coded in an Excel document according to the protocol questions and scenarios. All participant responses for the first question were added to the Question 1 field, all for the second question in the Question 2 field, and so forth until all answers were represented. Each of the three question rounds had slightly different questions and scenarios, depending on the answers provided in the previous round. Therefore, each round was coded according to its unique protocol.

Once I completed the fourth analysis round for the Delphi section, I physically read all provided documentation. I used an Excel document to categorize the types of documents I received and to which organization that they referred. I highlighted relevant sections, such as board member comments regarding improving board diversity as presented in board meeting minutes or trends in employee records that indicated an increase in board member diversity. I entered such sections into their relevant columns in the Excel document. I conducted a thematic analysis of these columns using NVivo 10 software to highlight recurring themes across the documentation. These themes formed the document findings of this study.

Finally, I entered my transcribed observation notes into an Excel document. Again, these notes were entered per observation category as per the observation protocol. I also indicated in the Excel document to which organization each observation refers. Once I entered all the notes into the relevant comments, I conducted a thematic analysis of the observations using NVivo 10 software. The recurring themes that I found during this analysis formed the observation findings for this study.

I reread all the Delphi question protocols and observation protocols, as well as the documentation categories to create an Excel document with the most relevant questions and categories across all three data sources to form the coding for the final analysis. Thus, I coded all collected and previously analyzed data according to the following key areas of concern, so as to best answer the posed research question and meet the purpose of my study: (a) process parameters; (b) implementation guidelines; (c) influence on community relations, identification, and understanding of specific community needs; and (d) overall organization performance. I entered all the found themes from each respective source's individual data analysis into the Excel spreadsheet according to these codes. I entered the Excel data into NVivo 10 for a comprehensive thematic analysis (see Castleberry, 2014). NVivo 10 was software that was created to assist researchers in conducting qualitative data analysis (Castleberry, 2014). Because there was an extensive amount of data to analyze and to lower the risk of human error or research bias, it was more timeous and overall more effective and accurate to use this software than to conduct a manual analysis of the final data (Castleberry, 2014; Noble & Smith, 2015). I used NVivo 10 to compare the recurring themes in participant answers with recurring themes

in the policies and practices. This comparative analysis allowed me to identify if, where, and how participant answers differed or were like current nonprofit diversity policies and practices, as presented in the documentation and observation findings. I used these similarities and differences to highlight policies and practices that still needed addressing, as well as which suggestions and solutions offered by participants might aid in such improvements. I used the final thematic analysis to represent the most effective processes and implementations for promoting nonprofit board diversity. I presented instances if and where improved board diversity demonstrated overall improved organizational performance and the ability of organizations to meet community needs.

My findings are included in this dissertation as part of Chapter 4. I provide a discussion of my findings, after I review participant responses and identify major themes and common phrases from the final NVivo 10 data analysis, as part of Chapter 5 of the final dissertation. In that chapter, I provide insight into how well the posed research question is answered. I then provide recommendations for future research, as based on my findings.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is important for giving study credence (Noble & Smith, 2015). Specifically, the levels of trustworthiness within a study relate to how credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable the study processes and results are (Noble & Smith, 2015). Trustworthiness also referred to what measures I took to ensure that a study was conducted in an ethical manner (see Noble & Smith, 2015). The following subsections address all these trustworthiness-related aspects in more detail.

Credibility

Noble and Smith (2015) found that qualitative researchers used a different lens for establishing the validity of their study. For example, in quantitative studies, researchers are most concerned about the content validity of interpretations of scores (Noble & Smith, 2015). In contrast, qualitative researchers use a lens based on using the views of people who participate in a study. One of the lenses to determine the credibility of the study is to ensure that the data are saturated, to establish high-quality themes (Noble & Smith, 2015). Another lens is to ensure that these data evolve into a credible narrative by allowing data to mitigate researcher bias (Noble & Smith, 2015).

As Noble and Smith (2015) noted, credibility in qualitative studies means that the study findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, and the readers of the study. Therefore, to ensure credibility for this study, I used a panel of experts to review each of the three Delphi question rounds as well as the observation protocols (see Appendices A and B). I allowed participants to review their Delphi answers before each thematic analysis phase, and secondary documentation and observation data to substantiate my findings (Noble & Smith, 2015). The Delphi and document data collected was also from participants and organizations themselves, with little to no researcher influence while participants answered the Delphi rounds questions, as the questions were answered in written form rather than in direct communication with me; and the whole Delphi technique took place online via SurveyMonkey, rather than verbally or in-person. Preinterview phone calls with participants were intended to address any concerns or questions they might have had, while post-interview phone calls would

be to confirm clarity and accuracy of the data before including the data for analysis. Thus, all the Delphi-related data from the participants would be their own words and interpretations, making the final findings more accurate (see Noble & Smith, 2015). Similarly, I had no say in documentation wording, making for accurate and representational raw documentation data from which I gathered relevant information to support the Delphi and observation findings.

Furthermore, participants were aided in the second and third Delphi rounds by having access to fellow participant responses. By reviewing others' responses and reasoning, participants could change some of their answers, and work toward establishing consensus (Jorm, 2015). Where variations in answers persisted across all three question rounds, I highlighted these persistent differences as part of my findings. I made recommendations about why participants could not reach consensus on certain areas or scenarios and where future researchers might add to my findings. By allowing for potential differences and lack of consensus, I could ensure that my results were not manipulated toward desired results, which would undermine the credibility of my study (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Observation data also added to the credibility of my study. I relied on participant responses and organizational documentation. I witnessed if, where, and how participants and their respective nonprofits employed diversity processes and practices. I could observe if, where, and how board diversity translated to and presented itself in community interactions and general organizational operations. Therefore, I confirmed that certain noted processes and implementations worked in practice and that such

processes and implementations could positively impact organizational performance and allow nonprofit leaders to meet the needs of the communities that they served. Such confirmation added credibility to suggested practices and implementations that would otherwise remain mostly hypothetical or theoretical if no practical observations occurred (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Transferability

Transferability will allow the reader to transfer findings of the data collected to other settings (Noble & Smith, 2015). Purposive sampling was used to ensure that only the most relevant and representative members of the population took part in this study (see Guetterman, 2015). Guetterman (2015) defined purposive sampling strategies as used in qualitative studies because individuals were selected based on their knowledge about the phenomenon being studied. To establish transferability, I included direct quotes of the participants to provide a rich description of the responses to the various questions posed throughout this study, as well as to reveal how these responses worked to answer the posed research question.

Transferability might be limited because views expressed in this study were not the same for different populations. However, further research could be used to determine whether my study's findings can be transferred to other populations. Another limit to transferability would likely be the lack of demographic diversity within the sample. The more diverse and representative a sample, the more transferable a study will be (Noble & Smith, 2015). However, the lack of diversity within the nonprofit sector, which I aimed to address, meant that although every attempt was made to include a demographically

representative sample, participants would be relatively uniform in ages, races, and backgrounds. To mitigate this potential sampling bias, I actively sought nonprofits with diverse boards (i.e., nonprofits where visible diversification occurred) from which to gain my participants.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research refers to how stable the data are in the study, and that one researcher can imitate the research process of another (Noble & Smith, 2015). I established dependability by creating a clear audit trail from the data transcriptions by using proper document maintenance. An audit trail refers to accurate record-keeping of all processes and findings, as a study progresses (Noble & Smith, 2015). To meet the requirements of the audit trail, I informed the participants in writing regarding contents of the consent form, including the purpose of the study, their rights, and roles within the study, as well as the central research question guiding the study. Participants were also informed as to how they were selected for the study, the data collection process, and the research method used to present the research findings.

I kept accurate records regarding each round, if and where questions and scenarios changed per round as per panel evaluation and/or participant responses, and what kinds of substantiating documents that I gained. I kept accurate records related to what I observed during each site visitation. In this way, other researchers will be able to track how I conducted my study. I ensured increased dependability by using secondary data sources (i.e., documentation and observations) to substantiate findings (see Noble & Smith, 2015) better.

I improved the dependability of the study by ensuring that only experts who actively participated in promoting nonprofit board diversity and who could have valid insights and knowledge of board diversity, took part in the study. In this way, I was assured that the processes, implementations, and claims for positive organizational and community impact of nonprofit board diversity were reliable. Dependability was also increased using NVivo 10 software to conduct the final comprehensive thematic analysis and related comparative analysis, which would significantly reduce the likelihood of human error or researcher bias during the analysis process (Castleberry, 2014; Neuman, 2014).

Confirmability

Noble and Smith (2015) proposed that the criteria for trustworthiness in the qualitative inquiry included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Silverman (2016) and Neuman (2014) noted that confirmability in qualitative research was the extent to which the findings of the study were free from the effects of the researcher's bias. To ensure confirmability, I provided each participant with a copy of the consent form, the signed copies of which will work to confirm participants' informed and voluntary participation in the study. This process confirmed that their participation and answers were not coerced, giving credence to the study.

Researcher bias was also limited through using a panel of experts to evaluate each question protocol before conducting each of the three rounds of questioning. This panel ensured that there were no ambiguous or leading questions that might distort the accuracy of the study findings (Noble & Smith, 2015). I allowed the participants to review their

answers after each round, as well as verbally discuss areas where I might have been unclear of their answer meanings, before using their answers in the analysis. Participants also had access to a summarization of other participants' answers per round to not rely solely on researcher questions or explanations in formulating or adjusting their answers in the second and third question rounds. Thus, consensus, when reached, was due to participants' interpretation and reinterpretation of their own and others' responses, rather than through researcher manipulation (see Davidson, 2013; Jorm, 2015; Noble & Smith, 2015). During the manual thematic data analyses after the round, I practiced reflexivity, by calling any bias into account and actively seeking to remove such bias while conducting the analysis (see Noble & Smith, 2015). Reflexivity was also practiced when protocol questions needed to be changed, depending on evaluation and participant feedback, as well as during the interpretation of the final thematic and comparative analyses.

Secondary data from nonprofit documentation and practical observations related to diversity further worked to substantiate findings, providing further confirmability to the study, as well as limiting researcher bias during the final analysis and interpretation of results (Noble & Smith, 2015). During the analysis of the data, I compared the findings from the data with the documentation and observational data to confirm the findings. This process also served to mitigate researcher bias as it was a formalized fact-verification process. Finally, NVivo 10 was used in the final analysis to remove potential researcher bias further (Castleberry, 2014; Noble & Smith, 2015). All these measures worked to

improve this study's confirmability and ensure overall trustworthiness of the findings and study.

Ethical Procedures

Qualitative studies require the researcher to clarify their role in the research process, from defining a concept to reporting the results of the study and themes (Sanjari et al., 2014). Although various instruments were used in this process, human participants are an integral part of the study. Therefore, I ensured that confidentiality and rights to privacy were clear to the participants and advised that they can withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

I ensured such confidentiality by providing each participant with a code (e.g., Ex1) to replace their name in all analyses, and publication processes. Thus, participant answers, while still being identifiable as the specific respondents' answers, were not identified by other participants, and readers other than myself had no idea of the respondents' identities. No identifiable information, such as email addresses, phone numbers, names, or places of work will be published, either in the answer summaries provided to participants or in the final dissertation.

Informed consent is also an integral part of ethics in research (Sanjari et al., 2014). It is one of the most important requirements for a research study (Noble & Smith, 2015). To begin the qualitative research process, I reviewed the consent form and addressed any questions from participants. Silverman (2016) suggested that informed consent should include why and for whom the data were being collected, the kinds of

questions that were asked, how the data were handled in terms of publication and confidentiality, and any risks or benefits to or for participants.

The participant received the consent form before the Delphi technique commenced and was asked to state “yes” or “no” regarding their participation in the study, as well as signing and returning a copy of the form to me via email. Participants had to confirm their consents online before gaining access to the survey questions on SurveyMonkey. I requested that the form was returned within 3 business days. Participants were contacted by phone to confirm their participation. They were also informed that identities would be protected, and the information that they supplied would be strictly confidential. In addition to the informed consent form, the participant was notified of his/her rights, which included withdrawing from the study at any time and being allowed to withhold any material. There was little to no risk to the participants, as they could answer each round in time and location of their choosing that they deemed convenient, safe, and private. As their participation would be kept confidential, their responses or study exits would in no way affect their work or personal lives. However, they did consider time, as they had to set aside three 45-minute sessions to answer each round of questioning.

Participants were also aware that some would be selected for further participation in the observation phase of the study. Chosen participants might opt not to take part in the observation phase. In such cases, I selected other participants from within the Delphi pool who fit the requirements and observed them instead. Participants had 3 days after each round was uploaded to SurveyMonkey in which to enter their answers online. An

automatic email notification was sent to all participants when I would upload the next round to SurveyMonkey. Participants might wish to budget their time over the 3 days or complete the 45-minute session in one sitting each, whichever they prefer. There was no compensation for their participation.

I stored all digital copies of the signed informed consent forms, all data collected, and all analysis-related Excel and NVivo 10 documentation on a password-protected computer. Any hard copy notes and documentation was stored in a locked container to which I alone have access. All digital and hard copy data will be stored for the required five years before being destroyed (see Department of Health, Education, and Welfare [DHEW], 1974).

Summary

Chapter 3 provided a review of the qualitative modified Delphi technique and the rationale for the approach's appropriateness. Additionally included was a presentation of the role of the researcher. Additionally, I provided the recruitment logic of participants, data saturation, rights and sample size, the criteria used for purposive sampling, and the location in which this study occurred.

Chapter 3 included the interview protocol instrumentation, expert evaluation, and the rationale for the use of NVivo 10 in the data's thematic analysis. Additionally, Chapter 3 included the rationale for the trustworthiness of the study. Chapter 4 includes research findings and data.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this modified Delphi technique was to develop a process for increasing diversity of nonprofit boards to serve community demographics. The research question for this study was: What strategies and practices could nonprofits employ to promote diversity in their organizations' boards? Limited understanding exists among some nonprofit boards and leadership of how to successfully diversify (Garrow, 2014; Groggins & Ryan, 2015; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015). Specifically, the problem addressed in the study was that some nonprofit organization leaders struggled with diversity of the board and leadership positions that reflected the communities that they served (Gross, 2015; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015). A panel of experts who worked as board members with nonprofits was selected for this study. The panel of experts participated in three Delphi rounds with each question round guided by interview questions (see Appendices A and B) to determine whether consensus was reached regarding the strategies and practices employed by nonprofits to promote diversity on their organizations' boards. The findings generated from participants' responses showed that board members of nonprofits generally believed in having an accurate assessment of the community served and creating representation to gain insider perspective in the community. The participants recommended having a pool of candidates and board members fit for the position, regardless of personal background, to increase the diversity of nonprofit boards to reflect community demographics. In Chapter 4, I describe the research setting, participant demographics, data collection procedures, data analysis

procedures, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results of the study. I conclude the chapter with a summary and transition.

Research Setting

The setting of this study was nonprofits in the Midwest. Leaders of the nonprofits provided various social services serving local communities. Although most of the recruitment and data collection processes of this study were conducted online for convenience, the participants might have been located elsewhere; involvement in a board of a nonprofit in the Midwest was a prerequisite for participation in this study.

Demographics

The sample of the study consisted of a panel of experts who worked as board members in nonprofit organizations. The sample was recruited from leaders and board members of nonprofits in the Midwest area. I used personal contacts and LinkedIn contacts to recruit participants. The criteria for selecting the participants to ensure that they were experts in their field nonprofit board members who actively participated in (successful) attempts at promoting their board's diversity and who were experienced with advancing racial and ethnic diversity among board and leadership positions in their organization. The participants were from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds, and they were required to be experienced with developing strategies in promoting ethnic and racial diversity in their organizations (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Data Collection

In this modified Delphi study, I collected data through open-ended protocols. I developed three protocols for this study. All three rounds were intended to produce

insights and consensus regarding the processes, implementation, and potential impact on communities and organizational performance of promoting board diversity. In between rounds of questioning, I attended some board meetings and took observation notes. I remained in constant contact with the participants to avoid attrition in between rounds.

To begin data collection, I first obtained permissions and informed consent. Participants who returned signed informed consent forms were e-mailed a SurveyMonkey link to the first round of questions. The participants were given a timeframe to save and go back to their answers until they decided to finalize their responses. Their answers were only visible to themselves and to me. At the end of the given timeframe, I downloaded the responses and saved them in Microsoft Word format. I then uploaded the Word files to NVivo for analysis. The first round of analysis was guided by the concept of stability or consistency of responses in the Delphi rounds (see Dajani, Sincoff, & Talley, 1979), which is further described in the data analysis section. The results of Round 1 were used to develop the questions for the Round 2 protocol.

I e-mailed the results of Round 1 along with the protocol to Round 2 immediately after analysis to avoid attrition. The participants were again given a timeframe to respond to the Round 2 protocol, and I downloaded the responses at the end of the timeframe. I analyzed the responses similarly to the analysis conducted in Round 1, with the addition of at least 70% of responses as the criteria for the level of consensus (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). The data were also thematically analyzed to develop themes. The themes that emerged from the analysis were used to develop the protocol for Round 3.

The participants received the results of Round 2 and the protocol for Round 3 immediately after the analysis. I determined Round 3 as the final round of this modified Delphi technique. I downloaded the data from SurveyMonkey at the end of the given timeframe. I then thematically analyzed data and determined data with at least 70% of responses to have reached a level of consensus (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). From the themes that emerged from the third round of analysis, I answered the research question.

Data Analysis

I aimed the data analysis to determine if a level of consensus had been reached among the panel of experts. For each round, responses to the open-questionnaires were uploaded to NVivo, read and reread, and thematically analyzed. The responses were coded using the nodes in NVivo in which one unit of meaning was assigned into one node. Each node contained a count of the number of participants sharing similar opinions, in which the criteria for determining consensus were based. The following sections contain the descriptions of the analysis and results per round.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In qualitative studies, four key elements generally produce confidence in the research methods and result in establishing trustworthiness. The four key elements include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I adjusted to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to increase the trustworthiness of the results.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the accuracy of how the results represent the participants' perceptions and experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Credibility is generally associated with the internal validity of the study. For this study, data were collected from interviews and observations to help increase credibility. Furthermore, the themes that emerged from each round of the study were matched with raw data to assure findings were reflective of data.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the applicability of the findings to policy, practice, and future research (Noble & Smith, 2015). As participants of this study were considered experts in their field, data collected from the participants were considered representative of the nonprofit board members in the Midwest. Through the participants' experiences, they could share knowledge applicable to promoting diversity in nonprofit boards. The participants were also involved in different social services, allowing for a heterogeneous sample representing different nonprofits in the Midwest.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the reliability of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I documented research procedures involved in this study. Data were managed and analyzed continuously throughout the Delphi rounds. I transcribed all data collected to Microsoft Word files and uploaded those data to NVivo for organization and storage. I coded the transcripts to develop the themes to determine the strategies used by nonprofit board members to increase diversity.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the ability of other researchers to agree with the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I attempted to remain as objective as possible to increase confirmability through reporting research limitations and potential bias. I recorded the procedures in this study, and the findings were evidenced by the raw data.

Round 1

I aimed Round 1 of this Delphi study to gain insights and consensus regarding the processes, implementation, and potential impact on communities and organizational performance of promoting board diversity. To achieve the goal, I developed a questionnaire (see Appendix A) from related literature. I conducted a preinterview discussion with each participant to ensure that the participants were comfortable answering the questions and that the participants had no clarifications about the questionnaire. The questionnaire was made available only to the participants via a SurveyMonkey link sent to their email. After the given timeframe, I collected all responses and began analysis.

Round 1 Analysis

The criteria for determining if consensus was reached was based on the concept of stability or consistency of responses in the Delphi rounds (Dajani et al., 1979). *Consensus* would have been reached if 100% of the experts responded similarly. If more than 50% of the participants responded similarly, then the response was considered as a *majority*. If a large portion of the participants responded similarly, but the portion was less than 50%, then the response is considered a *plurality*. Finally, if 50% of the participants responded

similarly, the response is considered a *bipolarity* (Dajani et al., 1979; von der Gracht, 2012).

Round 1 Results

Table 1 shows the responses of the 28 participants from Round 1. Among the nine open-ended questions asked, none produced consensus. However, one response from the first question and one response from the second question appeared to produce a majority. Additionally, several items from all the questions appeared as a plurality. Responses that appeared to lack meaning were considered irrelevant and were omitted for Round 2 questioning. Responses considered as majority and plurality were used to develop the questions for Round 2 to determine whether a majority or plurality view would prevail.

Table 1

Delphi Round 1 Responses

Question	Response	N of participants
Q1 What potential issues do you think might occur in this nonprofit's catering to this specific need within the community, considering the demographic disparities? Please elaborate.	The board may lack an understanding of the community's culture and needs.	19
	Issues depend on the service	1
	Limited services	1
	The board members' commitment	1
	no response	7
Q2 What practical ways might diversity within this board improve the nonprofit's performance in catering to this need? You may use practical examples from your own nonprofit and diversity-related experiences, where applicable.	Being more inclusive and in touch with the community	17
	Having broader perspectives in strategizing	10
	no response	7
Q3 How might such a disconnection in demographic representation between the board and the community influence this nonprofit's ability to cater to the community's needs?	Impeding progress and lack of representation	8

(continued)

Question	Response	N of participants
	Ineffective service	7
	no response	7
	Demographics do not define success	5
	Depends on the function of the board	3
	Temporary fix	1
	Others	1
Q4 In what ways might such influences be evident in your own nonprofit?	Impact on the community served	12
	no response	8
	Biases and personal motives	6
	Positive action	4
	Have the authority to allocate resources	1
Q6 What practical steps (i.e., strategies and practices) should your and other nonprofits take to improve their racial and ethnic representation (please draw from any examples or strategies evidenced within your own organization)?	Promote diversity and representation when recruiting	12
	Provide training	7
	no response	7
	Communicate with the community	6
	Increase cultural awareness	3
	Be open to change	2
	Identify barriers	2
	Understand the needs of an organization	1
	Utilize resources	1
	Set goals	1
Q7 What hindrances to improving board diversity have you experienced within your organization?	no response	8
	Looking for qualified individuals	7
	Competition with other organizations when hiring	6
	Making board members stay	4
	The uncertainty of role as a board member	3
	Bad habits	1
	Board members' priorities	1
	None	1
Q8 Why do you think such hindrances exist?	Prejudices and lack of diversity in the candidate pool	8
	Lack of time to volunteer	7

(continued)

Question	Response	N of participants
	no response	7
	Fear of change	4
	Volunteerism in general	2
	Not knowing one's role	2
	Lack of resources	2
	Others	2
	Building relationships	1
	Inconsistent leadership	1
	Lack of knowledge	1
Q9 What do you think could be done to overcome these hindrances? Please provide practical suggestions for overcoming hindrances to diversity.	no response	8
	Broaden network	6
	Clearly define goals, mission and vision	5
	Establish communication with the community	5
	Conduct training	3
	Identify resources needed	3
	Motivate board members to commit	3
	Consider having middle tier managers	2
	Minimize discrimination and inequities	1

Round 2

Delphi Round 2 involved collecting data from an open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix B) developed from the results of Round 1. Immediately after the analysis of Round 1, a summary of the results was sent to the participants' email. A follow-up phone call was conducted with each participant to clarify any questions they may have and to avoid participant attrition in between the Delphi rounds. Then, a SurveyMonkey link to the Round 2 protocol was sent to each participant's email. The link was accessible for a given timeframe, and I collected and analyzed all responses at the end of the given time.

Round 2 Analysis

The criteria for determining if consensus has been reached for Round 2 of this Delphi study were also based on the concept of stability or consistency of responses (see Dajani et al., 1979). The concepts of consensus, majority, plurality, and bipolarity were applied in the analysis. Consensus refers to 100% similar responses from the experts. The majority refers to over 50% of similar responses from the experts. Plurality refers to a substantial portion but is less than 50% of similar responses from the experts. Bipolarity refers to 50% similar responses from the experts (Dajani et al., 1979; von der Gracht, 2012). However, to further narrow down the items for Round 3 questioning, an additional criterion based on the suggestion of Hsu and Sandford (2007) was used. The suggestion was to focus on responses with at least 70% of responses. Therefore, the Round 2 analysis was based on the concept of stability or consistency of responses (Dajani et al., 1979) with the addition of emphasis on the items with at least 70% of responses (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). With the additional criterion, the development of the Round 3 protocol was reduced to focus only on items considered as a majority.

In Round 2, 25 experts were retained to participate. The results of the first round were shared with the participants before giving the questionnaire for the second round. I remained in constant communication with the panel of participants between Rounds 1 and 2. Furthermore, the use of e-mail to collect responses likely contributed to the low attrition (Flanagan, Ashmore, Banks, & MacInnes, 2016).

Round 2 Results

The protocol for Round 2 consisted of seven open-ended questions. The items for the Round 2 protocol were developed from the results of Round 1, in which responses considered as majority and plurality were used to develop the questionnaire. The results for Round 2 are summarized in Table 2. Among the seven items in the Round 2 protocol, none produced consensus.

Nonetheless, six responses for questions one, three, four, five, six, and seven produced a majority ($n = 13$), and among the six responses, two responses had at least 70% of responses ($n = 18$). The responses of *based on data and information* for the first question and *provide better service* for the sixth question had at least 70% of responses. Several responses produced plurality, and some responses appeared to lack relevant meaning.

Table 2

Delphi Round 2 Responses

Question	Response	N of participants
How do you think the board members become aware of their community's needs?	Based on data and information	18
	Based on experience	12
	Depending on the person	2
	Regular board meetings	2
How is inclusion related to diversity in terms of improving the nonprofit's performance in catering to the needs of the community?	Creates representation	12
	Creates diversity in supporters and employees	5
	Helps carry out the mission	5
	Uncertain of the relationship between inclusion and diversity	3
	Educates board members	1
	Provides equal opportunities	1
	No response	1
How does keeping in touch with the community contribute to improving the nonprofit's performance?	Knowing the needs to be prioritized	17
	Building trust and relationship	10
	Increasing visibility in the community	3
	No response	1
How does open-mindedness contribute to improving the nonprofit's performance?	Brings innovation and change	16
	Identifies and addresses the needs of different communities	9
	Provides best services and relationships	4
How does representation by all community sections impact the community served?	Reduces inaccurate representation of the community	15
	Reduces barriers	9
	Shares responsibilities with the community	2
	No response	1
How does diversity on a nonprofit board such as yours help in fulfilling your organization's mission more effectively?	Helps provide better service	20
	Widens network	4
	Does not change service	2
	No domination of one group	1
	Serves as a reality check	1
What strategies do you suggest in recruiting and retaining a diversified board for effectively serving a nonprofit organization's community?	Recruit outside usual network	13
	Encourage current board to be more flexible	10
	Conscious effort of inclusion	9
	Hire candidates based on skills and job fit	8
	Check in with the current board	8
	Adapt the process to be more inclusive	7
	Flexibility in term limits	2
	Transparency in being more diverse	2

None of the responses for the second question produced at least a majority. Further analysis of the data revealed that almost half of the panel of experts ($n = 12$) generally perceived that inclusion and diversity helped improve the nonprofit's performance in catering to the needs of the community through the creation of representation. Nonetheless, the remaining participants had different perceptions with one participant not responding to the question, and three participants claiming to be uncertain that a relationship between inclusion and diversity existed. Participant A12 reported, "I don't want to assume that the existence of diversity for a board has a direct impact on performance. It is more complex than that." Participants A2 and A17 shared similar perceptions with Participant A12 and added that their organizations were more focused on carrying out their mission rather treating inclusion and diversity or the lack thereof as a problem to be addressed to carry out the mission. Participant A17 noted the following:

However, I am struggling with the framing of "needs," in part because framing seems somewhat focused on the community as a problem that needs to be addressed, rather than an asset. At [organization], we used a strength-based approach to thinking about these issues. We don't focus so much on needs, but on the strength of the entrepreneurs to succeed in their business to manifest their dreams.

Based on data and information. For the first question, only one response met the consensus criteria. Over 70% of the responses revealed that the board members become aware of their community's needs through making use of data and information. Participants A1 and A12 perceived that the strategy employed by the board members to

increase awareness of the community's needs depended on the person. Participant A1 specified that board members might employ methods based on data and information or based on one's personal experience. Over 70% of the responses ($n = 18$) revealed that data and information increased the board's awareness of the community's needs, while nearly half of the responses ($n = 12$) focused on the significance of one's personal experience of being immersed in the community. The strategies based on data and information generally involved collecting information from surveys, assessments, and reports from newspapers, television and radio broadcast, and social media. Participant A4 shared:

Demands increase for the organization's services, and management brings these up in strategic planning. [Organization] also constantly watches and reviews trends and the environment. We conduct our own studies and talk constantly to community partners and clients and report to these to our board.

Knowing the needs to be prioritized. The third question generated one item with over 70% of the response. The participants generally perceived that staying connected with the community improved performance by allowing the board members to know the needs to be prioritized. In staying connected with the community, the community was given a voice which helped address specific needs. Participant A10 wrote, "Helps us to know the immediate needs of the community and allows us to address them sooner than later." Participant A22 reported the following:

As noted above, cultural competence is good for outcomes. Knowing your community, and its needs and assets, helps you tailor your work. You understand

where people are coming from. You speak a language that they understand. Your participants are able to build trust and understanding with you more quickly, an essential element of creating better outcomes.

Some participants stated that the community's needs were always changing and keeping in touch with the community helped the organization to address the needs better. Participant A8 wrote, "We can then be responsive to their changing needs. A community is very dynamic in its nature. It is not static, so we take the approach that the community is a living and breathing entity." Getting to know the community's needs were perceived to contribute to the improvement of the organization's overall performance.

Brings innovation and change. The participants generally perceived that open-mindedness improved performance by generating innovation and change. Innovation and change generated a *majority* response for the fourth question with responses from 16 participants. Participant A19 reiterated the following:

Open-mindedness contributes to improving the nonprofit's performance by allowing new ideas to be welcomed and all voices are expected to be valued and heard. Additionally the shared experiences makes the board more knowledgeable, sensitive, efficient, creative, and successful. Open-mindedness aligns with inclusion as this improves problem-solving opportunities and creates a level of innovation not possible in homogeneous communities.

In relation to the previous theme in which the needs of the community were often changing, some participants perceived that the ideas generated by the board to help the community should also be evolving. Participant A20 expressed the following:

Nonprofits must remain nimble and agile in today's climate. Our communities are rapidly changing - receiving information differently, interacting with our services differently, and looking for asset-based approaches to tackling our deepest inequitable systems. A nonprofit that is not adaptable and innovative, will be asking itself a question of relevancy.

Participants A3, A8, and A25 claimed that being open-minded contributed to the improvement of the organization and the community. Furthermore, the participants revealed that being open to innovation and change helped create a relationship between the organization and the community, as the community tend to feel heard and valued. Overall, the participants perceived that achieving the goal of innovation and change included the involvement of the community in the improvement of the organization's performance. Participant A8 mentioned the following:

Reiterating my previous statement, "we don't know, what we don't know" so having an open mind allows us not to pigeon hole our community and the members of the community. Our clients then sense that we are not judging them but listening to them and that we value their contribution.

Reduces inaccurate representation of the community. The fifth question generated one item with over 50% but less than 70% of response ($n = 15$). Most of the participants perceived that the impact of representation by all community sections on the community served helped reduce the inaccurate representation of the community. Specifically, as the board got to know the community, the needs of specific groups were understood, and the needs addressed became more of the community's actual needs than

the board members' perceived needs. Participant A1 shared, "Often, by not including those served, we overlook strengths that can be built upon and instead focus on perceived deficits or weakness—often inaccurately labeled or given more weight and consequence than needed." Similarly, Participant A15 specified the following:

Listening to all the community members' voices provides an accurate view of the conditions from each section's perspective. [Organization] has used a tool created in-house called [program]. It is a survey process that seeks input from local businesses, police, school principals, government leadership, neighborhood residents, and other stakeholders. This creates a picture of the community's strengths (asset-based development) and their valued needs.

Helps provide better service. For the sixth question, the participants generally perceived that the impact of diversity on a nonprofit board on fulfilling organization's mission more effectively involved providing a better service, with over 70% of the participants ($n = 20$) sharing a similar response. Participants A10, A11, A13, and A15 perceived that a diverse helped introduce different perspectives which may be helpful in providing better services. Participant A13 shared, "Having a diverse board helps to get different perspectives from a host of people to help fulfill the organization's mission that generally involves a diverse population."

With more input from a diverse board, the participants also generally believed that the board made better informed strategies and decisions. Participant A14 claimed, "More diversity on our board would help us fulfill our mission more effectively because

it would increase the cultural competence in our decision-making.” Similarly, Participant A17 expressed the following:

Early in my tenure at [organization], the board did not have the level of racial diversity that I envisioned for this organization given our clients are all people of color. We effectively worked on this and included many of our entrepreneurs on the board so we would have well rounded and diverse perspectives. Having clients on the board has changed the dialogue. Now, when issues are discussed, there is practical experience from the very people who we serve. This has had a powerful dynamic on the organization and its effectiveness.

Recruit outside the usual network. For the final question, one item generated a little over 50% of participant response ($n = 13$). The responses for the seventh question, the strategies in recruiting and retaining a diversified board for effectively serving a nonprofit organization’s community, were quite varied, including strategies such as encouraging the current board to be more flexible, making a conscious effort of inclusion, checking in with the current board, hiring candidates based on skills and job fit, and adapting the process to be more inclusive. Nonetheless, a slight emphasis was stressed on the significance of recruiting outside the board’s usual network. To recruit and retain a diversified board, most of the participants perceived that widening the organization’s network had a significant contribution. Participant A25 shared that some of their organization’s strategies were to “go to neighborhood planning units or equivalent in your community, attend PTA (parent-teacher association) meetings/town hall

meetings/community sponsored events, and identify and/or join any business owner groups in your community.”

Some participants perceived that board members needed to socialize with potential candidates from the community to encourage them to join and stay in the organization. Participant A3 shared the following:

As the CEO place yourself in circumstances and situations that will allow you to network with potential board members and make sure you have the data that shows the quality of what you do, your outcomes and the reasons why they want to be affiliated with your organization. We are about creating strategic partnerships establishing not only that I need them but the potential board member will benefit from being affiliated with my organization just as much as I can benefit from their expertise.

Participant A9 shared some of the strategies their organization employed in recruiting and maintaining a diversified board:

Advertise among business organizations, community communication networks and news media, etc. Stating very clearly the mission and what they are looking for in board members, then interview those who show interest. Interview for knowledge of communities, fit with the mission, skill sets, and interest in serving, growing and learning.

Major Themes from Round 2 Results

The findings from the Round 2 questionnaires presented above were narrowed down to three major themes. The major themes served as the basis for the Round 3

protocol, which was directed to produce a consensus and answer the research question: What strategies and practices could nonprofits employ to promote diversity in their organizations' boards? The three major themes included (a) getting to know the community, (b) involving the community, and (c) widening network to include more groups of people.

Getting to know the community. The theme is getting to know the community was developed from the responses based on data and information knowing the needs to be prioritized and reduces the inaccurate representation of the community. The first response was generated from the first question, the second response was generated from the third question, and the third response was generated from the fifth question. All three responses referred to strategies the participants employed to promote diversity in their organizations' boards involving increased awareness of the community's needs and priorities, and representation. Overall, the participants generally perceived that being familiar with the community increased the chances of steering the organization to involve a diversified board, as specific problems and solutions were identified.

Involving the community. The theme *involving the community* was developed from the responses *brings innovation and change* and *helps provide better service*. The first response was for the fourth question asking the impact of open-mindedness on performance, and the second response was for the sixth question asking the impact of diversity on a nonprofit board on fulfilling organization's mission more effectively. The responses involved the strategy of involving the community to promote diversity in the organization's board. The participants generally believed that the organization was driven

by its mission and that innovation and changes, and better services may help realize the mission. Innovation and changes were not limited to ideas. The participants generally believed that bringing in new people with different perceptions may help the organization, such as in the statement of Participant A1, “Being open to new ways of thinking, innovative ideas, new people and processes, can improve our efficiency and effectiveness.” Similarly, Participant A12 reported the following:

One of the key skills and capacities for effectiveness and sustainability for a nonprofit is the capacity to adapt and change as things change around them – community, partners, competitors, employees, boards, funding, and policy. Open-mindedness is an essential prerequisite to adaptability.

Several participants also mentioned that they encouraged a diversified board to provide culturally-competent decisions. Participant A15 shared, “Having a diverse [organization] board adds additional worldviews and cultural perspectives which enriches our discussion influences the prioritization of work, and ultimately increases the accomplishment of our mission more effectively.”

Widening network to include more groups of people. The theme *widening network to include more groups of people* was developed from the response *recruit outside the usual network*. While the response did not meet the 70% response criterion, the response was considered a majority, and the data were interpreted as the need to widen the network to recruit and retain a diversified board for effectively serving a nonprofit organization’s community. The participants shared strategies such as advertising openings in the organization, attending local meetings and job fairs, and

accepting referrals from diverse staff and board members. In hiring candidates for the board, the participants also shared looking into the skills and experiences of the candidate in relation to the community. Participant A13 shared, “Solicit to individuals, leaders of companies and communities and others that are diverse and offer a set of skills and intellectual capital that can be best used to support the mission, values and organizational goals of the nonprofit.”

Round 3

Development of Round 3 Protocol

Round 3 protocol was narrowed down to three questions to reflect the three major themes resulting from the analysis of Round 2 data. The aim of the three questions was to produce a consensus and answer the following research question: What strategies and practices could nonprofits employ to promote diversity in their organizations’ boards? As the Round 2 results condensed the strategies and practices employed by the participants to get to know the community, involving the community, and widening the network to include more groups of people to promote diversity in the organizations’ boards, the aim of Round 3 was to produce a consensus on how the participants employed the strategies to promote diversity in the board.

I conducted Round 3 of this Delphi study to solve any discrepancies and determine consensus related to participants’ actual knowledge and experiences of addressing and promoting board diversity. The open-ended protocol used in Round 3 was developed from the results of Round 2. A summary of the results of Round 2 was emailed to each participant, and I discussed the results with each participant in a pre-Round 3

phone call. The preinterview call was conducted to allow the participants to compare their answers with the answers of other experts, clarify whatever questions the participants had, and to avoid participant attrition in between the Delphi rounds. A SurveyMonkey link to the Round 3 protocol was then sent to each participant. After the given timeframe, I immediately closed the access to the questionnaire and began data analysis.

Round 3 Analysis

Round 3 was determined as the final round of this Delphi study. Items that reached at least 70% of similar responses from the panel of experts were considered to have reached a level of consensus (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). In between Rounds 2 and 3, I was in contact with the participants through e-mail to avoid attrition (Flanagan et al., 2016). I communicated the results of Round 2, which included getting to know the community, involving the community, and widening network to include more groups of people.

Along with the results, an open-ended protocol containing three questions based on the results of Round 2 were also sent to the experts through e-mail. Twenty-seven participants returned the accomplished Round 3 protocol. The responses were then analyzed to determine if consensus has been reached in any of the items. The results are presented in the next section.

Round 3 Results

None of the responses for Round 3 reached 100% consensus. However, based on the criteria of 70% response rate, three items reached a level of consensus. Accurate

assessment of the community ($n = 23$) was agreed as influencing the diversity of the board based on data and information, identification of the community's priorities, and reduction of inaccurate community representation. Creating representation and gaining insider perspective ($n = 25$) was considered a contributing factor in promoting diversity in the board based on involving the community for innovation, changes, and better services. Having a pool of candidates and board members fit for the position ($n = 26$) was considered to promote diversity in the board through widening the board's network to include more groups of people. Table 3 contains a summary of the participants' responses. The responses are further described in the following paragraphs.

Table 3

Delphi Round 3 Responses

Question	Response	Number of participants
How does getting to know the local community based on data and information, identification of the community's priorities, and reduction of inaccurate community representation promote diversity in your organization's board?	accurate assessment of the community	23
	wider network for recruitment	7
	not related	1
	not applicable	1
How does involving the community help provide innovation, changes, and better services to promote diversity in your organization's board?	creating representation and gaining insider perspective	25
	introducing board to community	2
How does widening the board's network to include more groups of people contribute to recruiting and retaining board members to promote diversity in your organization's board?	having a pool of candidates and board members fit for the position	26
	just beginning to have a diversified board	1

Themes from Round 3 Results

Accurate assessment of the community. Most participants perceived that getting to know the community was an effective strategy to promote diversity in the organization's board, an accurate assessment of the community was gained. Most of the participants reiterated that the diversity sought for the board was not only racial diversity but also diversity in knowledge and skills. Participant A12 explained the following:

Sustainability of an organization's board involves being an active contributor, supplier and investor in the community of which it serves. This requires knowledge of the community (history to current), relationships with the people in the community, and an impactful, accessible, respected and valued presence in the community. Thus, a genuine consciousness of the community increases the cultural diversity opportunities for the board. This is essential to attain an inclusive board that represents the community.

The participants generally believed that the role of the board was to be representative of the community to provide better services and seek donors, as evidenced in the statement of Participant A10:

The various areas of service the organization promotes will resemble the "face of the community." Not only by ethnicity, but also by the knowledge and needs the community resembles. The success of this diversity fine tunes the "engine of power," the board will need to produce strength.

In the experience of Participant A17, the organization was in the process of seeking a diversified board to fulfill the organization's mission. The participant shared

that collecting data and information about the community served helped the current board realize the inaccuracy between their services and the community's needs. The participant shared the following:

Our organization just recently started getting input from the community. The answers astounded us. We realized that we were not hitting the core needs of who we intended to serve. Furthermore, we realized that we had a disconnect with the community itself. It was eye opening and to be honest a bit humbling to see that our mission was not aligned with the needs of the community. We then had to reassess the make-up of our board. We are still in the process of finding the right members to be on our board.

Therefore, having an accurate assessment of the community through getting to know the community increased the potential for having a board representative of the community. Thus, diversity was promoted, and the board was not limited to a specific demographic. Participant A11 mentioned the following:

As an agency, we are very data driven. Our organization tracks data across all sites in the USA, Canada and Latin America. This information is used to help local sites identify areas of priority for the youth we serve. For example, data indicating the rates of mental health issues (and cooccurring disorders) in our youth resulted in recruiting board members from health care communities to assist us in addressing these needs.

Similarly, Participant A9 identified that gaining an accurate assessment of the community may help understand issues that divide the community, the characteristic of

the community, and may help build a relationship with the community. The participant provided an example in which a community might have *invisible borders* in which an area might be unsafe for staff and board to work in. The knowledge might lead the board to take action and provide security staff for the members of the nonprofit to continue serving the community; thus, it might increase the number of people applying for staff or board positions. Participant A9 explained, “Knowing the context of the community so that you can tailor interventions and programs to its norms and culture and increase your chances of success for your organization and the board members.”

Creating representation and gaining insider perspective. Most of the participants perceived that creating representation and gaining insider perspective promoted diversity in the organization’s board for the purposes of involving the community to help provide innovation, changes, and better services. Representing the community was believed to increase the perception that the community had ownership in the actions of the nonprofit. Participant A15 explained the following:

By involving the community, the board will not be seen as coming from the outside to dictate to the community what its needs and what solutions the community should accept. Instead the community will feel as though they are a part of the process and will be engaged in the solutions, which almost always requires innovation and change.

Participant A1 elucidated the influence of the sense of ownership to the success of the organization: “When they take ownership of their own community, they in turn help to guide our organizations mission, strategy and allocation of services.” Participant A21

claimed that a partnership existed between the nonprofit organization and the community when the community had ownership in the services and activities. Participant A21 stated that establishing a partnership with the community involved “including the voices and perspectives of the community in the services and activities that benefit them facilitates the development of strategies that incorporate the needs of those being served.”

Additionally, a partnership with the community included gaining an insider perspective, as most of the participants claimed that people in the community were the best informants of the community’s needs. The representation may help bring innovation to the nonprofit, as Participant A5 claimed, “Community members served by the organization or involved with the organization in some way may offer some of best ideas for innovation, change and good ideas for better serving the community.” Participant A13 mentioned, “It’s important to involve those who live in the community because they know more about positive changes the community needs presently and can affect changes.” Similarly, Participant A24 described the following:

In almost all types of problem-solving situations or opportunities, involving those who are closest to the problems (on the ground) or needs in the community helps tremendously in ensuring that the most current and first-hand information is brought to bear in making good decisions and take the best course of action. Seeking out community perspectives and insights on best approaches for promoting diversity of nonprofit boards helps to build trust and respect for the organization in the community.

Participant A24 added that the trust developed by the community toward the nonprofit generally yielded opportunities for collaboration, and sparked creativity, as people become “open” and “willing to share ideas.” Participant A27 shared similar perspectives and cited the following:

Boards that function under the belief of strong alliances with communities pave the way for diverse perspectives that can yield creativity and innovation.

Embracing diversity helps to minimize stagnation of the board’s mission and vision and enhances the ability to reflect community interests within the organization. It allows strong connections that provide an ability to access and utilize resources within the community; make tactical and strategic decisions, expand the board’s collective cultural awareness, and establishes a culture of community collaboration and inclusivity.

Participant A17 stated that their organization was beginning to be more open in diversifying their board. The participant highlighted, “We had to admit to ourselves we only know what we know- we don't know what the community members know.”

Similarly, Participant A1 shared, “Most often times, the community will perceive the issues that affect them from a vantage point that an outsider just cannot.” Participant A18 also claimed that their organization was beginning to expand their network for their board and hoped to continuously do so. Participant A18 narrated the following:

Involving the community is essential to promoting diversity in our board. Because our group evolved organically, we are composed of people who have a connection to someone already on the board. We have hosted three big community events

since our inception and all of those have contributed to our board composition and our goals and objectives. For example, our second community event was held at High School for Recording Arts in St. Paul. A number of students participated and several commented that while we are focused on youth education and development, we had no youth involved in the planning of the event. While we currently have no one that would be considered a “youth” on our board, we have several people in their 20s and 30s who are members. This wasn’t always the case: the vast majority of the founding board members were 50 and older.

Having a pool of candidates and board members fit for the position. Twenty-six out of 27 participants claimed that focusing on the skills of a candidate rather than race increased recruitment and retention of a diversified board. Participant A2 stated, “Diversity does not mean cultural competency; however, [diversity] is skills-based.” Participant A24 argued, “I believe that inclusion promotes more inclusion.” The participant explained the following:

By widening the network of connections to assist in building a greater pipeline of a strong diverse prospect pool, the organization naturally will be able to expand its board prospects and its board recruitment process to promote diversity on the board. As this process becomes an integral part of the board’s and the organization’s ongoing culture, this will support ongoing and continuing board/staff recruitment and board/staff retention.

Among the participants, only participant A23 claimed that their board had not reached diversity as of the moment; however, the current board had begun strategizing to

widen the organization's network for a more diversified board. Participant A23 shared the following:

We've just completed a board matrix and what we learned is not only is the actual diversity on our board narrow; so are the networks of who are board members know. We have just begun the discussion about how do we widen the network and recruitment process so that we can grow the diversity on our board.

Participant A20 also believed that promoting diversity in the board began with internal strategies, such as planning the recruitment process. The participant explained that focusing on "talent acquisition" increased the pool of candidates fit for the job. Job fit was perceived to address "equity," as the participant explained, "Additionally have to have diverse calling that within an organization is talking about equity; needs strategies that deal with equity need to deal with internal before external work." During my visit to five nonprofits, I noted that some of the nonprofits did not have a board development program, no orientation for new board members, and board members were selected based on recommendations from friends already on the board and skill sets were not considered. One organization asked the researcher for referrals.

Conversely, participant A18 believed that recruitment involved the external network and connections of the nonprofit, while retention involved the internal activities of the organization. I noted in the visit to the nonprofits that several community members who were eligible to receive services and employment opportunities were unaware of the organization despite years of existence. The researcher inquired about the nonprofits' existing or potential partnership with for-profit organizations to increase the nonprofits'

visibility in the community, and several boards revealed that the idea had not occurred to them. Some board members then added the strategy of collaborating with for-profits to widen their networks. Participant A18 shared the following:

Widening the board's network contributes to recruiting board members by increasing our exposure and access to potential board members. I believe that retention of board members, however, is less about widening the board's network and more about the experience of serving on the [organization's] board. Members frequently mentioned that they look forward to the meetings and see their involvement as a positive that contributes to their well-being and sense of satisfaction.

Participant A22 had similar perspectives and claimed that recruiting people from different backgrounds increased diversity in the board:

Our experience has been that the more diverse our board has become, the more it attracts other people of color—each of who bring wonderful skills and talents.

Our focus on diversity has been a selling point for recruiting both diverse board candidates, and strong majority community candidates.

Some participants, such as participant A3 claimed that the organization made an effort to “cast a wider net” to attract people with different skills from diverse backgrounds. Participant A3 reiterated the following:

Anytime that we widen the Board network, it casts a wider net as related to additional or future board prospects (and I actually regularly use this saying with potential new candidates that we are “casting a wider net”) - Whether that means

diversity, which I still believe you have to be very intentional regarding or donors. As an example, at one point, the [organization] board was very heavily weighted with market rate homebuilders, which from an expertise and connection view makes perfect sense. However, as we tried to attract different volunteers, donors, community partners, etc., their overlap of connections was evident. From a board retention standpoint, I have found that members welcome different perspectives that may be offered via different skills sets, diversity in race, background, age.

Participant A15 emphasized, “People know people.” Hence, working toward a diverse board increased the diversity in the pool of potential board members.

Furthermore, Participant A14 argued the following:

Widening the board’s networking helps to diversify and retain board members through recruitment efforts. As a result, prospective board members will be more attracted to serve on the board when the organization is sensitive to cultural differences and is committed to representing the community through its cultural awareness and concerned with retaining board diversity.

Summary of Results

In this chapter, I described the procedures involved in the three rounds of this Delphi study. Additionally, this chapter included the presentation of the results. I addressed the problem that some nonprofit organization leaders struggled with having board and leadership positions that reflected the diversity of the communities that they served (Gross, 2015; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015). To address the problem, the

following research question was answered in this chapter: What strategies and practices could nonprofits employ to promote diversity in their organizations' boards?

Results from Round 1 did not reach the level of consensus determined by the concept of stability or consistency of responses (Dajani et al., 1979). Therefore, the results that yielded a majority (more than 50% of response) and a plurality (a substantial portion of response) were used to develop the protocol for Round 2. In Rounds 2 and 3, an additional criterion was used to determine the level of consensus. The level of consensus was set to at least 70% of the response (see Hsu & Sandford, 2007).

Round 1 results showed that potential issues that might occur in catering to the community's needs considering the demographic disparities were generally due to the board's lack of understanding the community's culture and needs. In Round 2, the panel of experts determined that the board attempted to address the issue of the lack of understanding through collecting data and information from the community, and through experiences when immersed in the community. The strategy involved in the process of resolving the issue was getting to know the community. Round 3 results identified that in getting to know the community based on data and information, identification of community's priorities, and reduction of inaccurate community representation, diversity was promoted through having an accurate assessment of the community. Hence, the strategy to promote diversity in the board involved methods to assess the community accurately.

Another strategy to promote diversity in the board involved creating representation and gaining insider perspective. In Round 1, most experts believed that

being more inclusive and in touch with the community was a practical method to improve the nonprofit's performance in catering to the community's needs. Round 2 results showed the claim that the nonprofit's performance was improved through inclusion, as the actions involved in the community. Involving the community helped provide innovation, changes, and better services, which then promoted diversity in the board through creating representation and gaining insider perspective.

The third strategy determined to promote diversity in the board was to have a pool of candidates and board members fit for the position. Round 1 results showed that recruitment was a key process towards diversity in the board. Round 2 results revealed that recruiting outside the nonprofit's usual network may help increase diversity. Round 2 also determined that the diversity in the board was also influenced by the retention of members. Round 3 results provided evidence that recruitment and retention were impacted by having a pool of candidates with skills fit for the job rather than for fitting in the demographics. Chapter 5 includes the conclusions, implications, limitations, and recommendations of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of the modified Delphi technique was to develop a process for increasing the diversity of nonprofit boards to serve community demographics. There has been an increased focus on ensuring diversity and representation in organizations (Galinsky et al., 2015; Groggins & Ryan, 2015; National Council of Nonprofits, 2017; Sharma, 2016). Increased inclusion through diverse demographics can increase an organization's successful outcomes while improving socioeconomic conditions for minorities and their immediate communities through alternative viewpoints and differing perspectives (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Burke & Steensma, 1998; Gazley et al., 2010). Diversity in nonprofits is important; nonprofits can better society by supporting communities or ideas that are not always addressed by the government or for-profit industries. This process can reduce inequalities faced by vulnerable demographics and improve their socioeconomic conditions (Andrevski et al., 2014; Hafsi & Turgut, 2013; Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015). Without a diverse board, board members may focus on fundraising rather than the organization's actual purpose (Larcker et al., 2015). Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and affirmative action provided guidelines on how to improve diversity through governmental and legal ordinances for cultural, physical, psychological, gender, and sexual disparities (Griffin & Hart, 2016; Mor Barak, 2015; Sharma, 2016).

I used a modified Delphi research design with additional observations and pertinent documents to support the data uncovered in the interviews. A Delphi research design is used when the research requires practical solutions established from a consensus of professionals and experts, making it a practical and appropriate method to understand

and address diversity in nonprofit leadership boards (Carnochan et al., 2013; Davidson, 2013; Jorm, 2015). The modified Delphi design acquired opinions and suggestions for best practices from experts. The experts used for this study were board members who have attempted to improve their board's diversity. The sample was gathered by identifying diverse nonprofits by researching the board's diversity through their websites.

I also aimed to fill gaps in the literature regarding diversity in nonprofit organizations, their leadership structures, and the positive influence that improved diversity might have on these organizations' performance (Bond & Haynes, 2014; Buse et al., 2014; Gross, 2015). I focused on how diversity in nonprofit organizations could influence the effectiveness of nonprofit performance. Representational leadership may equip nonprofits with the necessary insight into how best to meet the needs of differing and unique populations (Andrevski et al., 2014), making this study imperative both to the organizations and the local groups that they serve. There was one research question asked for this study: What strategies and practices could nonprofits employ to promote diversity in their organization's boards? Data for the answer to this question were gathered through three rounds of interviews.

Interpretation of the Findings

Three rounds of questions were presented to the participants and measured by the stability and consistency of the responses. Consensus would mean that 100% of the participants responded similarly. Responses that were 50% or higher would be a majority, 50% or less would be a plurality, and lastly, if 50% responded similarly, the response would have been considered a bipolarity (Dajani et al., 1979; von der Gracht, 2012). In

this section, I examine the responses that were in the majority. I provide insight into themes developed after triangulation and NVivo 10. Each majority is compared to the literature found in Chapter 2, and I offer insight into the framework when applicable.

Round 1

There was no consensus in the first round of interviews with only Questions 1 and 2 having majority support. Question 1 was the following: What potential issues do you think might occur in this nonprofit's catering to this specific need within the community, considering the demographic disparities? Nineteen out of 25 responded that the board might lack understanding of the community's culture and needs. Although the participants did not want to widely elaborate on their reasoning, the literature provided some context and support for the verdicts.

Wellens and Jegers (2014) noted that a more diverse organization that aligned itself with the local community could improve organizational outcomes. Organizational size did not determine service-delivery capabilities but understanding the local community's needs do. Both Hawkins (2014) and Wellens and Jegers (2014) contended that improvements of an organization's services grow from diverse people who could speak for the community's needs. Recognizing a community's composition can offer increased assistance to improve a nonprofit's services and goals. Additionally, a continued relationship with the community's culture and needs could keep the board abreast of any changes in the community's demographics to further their goals (Bromley & Meyer, 2014; Fyall & Allard, 2016; Gross, 2015; Paynter & Bernier, 2014).

Ultimately, both the participants and literature agreed that a lack of understanding of the local community's needs is detrimental to the organization.

The second majority response was from the question that asked the following: What practical ways might diversity within this board improve the nonprofit's performance in catering to this need? Seventeen participants formed a majority and agreed that board members must be more inclusive and in touch with the local community. Although the response from the first question focused on a lack of understanding of the community's culture and needs, the second response reflected that board members must be diverse and inclusive to understand the community better. When an organization is out of touch with the community, it can be rectified through inclusion and diversity.

Previous research agreed with the majority's assessment. Jung (2015) suggested diversifying the board and including the local community to offer increased access to leadership and expand the funding process. Not only would there be an increase in funding, but nonprofits would be able to remain independent and more committed to the organization's mission (Kim, 2016). Including the community in fundraising would stop the capitulation to big money philanthropists who want to change the organization's goals and further alienate the nonprofit's relationship to a diverse community (Kim, 2016). The inclusion of the local community is not just advantageous for funding but also for refining the organization's mission and goals.

Increased inclusivity can also improve an organization's ability to tackle and improve social justice issues (Buse et al., 2014; Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013; Groggins &

Ryan, 2015; Gross, 2015). Increased diversity would focus an organization's community goals and be used for the community to hold the organization accountable (Bromley & Orchard, 2015). Improved inclusion leads to better financial stability, furtherance of social justice, and fulfillment of ethical responsibilities as the diverse board would ensure that the goals are met (Bromley & Orchard, 2015). Therefore, the literature does support the majority's assessment that board members should emphasize developing relationships with the local community.

Round 1 did not produce any themes in the analysis process; however, the two responses that had a participant majority aligned with the literature. Diversity is necessary to be more in touch and communicative with the local community's needs and culture. Increased community understanding relies upon the organization being more inclusive of the community. Inclusivity and communication with the immediate community are necessary for nonprofits to function adequately within a diverse environment. The literature also offers support that one way to increase community relations is through board diversity. The notion of community relations and inclusion were not mentioned in the diversity management theory. One potential reason for the exclusion of community is that diversity management theory has not been widely applied to the nonprofit sector. However, diversity management theory's call for increased representation can be extended to the local community as this is an influential aspect of performing nonprofit work. This notion is discussed in the following rounds.

Round 2

Most responses gathered from the questions yielded three themes after the data analysis process and triangulation. I used the documents from the organizations and the observations I made to verify the findings. The first theme was getting to know the community. This theme originated from the answers based on data and information, knowing the needs to be prioritized and reduces the inaccurate representation of the community. Hawkins (2014) maintained that organization leaders should try to reduce historical socioeconomic differences by diversifying their organizations. Bond and Haynes (2014) stated that increased diversity could help the organization reach community goals. Wellens and Jegers (2014) added that the mere inclusion of the community within their organization could improve diversity. Therefore, relationships with the local community need to be forged.

Networking is a method to establish communications with community leaders. Paynter and Bernier (2014) supported this notion and stated that the size of the organization does not determine success but rather through an understanding of the community, organizational goals can be reached. Another way to get to know the community is through diversity on the board of the nonprofit. Diverse boards help a nonprofit to understand the needs of the community (Bond & Haynes, 2014; Glass & Cook, 2017). Establishing a relationship with the community increases funding and maintains the organization's goals without being beholden to outside influences (Jung, 2015; Kim, 2016). Better relations with the community can help track changing demographics and evaluate the political and social landscape (Bromley & Meyer, 2014;

Fyall & Allard, 2016; Gross, 2015; Paynter & Bernier, 2014). Therefore, embracing a community and mirroring its diversity can add value to the nonprofit and improve its organizational climate (Abdullah & Ismail, 2017). However, Weisinger et al. (2016) made the distinction that a diverse board extended into the community, rather than the community creating a more diverse board. The theme was well supported by existing literature and research, making it an important piece of advice to support board diversity further.

The second theme was involving the community. This theme was established from the responses of brings innovation and change and helps provide better service. The participants stated innovation for increased services created with community involvement could help achieve the nonprofit's goals. Additionally, participants reiterated that perceptions gathered from a diverse board could introduce innovative ideas and offer culturally appropriate policies. Involving the community can also offer new options for revenue (Lin & Wang, 2016). A failure to involve the community can reduce the ability to hire, train, and maintain employees. Board representation that is not reflective of the demographics of the community can potentially diminish the nonprofit's success (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2015). However, Groggins and Ryan (2015) warned that merely implementing diversity goals without understanding the community might reduce the organization's success. Therefore, it is important to reduce barriers between the nonprofit and the community. Any diversity initiatives should not fill a quota but align with the locality. The second theme offers perspective and knowledge to nonprofit boards by maintaining that the community is integral to organizational success.

The final theme of widening the network to include more groups of people was developed from the response of recruit outside the usual network, which also happened to have the smallest majority. These participants advocated for an increase in recruitment beyond their existing network. Increasing the network for inclusivity can come from local job fairs, community activism, advertising, and referrals. These candidates should reflect the community for optimal outcomes. Jung (2015) supported this conclusion stating that a diverse board increases the pool of potential donors. An increased network gathered beyond normal channels, could help obtain better resources and offer increased aid (Gross, 2015; Lockhart & Campbell, 2008; Medina-Borja & Triantis, 2014). A diverse network leads to a diverse pool of donors, which can create and produce increased organizational outcomes. Diversity management theory, once again, runs parallel to the findings rather than outright aligning with it. Networking and community involvement are not specifically mentioned within the framework, however, that may to be the nature of nonprofit work. Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002) argued that diversity of management increases performance, information sharing, and problem-solving skills. However, as nonprofit work relies so heavily on the local community, it would be reasonable to extend the theory to local community leaders as well as the organization's board. While these themes align with previous research, responses found within Round 3, begin to deviate from existing research.

Round 3

Three questions were asked for Round 3. From these three questions, three themes were generated that had majority support. The first theme was an accurate assessment of

the community. However, this diversity comes with a caveat as diversity should not only apply to sexual preference, gender, ethnicity, or race but should also include diversity in knowledge and skills. Although not supported in the literature, participants noted that insider community perspectives could provide workers with information on where they will be welcomed, and which neighborhoods may be dangerous.

Assessing the community's needs is more beneficial to a nonprofit than the organization's size (Paynter & Bernier, 2014). Having a diverse workforce and including various stakeholders can help build relationships that can improve service delivery (Wellens & Jegers, 2014). If a board or organization is too homogeneous, then Glass and Cook (2017) suggested that nonprofits should diversify. Community involvement can create a greater network from which the nonprofit could recruit from. However, Weisinger et al. (2016) argued that to foster diversity, organizations should focus on building diversity first within the board that goes on to extend into lower departments and eventually, offer an improved, holistic assessment of the community. This assertion differs from the well-supported notion that increased understanding of the local community influences the nonprofit's board composition and social and political goals (Bromley & Meyer, 2014; Fyall & Allard, 2016; Gross, 2015; Paynter & Bernier, 2014). Ultimately, the participants and the literature agreed that understanding and relying upon the local community, while increasing diversity, can help extend the nonprofit's goals by relying on alternative perspectives (Guillaume et al., 2017; Pennel et al., 2015; Wellens & Jegers, 2014).

The second theme created greater representation and offered insider perspective. Participants noted that a close relationship with the community could increase connections with the local community, provide a feeling of ownership that the community could support, and offer an insider perspective that could only be reached by forming connections with locals. These findings align with much of the literature review as some scholars stated that simply including diversity is not enough, but instead, it is important that diversity should be ingrained in the operating culture (Fredette et al., 2015; Janssens & Zanoni, 2014). If diversity is not a focus point for the organization, then the nonprofit cannot relate to the community. Organizations should also rely upon the Internet to forge community bonds and improve organizational performance, while increasing diversity, organizational reach and relationships with the community that reflect their needs (Andrevski et al., 2014; Bromley & Orchard, 2015; Kirk et al., 2016; Lee, 2018; Rotolo & Wilson, 2014; Van Beers & Zand, 2014; Young & Lecy, 2014). This theme does not largely deviate from the literature, thereby providing further support for the benefits of board diversity within nonprofits.

The final theme was to have the correct pool of candidates who are appropriate for board member positions. The participants noted that focusing on skills instead of diversity can create better results than meeting diversity quotas. However, five of the nonprofits which were visited had no development program to offer a path to board membership, and all board members came more from personal connections instead of a set skill set, despite board members reiterating how skill sets are the most important

qualification. By ignoring representation, the local community remained unaware of the services and opportunities that the organization offered.

The participants' responses contrast with much of the existing literature. Van Beers and Zand (2014) stated that a diverse board helps improve the skills and knowledge of existing members. This would indicate that diversity alone is a skill that can be transferred to other board members. By failing to recognize the importance of hiring a diverse board, organizations would fail to hire and keep an effective workforce that is needed to forge bonds with the community (Schwabland & Tomlinson, 2015). However, Groggins and Ryan (2015) argued that diversity itself does not forge positive results, but instead fosters a more positive climate, somewhat supporting the participants' responses. Unlike the previous themes, there was minimal support for the final theme within the literature. An initial interpretation of this study's results would support the diversity management theory. Both the participants and the theory stated that diversity is beneficial for organizational success, however board members felt that merely including the community can provide new perspectives without having to change the composition of the board. The theory and results diverged with where diversity comes from. I must assess the study's limitations to determine if these created this discrepancy.

Limitations of the Study

Geographic location, demographics, socioeconomic conditions, and a sample from a single nonprofit were all limitations of this study can also alter the composition of the studied nonprofits, thereby limiting transferability. Purposive sampling was deployed to obtain a diverse sample to mitigate this limitation. However, it is hard to say whether

this action affected the results without comparison from other types of nonprofits. The definition of diversity was initially listed as a limitation. However, strict research guidelines and provided definitions mitigated these concerns. Lastly, researcher bias was a concern; however, by offering three rounds of interviews, participant reviews of their answers, expert reviews of each round, and reflexivity these concerns were largely eliminated. After reviewing the results of the study against the literature, these measures did help reduce limitation concerns as they largely lined up with previous research. Nevertheless, the third theme of hiring for skill sets first rather than diversity may be due to location or sample population.

Recommendations for Future Research

Demographics, location, and type of nonprofit should all be considered in any future research to improve transferability. Repeating this research in those contexts could confirm or diminish the results of this research. Other types of methodology may also prove useful when attempting to replicate this study. Although I used the Delphi technique, it did not account for location or type of nonprofit. Rather than repeatedly replicate this study in differing environments, a multiple case study could provide a better method of comparison as it would provide a way to select a variety of settings for comparison and support results uncovered from this study. A quantitative approach to determine if diversity on the board improved the organization's outcomes and the importance of board member diversity. Lastly, the third theme of the third round needs further investigation to understand the context of this deviation from the literature. Previous research had described that being a racial or ethnic minority is a skill, yet

participants did not agree with this sentiment. Future research should focus on this phenomenon to determine if it was restricted to this research or was a broader concept and belief.

Implications for Social Change

This study may provide nonprofit organizations with information to improve diversity within their board and organizational performance if recommendations are followed. By identifying key procedures for expanding board diversity, nonprofits could increase their equity, performance, social injustice, and increased aid. The results of this study focused largely on the importance that diversity has with outreach to the community, not the board itself. Increased communication with the community through a diverse board is important. The nonprofit sector has more than a trillion in assets. However, a lack of diversity on the board and poor relationship with the community can cause the nonprofit to focus more on fundraising rather than widening and applying their services to their intended base. This research provided evidence of the importance of fostering a deep relationship with the community and relying upon a diverse board to do so. As existing literature stated that funds raised locally improve the nonprofits output greater than those from other sources, this research can be used to foster positive social change by advocating that a strong community relationship, fostered through a diverse board, can improve the function of the nonprofits, extend their reach, better serve their community, and reduce socioeconomic inequality through new perspectives. There are also methodological and theoretical implications.

Bunderson and Sutcliffe's (2002) diversity management theory stipulated how organizations might improve minority representation and overall diversity within their workforce for the organization's advantage. The results found that a strong relationship with the community has an important influence on service delivery, a component not mentioned in theory. Incorporating an emphasis on the community could strengthen the theory and provide new insights on the effects of diversity within the workforce. However, this distinction may only apply to nonprofit boards. If so, then the diversity management theory can include this element in the context of nonprofits.

I offered avenues for recommendations for future practice as increased diversity creates new avenues for communication with the local community, thereby expanding its ability to fundraise and deliver their services to the desired population. Considering that notion, nonprofit leaders should continue to diversify their boards to improve community relations and offer new insights for problem solving. Lastly, I provided a strong incentive for nonprofits to increase their diversity to maximize their output and better provide services to who needed them.

Conclusion

Through this qualitative, Delphi technique study on board diversity, I examined a single research question throughout three rounds of interviews with professionals. The results of this study indicated six themes: getting to know the community, involving the community, widening the network to include more groups of people, accurate assessment of the community, creating representation and gaining insider perspective, and having a pool of candidates and board members fit for the position. Through my observations, the

final theme proved itself at odds with the participant's previous statements on diversity and existing literature. Although skill sets are an important criterion, diversity should not be discounted, as it can be considered a skill, especially when establishing relationships with the community. Although this study largely aligned with previous research, there remained room for further research that could further support these findings. In conclusion, diversity in nonprofit boards is important, especially in establishing networks and relations with the community. These relationships can influence the nonprofit's success. Therefore, leaders of nonprofit boards should consider increased efforts to improve diversity within its ranks.

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Appendix A: First Round Delphi Questions Protocol

Preliminary Demographic Data

Age: 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56 or older

Race: Caucasian Hispanic African American Asian Other

Gender: Male Female Other/Non-defined

Role/Title in Nonprofit Organization:

Actively involved in promoting nonprofit board diversity: Yes / No

Instructions

Please answer the following questions as comprehensively as possible. Your answers will be used to create board diversity-related scenarios which you will need to analyze and discuss in the subsequent question-feedback rounds.

Questions

1. What have you experienced in terms of changes to diversity/representation on your board? I.e., have you witnessed changes in diversity during your serving on your organization's board, and what did such changes include? Please be as descriptive as possible.
 - a. What was your specific role in promoting diversity?
 - b. Why did you feel it necessary to be involved in promoting diversity in your board?
2. How has increased board diversity impacted your organization's ability to meet community needs?
 - a. Would you say improved board diversity has led you and your organization to better understand and identify community needs? How so?
 - b. Would you say improved board diversity has led you and organization to improve general community relations? How so?

3. How has increased board diversity impacted your organization's general performance? Please be as descriptive as possible.
4. What processes and guidelines have you and your board developed to promote board diversity?
 - a. What processes and guidelines did you find most valuable and effective in promoting diversity? Why?
 - b. What processes and guidelines did you find difficult to implement, or to be ultimately ineffective in promoting diversity? Why?
5. How did you personally go about promoting diversity in your organization's board? I.e., what implementation criteria and practical recommendations could you provide regarding promoting and improving nonprofit board diversity?
6. Overall, do you believe you and your board's attempts at promoting diversity has been successful? Why or why not? Please be as descriptive as possible.
 - a. What, if any, areas do you feel you and your board could still work on to further improve board diversity?
7. Please describe a time when you employed a particularly successful diversity-promoting process/suggestion/practice/policy. Please use the following questions to guide your description:
 - a. What was it?
 - b. What did you do to successfully implement it?
 - c. How did you get other stakeholders to 'buy-in' to it?
 - d. What was the outcome?
 - e. Why do you rate this as being particularly successful?
8. Please describe a time when you failed at employing a diversity-promoting process/suggestion/practice/policy. Please use the following questions to guide your description:
 - a. What was it?
 - b. Could you have done something(s) differently that might have met with better outcomes?

- c. Do you think the process/suggestion/practice/policy itself was flawed?
How so?
- d. Why did other stakeholders not 'buy-in' to it? What was the overall
outcome of this failure?

Please take note of your participant identification code. This code will be used for identification purposes in subsequent phases of this study.

Appendix B: Observation Protocol

Board Meeting Observation*Ethnic/Racial Demographic Representation of Board Members:*

Total Number of Members:

Number of Caucasians:

Number of Hispanics:

Number of African Americans:

Number of Asians:

Number of Other Race/Ethnicity:

Questions:

1. Did the Board present agenda regarding board and other diversity issues? Y / N
2. What attitudes did board members display in relation to diversity?
 - a. How did diverse members interact?
 - b. Were diverse members given equal opportunity to participate and be heard in the meeting?
 - c. Were there clear indications as to diversity leadership within the board structure? (i.e., did a minority lead the meeting, take the minutes, or be deferred to for decision-making?)
3. What diversity practices and strategies, which the participant mentioned during their Delphi phase, were evident during the meeting?

General Organization Observation

1. What practical measures and strategies do board members and organizational workers employ to ensure and promote diversity?
2. What practices did the participant, or the organizational documentation, promote, but do not seem evident in practice?

3. How did the participant, and other observed organizational members, treat members of the community?
 - a. How did their community interactions support and promote diversity?
 - b. Is there evidence of diversity promotion through practices such as ethnic/racial representation on promotional flyers, posters, and other organizational material?