

2022

## Marketing Strategies to Sustain Nonprofit Organizations

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Tara Murray

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Walden University  
2022

Abstract

Marketing Strategies to Sustain Nonprofit Organizations

by

Tara Murray

MBA, Keller Graduate School of Management, 2015

BBA, Strayer University 2014

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration, Marketing

Walden University

October 2022

## Abstract

Nonprofit organizations (NPO) face challenges that could create business sustainability issues. NPO leaders lacking marketing and funding strategies may fail to remain operational beyond 5 years because they rely on traditional funding sources. Grounded in the resource dependency theory, the purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore marketing and funding strategies nonprofit leaders use to sustain their NPOs beyond 5 years. The participants were three NPO leaders from one organization located in the Northeast region of the United States who successfully implemented their marketing and funding strategies to sustain their business beyond 5 years. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and a review of organizational documents. Through the use of thematic analysis, three themes emerged: (a) organizational behavior, (b) marketing, and (c) funding. A key recommendation for NPO leaders is to develop a strong communication strategy utilizing social media platforms and diversify funding resources. The implications for positive social change include the potential to improve community support by maintaining resources and contributing to communities' economic development.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my husband Bryan and our three beautiful children, Talan, Brya, and Ty. They are the reason I have pushed so hard through this challenging effort. My husband and I started our journey together in the United States Air Force. Throughout our challenges, he has continued to be my rock and my support through hard times. Thank you, Bryan. I love you very much, and I honestly could not have done this without you. I am so proud that my children have borne witness to the determination and motivation it took to complete a doctoral journey. Talan, Brya, and Ty, I only hope this depicts a path to how great your own futures can be; I love you three something fierce.

I also want to dedicate this entire journey to my father, Paul, who sadly is no longer with us. My dad instilled in me that I could be anything I wanted to be and always reach for the stars. At a very young age, I told him I was going to the top with my education: and I am proud to look up at him in heaven and say I am a Doctor. I love and miss you, Dad. I also want to recognize my mother, Lisa, who raised me to be a strong, independent woman. She has encouraged and supported me to always be the best version of myself. I could not ask for anything more. I love you, Mom. To my siblings, Paul, Nikki, and Jackie thank you for your support. To the outside world, I have taken on many roles and names, now, I add Doctor to the list, but to my siblings, they know me as I always was. It is beautiful we get to witness each other's growth. All three of you have motivated me greatly, and I could not have done this without your support. I love you, Paul, Nikki, and Jackie.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) have a role in the community that could include health matters and protecting human rights. NPO leaders are effective; however, sometimes NPOs experience different rising and fall trends (Lee, 2017). Nalepka and Ujwary-Gil (2017) suggested most NPOs face challenges that effectively fit customers' preferences that could create possible issues with business sustainability. There are several resources NPOs use to sustain their funding strategies, considering unpredictable trends (Gazzola et al., 2017). One funding strategy that NPOs have used to sustain their business strategies is the fundamental approach of collaboration (Álvarez-González et al., 2017; Noermijati & HS, 2018). NPO leaders use collaboration as a marketing tool for the community and partners to raise funding to support a mission.

### **Background of the Problem**

NPO leaders require resources to lead their operations and remain sustainable. NPO leaders need to have funding sources; however, deciding the best strategies presents challenges. Making decisions regarding a leader's appropriate approach to having finances is not an easy task (Park & Cho, 2020). Every organization requires sources to fund its operations and maintain sustainability.

NPOs operate in an increasingly unpredictable and uncertain environment, affecting the organization's sustainability to meet its leader's objectives. NPO leadership must build a sustainable firm, a valuable need for the organization (Lee, 2017). The concept of sustainability means NPO leaders can create and maintain strategies

sustainable in both the short and long term (Gazzola et al., 2017). Leaders in an NPO who create sustainable strategies can potentially perpetuate and fulfill the mission.

### **Problem Statement**

In the United States, over 12 million jobs exist in NPOs, which provide services to their local communities (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], U.S. Department of Labor, 2019). Many NPO leaders may fail to remain operational beyond 5 years because of their reliance on traditional funding sources such as government grants and donor contributions. Hung and Hager (2019) reported that 95% of NPOs depict financial health and sustainability with revenue diversification beyond traditional funding sources. The general business problem is that some leaders of NPOs fail to remain operational beyond 5 years. The specific business problem is some NPO leaders lack marketing and funding strategies to sustain their NPOs beyond 5 years.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore marketing and funding strategies NPO leaders use to sustain their NPOs beyond 5 years. The targeted population was three business executives of a NPO located in the northeast of the United States, who were successful in creating marketing and funding strategies to achieve sustainability of their organizations beyond 5 years. The implication for positive social change includes growth for social innovation, while also improving the NPOs' service and benefits provided.

### **Nature of Study**

The three types of research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method. Researchers use the qualitative methodology to analyze and interpret the subjective significances of a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2015). The objective of this study was to explore marketing and funding strategies NPO leaders use to sustain their NPOs beyond 5 years; therefore, a qualitative method was most suitable. Researchers use the quantitative research method to examine relationships among variables (Saunders et al., 2015). A quantitative research method was not appropriate because I did not intend to examine the significance of variables' relationship. Researchers use the mixed-method research approach to examine relationships among variables and gather qualitative data elements to gain insights regarding the relationships (Yin, 2018). Because this study does not involve examining relationships among variables, a mixed-method research approach was not appropriate for this study.

In qualitative research, a researcher can use five common research designs: phenomenological, narrative, ethnographic, and case study design (Saunders et al., 2015). For this study, I selected a single case study as the research design to identify and understand the strategies that NPO leaders use to sustain an organization beyond 5 years. Researchers use a phenomenological design when there is a need to understand the real-life meanings of participants' experiences and perceptions from experiencing phenomena (Saunders et al., 2015). A phenomenological design was not appropriate because this study was not focused on understanding the participants' personal meanings of real-life experiences or perceptions. A narrative analysis design was not appropriate for this study

since researchers use the narrative analysis approach to collect and analyze participants' personal stories (Saunders et al., 2015). Ethnographic design was not a good design for this study as researchers use ethnographic designs to observe and immerse themselves in the culture set as an active participant (Saunders et al., 2015).

### **Research Question**

What marketing and funding strategies do NPO leaders utilize to sustain their business beyond 5 years?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What are the successful marketing and funding strategies used for sustaining the business beyond 5 years?
2. What social media marketing and funding strategies have you used?
3. How successful have the social marketing and funding methods been in sustaining the business beyond 5 years?
4. How did you develop the marketing and funding strategies to increase brand awareness to sustain business beyond 5 years?
5. Describe how you implemented the marketing and funding strategies to sustain business beyond 5 years?
6. What challenges did you face when implementing marketing and funding strategies to sustain business beyond 5 years?
7. Describe how you overcame the key obstacles you faced when implementing marketing and funding strategies to sustain business beyond 5 years?

8. How did you measure the success of the marketing and funding strategies to sustain business beyond 5 years?

9. What additional information would you like to add regarding marketing and funding strategies you find useful for sustaining your business beyond 5 years?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Resource dependency theory (RDT) was the lens I proposed to use for this qualitative single-case study. The RDT was developed in 1978 by Pfeffer and Salancik and is a widely accepted theory by researchers of organizational behavior. Researchers use the RDT to explain behavior, structure, stability, and organizational culture (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). NPO leaders rely heavily on environmental resources, creating an organizational dependency on government and donor funding (Cadet & Carroll, 2019). Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) suggested organizational leaders can reduce the following environmental dependencies: (a) mergers, vertical integration; (b) joint ventures and other inter-organizational relationships; (c) boards of directors; (d) political action; and (e) executive succession. Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) determined organizational leaders create an effort to control constraints, resulting in the acquisition of resources from the environment. The RDT was appropriate for this study because it allows for exploring funding and marketing strategies used by NPO leaders that secure sustainability through resource dependency to align with my research question.



## **Operational Definitions**

*Brand reputation:* Brand reputation is the perception and views by the stakeholders, customers, and the market in general of a specific company's brand (Hitesh, 2021).

*Sustainability:* Sustainability is a business strategy that aims to establish value in the long term by considering how the business operates across varied environments. Sustainability is multi-disciplinary and intrinsically complex and must adapt to changing circumstances and new knowledge (Clayton & Radcliffe, 2018).

*Sustainable competitive advantage:* Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is a company's assets, capabilities, and attributes that cannot be replicated by competitors and provide a favorable long-term benefit over the competitors in the market (Faulkenberry, 2021).

## **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are elements that are accepted as true or plausible, without proof or question (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Assumptions in a research study are out of the researcher's control but are necessary for the research study to be relevant (Armstrong & Kepler, 2018). I assumed the participants of the interviews will provide truthful and adequate responses and share useful, relevant information on their funding and marketing strategies. Another assumption was that the results presented can be applied to NPOs to sustain their business beyond 5 years.

**Limitations**

Limitations are the restrictions and defects that hinder a researcher's study (Tanhueco-Tumapo, 2016). The limitations for this research study could include a limited number of interviewees who accurately respond to the interview questions. Limitations could be a form of restriction on the research study (Greener, 2018). I conducted interviews for this study in the northeast region of the United States, causing a limitation of results from other successful NPO leaders in other geographical regions.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations are choices preferred by the researcher, which must be stated and show the boundaries the researcher sets for the study (Osieja, 2016). Delimitations in a research study are factors or aspects of the study that the researcher controls (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The geographic region of the northeast of the United States was a delimitation. The participant's inclusion criteria of being a NPO leader who has succeeded in sustainability with sound marketing and funding strategies are another delimitation. The delimitations of this study ensure that the research question can be answered in a reasonable manner.

**Significance of the Study****Contribution to Business Practice**

Some organizational leaders of NPOs see sustainable marketing and funding strategies as a means to engage stakeholders and achieve increased revenue, which significantly affects NPO leaders' ability to deliver services to communities (Malhotra, 2016). This study may be significant to business practice because future organizational

leaders could employ or adapt the identified marketing and funding strategies to support their organization's financial and market sustainability beyond 5 years. Strategies pertaining to the business and industry in which the organization operates can provide a more reliable framework to guide decision-making (Malhotra, 2016). Managerial decisions made by NPO leaders about funding may further enable the sustainable growth of NPOs.

### **Implications for Social Change**

NPO leaders may demonstrate a concern for social change based on the nature of their organizations' missions. The potential implication for social change was to provide NPO leaders with funding and marketing strategies for becoming more effective in managing the organization and sustaining operations, thereby positively influencing economic development and community engagement and involvement. Organizational leaders, who engage in charitable works, philanthropic deeds, and volunteer works face a significant risk of running out of funds and other resources necessary for keeping the NPO operational beyond 5 years (Wang et al., 2016). When NPO leaders secure sustainable funding using marketing strategies, leaders may influence community support by maintaining resources, contributing to communities' economic development. Increasing sustainable funding through effective marketing strategies may contribute to driving social change since it may channel other resources to support NPOs' support of communities.

## **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

In this literature review, I presented a review of information about NPO structure and business strategies. Components of the literature review include an overview of the conceptual framework and relevant alternative theories. The conceptual framework review was of the RDT. The literature review includes information on the following topics: funding strategies, funding types of NPO's marketing strategies, and NPO's sustainability.

The intent of this literature review was to examine sources relevant in discussion to the marketing and funding strategies NPO leaders lack to sustain their business beyond 5 years. For this literature review, I used several databases accessible through the Walden University Library, ABI/INFORM Collection, Business Market Research Collection, EBSCO eBooks, GuideStar, ProQuest, SAGE Journals, and government databases. Keywords in my search included: *nonprofit*, *nonprofit sustainability*, *sustainability strategies*, *marketing strategies*, and *nonprofit management*. I selected sources that were relevant, peer-reviewed, and published primarily from within the last 5 years of this study (2016–2021). My search produced hundreds of sources to choose from; I only selected 125 for the literature review. Nine sources were published prior to the year 2015; more than 90% of the sources were peer reviewed. In Table 1, I provided a breakdown of the source content.

**Table 1***Literature Review Source Content*

Literature review content	Total #	Pre-2016	2016-2021	% Total (2016-2020)
Peer-review articles	94	5	89	94%
Non-peer reviewed articles	10		10	100%
Books (seminal)	11	4	6	54%
Dissertations	8		8	100%
Online resources	2		2	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>92%</b>

**Resource Dependency Theory**

Researchers use RDT to focus on managements' use of resources in their organizations. The origin of RDT dates to the 1970s, when Pfeffer and Salancik published their findings in 1978. The authors used the RDT to focus on external resources' effects on a firm's leadership behavior. Management leaders allocate and utilize financial resources, making raw material a bearing on the firms' overall direction (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The model is valuable because an organizational leader's ability to gather scarce resources and alter and use funds faster than their rivals is fundamental to success (Von Schnurbein, 2017).

Resources play a fundamental role in organizations, as leaders may use grant funding or donations to determine the organizations' direction and the overall success against relative and competitive companies. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) discussed resource dependency from a theoretical perspective, paving the way for the new

empirical application of the theory. Since then, a new empirical application to RDT has undergone immense revisions, leading to creating a practical framework applicable to diverse phenomena. The basis of RDT is that resources are central to the level of organizational (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Access and control of resources is the foundation of power in the organization (Seo, 2016; Yeh et al., 2020). Firms requiring important resources are not in control of resources and must use strategy to gain resource control (Birken et al., 2017; Dosi et al., 2020; Yeh et al., 2020). The appropriate approach is for leadership to access primary resources (Berrett & Holliday, 2018). NPOs because leaders rely on resources to remain sustainable and meet their financial goals leading to an approach to access primary resources (Jones et al., 2020).

The resource sustainability of the organization, depicted in the RDT, also affects the organization's marketing strategies. The lack of funding strategies within an organization can lead to sustainability challenges because of resource dependency not being independent (Seo, 2016). The reason for sustainable challenges is the lack of action taken by leaders to obtain resources and satisfy an objective (Seo, 2016).

The RDT is a valuable tool to understand an organization's market orientation strategies in the NPO industry. The specificity of NPOs and the gradually demanding resource environments they thrive in require leaders to adopt individual marketing efforts (Park & Cho, 2020). The marketing approach can be an adaptive strategy designed to ensure that both leadership and management receive the needed resources (Park & Cho, 2020; Seo, 2016). Accomplishing the organization's missions and implementing a range

of strategic activities directly links to the market orientation designed towards donors (Seo, 2016).

Researchers who understand RDT can provide valuable information relating to the interaction between NPOs and their donors in their operating environment. The connection between organizational strategies of marketing and funding has high visibility to business leaders to depict the association between donors and the market (De Los Mozos et al., 2016; Seo, 2016). De Los Mozos et al. (2016) suggested NPO leaders need to have a diversification strategy to ensure different revenue sources, leading to a higher degree of market orientation toward prospective donors.

NPOs do not exist in isolation and cannot escape the external pressures that prevent them from acting independently. Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) proposed that organizational leaders cope with environmental constraints of how different strategies influence leadership outcome and behaviors. Leaders in NPOs are consistently in direct or indirect contact with other firms in the environment, which provide the resources needed for sustainable operations (Birken et al., 2017; Dosi et al., 2020; Seo, 2016; Yeh et al., 2020).

### ***Organizational Behavior***

The behavior of employees who affect an organization is defined by the environment in which resources are attained. RDT is used to describe the way the accessibility of resources in the external organizational environment influence organizational behavior (Birken et al., 2017). Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) defined reliance as the effect that vital resource needs have on an organization's functioning.

Pfeffer and Salancik argued that RDT can be used to understand the actions and objectives of the theory using the dependency situation (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). RDT can be used to assess how an organization's behavior is subject to external resources acquired and executed by the organization (Uygun, 2017). Business leaders become dependent on other the resources of other organizations when their resources are sparse (Birken et al., 2017; Seo, 2016; Von Schnurbein, 2017; Yeh et al., 2020). NPO leaders can gain control of the organization's resources to reduce dependency.

NPOs are faced with dependency challenges because they need resources from other organizations. An organization that controls the resources has autonomy over organizations dependent on their resources (Birken et al., 2017; Dosi et al., 2020). Birken et al. (2017) defined the decisions made by organizational leaders to balance competitive needs as: (a) resource dependency, (b) maintenance of autonomy, and (c) building of relationships. Birken et al. implied that organizational leaders create dependency by building strategic alliances or relationships with other businesses to secure needed resources. Through collaboration, NPO leaders can alter their dependency upon other organizations. The power of dependency shifts from organizations' that depend on resources to control (Yeh et al., 2020).

Leaders must collaborate with other organizations to reduce power of dependency power and to support inquiries made by stakeholders for a NPO to maintain sustainable business practices. The effectiveness of an organization is dependent on stakeholder standards and opinions of the organization (Birken et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2020). An organizations' effectiveness depends on the leader's capacity to fulfill promises to the



stakeholders and meet economic goals. Birken et al. suggested that researchers use organizational theories to better understand the complicated relationship between organizations and their external environments.

**External Environment of RDT.** Ozturk (2021) stated that the effect of the environment in defining organizational behavior is the most important issue in RDT. Organizations lacking resources must depend on external organizations to fulfill the resources needed to succeed (Yeh et al., 2020). An organization may be required to provide their resources to an organization in need (Ozturk, 2021). Resource environments can change because of a shift in politics, the economy, and society (Jones et al., 2020), making resource dependency vital for organizational leaders to create and sustain strategic alliances (Birken et al., 2017).

Jones et al. (2020) inferred that NPOs struggle with tensions between meeting their social obligations and remaining financially stable. Jones et al. denoted collaboration among NPOs became heavily influenced because of competition in the market. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) defined that RDT is used by organizational leaders who seek to increase power when competing for scarce resources. Kirste and Holtbrügge (2020) referred to organizations' scarce and dependent resources as an authority of their control. Yeh et al. (2020) discussed the need for bargaining power because too much dependency on one organization can lead to uncertainty. Competing NPOs attempt to minimize their dependency on resources by acquiring resource exclusivity (Jones et al., 2020).

**Resource Independency.** Organizations do not exist in isolation. Leaders collaborate with other organization leaders through different networks such as joint ventures, supply chain systems, alliances, and other forms of cooperation (Chen, 2019; Klein & Pereira, 2016). Organizational leaders working together could achieve specific objectives within predefined boundaries and activities. The collaboration among different organizations is inevitable because of the resource limitations and the accomplishment of particular goals (Klein & Pereira, 2016). Because of scarce resources, firms could use the scarcity as a reason to collaborate and establish relationships.

The reliance on other organizations to complete daily activities requires tactics by leaders to minimize uncertainties in resource movement. Klein and Pereira (2016) described RDT as an organizations' survival nature to overcome resource challenges by obtaining external sources. Several factors could influence network survival, such as the level of dependence and the degree of substitutability of the networks. Klein and Pereira concluded that firms within a network find reasons to collaborate but developing elements to guarantee survival is difficult.

NPO leaders could find it difficult to survive when there is no environmental dependency. Klein and Pereira (2016) suggested environmental dependence falls under three broad classifications: social, political, or economic. Economic factors comprise the level of industrialization, per capita income, unemployment rate, and economic recession (Klein & Pereira, 2016). Political environment refers to the influence a government has on the ease or difficulty doing business (Deng et al., 2020; Klein & Pereira, 2016).

An NPO leader can seek to achieve environmental dependency through diversification. Diversification of a firm is to be independent and diverse from competitors and is one of the central themes in RDT (Chen, 2019). Chen indicated that when firms diversify, the main objective is to manage the interdependence and relationships within an environment. If the environment is dynamic, firms may have more incentives for achieving versatility arising from interdependency. In a philanthropic environment, it may be easier to access resources; therefore, diversification is less attractive and more expensive (Chen, 2019).

NPO leaders could attempt to diversify their business but may be vulnerable to external negative influences. Firm environment interdependence also differs depending on ownership of the business (Chen, 2019; Deng et al., 2020). The external environment is affected when a merger happens, which leads to a modification in the interchangeable relationship (Chen, 2019). Deng et al. (2020) concluded that political connections negatively influence the protection of the environment. Government officials may develop a long-term relationship with organization leaders and build connections among other government officials (Deng et al., 2020).

Muchemwa et al. (2016) determined the union between corporate governance and RDT is that the board of an organization is central to the business performance. When a firm's leadership appoints a new board, the firms' intention is to expand knowledge and find solutions to organizational problems (Muchemwa et al., 2016). The responsible leadership may evaluate and present the issues to those around them. The board gives counsel, legitimizes the process, and offers communication avenues, both internally and

externally (Muchemwa et al., 2016). An organization's network and size can also be a conduit of external players' resources (Shaw et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2018). Shaw et al. (2016) established that an independent board's social capital and professional experiences could enhance a firm's performance by providing a different viewpoint from the usual practices.

### **Relevant Alternative Theories of RDT**

I considered several conceptual frameworks to frame and use in my research; however, only one theory was necessary for my study. RDT is the most appropriate conceptual framework, but a comparable theory is the resource-based view (RBV) theory and an opposing theory is corporate governance. I did not intend to use RBV or corporate governance to frame my study.

**RBV Theory.** RBV is among the most popular theories cited to understand management principles. The popularity arises from the ease of RBV application to develop sustained market competition from a firm's internal sources. A firm must achieve a sustainable competitive advantage by developing new capabilities and implement them to develop superior products (Chumphong et al., 2020). Like other theories, the RBV developing body of knowledge faces empirical difficulties, ambiguity, and opposing views (Nagano, 2020). The arguments from other scholars posited in this subsection highlight empirical findings about the RBV as a management theory.

Scholars continue to pursue different interests in the RBV to dispel ambiguity by eliminating weak and inconsistent arguments. For instance, there is a lack of adequate evidence to explain why employee-based resources persist when firms adopt the same

firm-level strategies in their human resource strategies. Most researchers ignore modern thinking's role to dispute that RBV can only lead to identifying organization capabilities (Chumphong et al., 2020; Collins, 2021). Collins (2021) indicated the managerial cognition of human and social capital of a company's chief executive officer (CEO) could provide insight on which high commitment human resource (HCHR) strategies could boost firm-level employee-based resources. HCHR strategies could be vital in determining the most effective ways of deploying employee-based resources to generate competitive advantage (Collins, 2021).

The explanatory variables in RBV resources should be difficult to imitate, rare, and valuable in operation management. Bromiley and Rau (2016) used SCA as a dependent variable in evaluating the usefulness of RBV in operation management. Bromiley and Rau (2016) compared the few firms' performances with SCA and other firms, assuming no performance variations among the firms. The theorists established that competitive advantage may manifest at the business level but fail to translate into benefits at the operation management level, creating difficulty to measure the useful variables that other firms cannot replicate to demonstrate the unique and nearly unique factors (Bromiley & Rau, 2016).

From the literature explored, evidence exists that RBV theory and application in business management is complex and with several variances for achieving rarity, uniqueness, and developing SCA. Firms and industries differ substantially regarding the modalities for creating SCA through the RBV, rendering it important to study the unique factors from sector to sector and from one industry to another.

**Corporate Governance.** The state-related affairs may imply that corporate governance could mediate between the government and the markets. Corporate governance is among the recommendations to overcome organizational management afflicting firms' concerns in modern markets (Naimah & Hamidah, 2017). According to Naimah and Hamidah (2017), corporate governance refers to the manipulations made to direct a company towards achieving corporate governance principles, including; fairness, accountability, independence, and transparency. For the practice to positively influence a firm, stakeholders such as the government, investors, employees, shareholders, and financiers must play a role (Lebedeva et al., 2016; Naimah & Hamidah, 2017). Lebedeva et al. (2016) inferred that positivity in an organization's corporate governance should increase performance and maximize stakeholders' value in a sustainable future.

Several factors may enhance corporate governance and lead to achieving a firm's social and economic soundness. Naimah and Hamidah (2017) showed that corporate governance principles positively influence profit margins. Also, audit quality, audit committee meetings may have a positive outcome on profitability; however, independent boards and board size negatively influence a firm's profitability (Lebedeva et al., 2016; Naimah & Hamidah, 2017).

Improved efficiency, improved competitiveness, reduced risk of doing business, and increasing sustainability, are avenues that may advance corporate governance performance. Lebedeva et al. (2016) noted that public corporations' privatization enhances the low corporate governance score. Corruption among law enforcement agencies, underdeveloped financial markets, and lack of qualified managers limits

corporate governance principles (Lebedeva et al., 2016). When individuals responsible for punishing financial malpractices do not have adequate resources, corporate governance becomes challenging to achieve (Lebedeva et al., 2016).

The structure used in a Turkish study subindices to define board procedures, shareholder rights, clauses of disclosure, and ownership to predict corporate governance scores. Ararat et al. (2017) conducted a study in the Turkish market about public corporations using the Turkey Corporate Governance Index (TCGI). The research established that the disclosure sub-index indicated a higher market value and profitability, the main driver for the TCGI (Ararat et al., 2017). Kakanda et al. (2017) also established that risk management disclosure correlates positively with organization performance. Investors are likely to show interest in an organization that discloses investment-related information (Kakanda et al., 2017). The disclosure of climate risks and increased shareholder activism may help to improve corporate governance.

More research is needed to understand sources of market competitiveness and ways of increasing profits of each sector's dynamics. Evidence indicates that the government's institution of strict regulatory measures enhanced governance effectiveness (Li et al., 2017). Li et al. (2017) also found that listed firms perform better than unlisted ones leading to an affirmation that regulatory standards play a pivotal role in enhancing corporate governance effectiveness. There are specific ownership structures, which are more feasible and profitable depending on the sector a firm serves (Elvin et al., 2016). Board composition, including composition, size, expertise, and board meetings, positively influence firm performance (Kakanda et al., 2017).

## **Funding Strategies**

Of the many priorities of NPO leaders, securing new funding and maintain the existing funding sources is important. NPO leaders may find it difficult to prove themselves by indicating constituent benefits, competitive advantage, and establishing a quality and mission effectiveness (De Los Mozos et al., 2016). Hardy (2017) denoted that NPO leaders validate the organization's value by fulfilling the mission and continually communicating its significance to remain relevant. NPO leaders communicate their measurable goals and performance metrics to promote their potential sponsors' accomplishments (Hardy, 2017; King et al., 2018).

A decent brand reputation can facilitate the residence of existing grantors and sponsors and attract potential donors. Other funding strategies for NPOs include building a strong reputation and diversifying revenue streams (Berrett & Holliday, 2018). Hardy (2017) suggested that sponsors and grantors often associate with NPOs with respectable brand reputations. NPO leaders can build their reputations by ensuring ethical excellence and financial compliance with the appropriate regulators (Gunnerson, 2019; Lu, 2016).

Diversifying revenue streams may instill confidence in potential sponsors and grantors. Organizational leaders help maintain the organization's sustainability by minimizing vulnerabilities associated with periodic funding failures when diversifying revenue streams (Berrett & Holliday, 2018; Gunnerson, 2019; Hung & Hager, 2019). Hung and Hager (2019) recommended revenue diversification as one of the strategies that NPO leaders can use to address NPOs' financial challenges. Revenue diversification refers to a shift from relying exclusively on grants and, instead, an earned income



strategy to mitigate the uncertainties associated with donations (Berrett & Holliday, 2018; Gunnerson, 2019; Hung & Hager, 2019). A financially healthy NPO that has adequate equity balances and administrative allocations, positive operating margins, and diversified revenue sources, which foster flexibility even during financial downturns (Hung & Hager, 2019). Hung and Hager (2019) suggested that NPO leaders who cultivate amounts of revenue from different sources are less vulnerable to financial crises than those relying on single-source revenue.

**Revenue Diversification.** Revenue diversification promotes autonomy, income and growth potential, and community connection (Hung & Hager, 2019; Mikołajczak, 2018). Autonomy refers to having independence in decision-making (Hung & Hager, 2019). Hung and Hager (2019) further suggested that when NPO leaders become overly dependent on donors, the NPO becomes susceptible to manipulation, which may interfere with the mission. For example, charities that depend entirely on government funding may fulfill the government's interests, indicating a loss of autonomy (Mikołajczak, 2018).

NPO leaders who implement only donor funding as a strategy may likely stunt the organization's growth because they lose control of making decisions and their community connection. Communication connections develop because, in revenue diversification, the organization is likely to reach new audiences, which is an opportunity to expand networks (Hung & Hager, 2019; Mikołajczak, 2018). Revenue diversification comes with disadvantages, including increased complexity and administrative costs and mission drift (Hung & Hager, 2019; Mikołajczak, 2018). NPOs may experience mission drifts because most NPOs designations are for charity activities but not income generation.

An effective technique of promoting revenue diversification is commercialization, generating revenue from selling products and services (Mikołajczak, 2018). Another potential benefit of revenue diversification is to increase autonomy because an organization that depends on income-generating activities does not have to submit to an external organization's demands (Hung & Hager, 2019; Mikołajczak, 2018). Critics, such as other scholars, of the revenue diversification strategy might argue that NPOs do not operate in the same manner as for-profit entities. The argument against revenue diversification may be deemed irrational and inconsiderate. Mikołajczak (2018) implied that NPO leaders who adhere to the traditional charity-related model of only receiving donor funding may struggle to maintain the organization's public image of transparency.

NPO leaders may strive to commit to a social mission but not income generation. Ortega-Rodríguez et al. (2020) indicated that NPOs could position themselves as transparent and accountable entities to boost their legitimacy and donations. Ortega-Rodríguez et al. (2020) suggested that NPO leaders should not engage in any other activity to generate income apart from depending on donations. Mafa and Kang'ethe (2019) identified that NPO leaders become highly dependent on their donors because they expect not to seem like they are only soliciting funding.

NPOs differentiate based on the expectations of the stakeholders. In the for-profit sector, firms rely on meeting their stakeholders' expectations, like the product's quality and price (Hung & Hager, 2019; Mafa & Kang'ethe, 2019; Mikołajczak, 2018). A notable expectation that every stakeholder in the charity sector, particularly the donors, wants to see is transparency, intended to ensure that funds do not get spent on meeting self-

interests (Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2020). Accountability includes the disclosure of information to address stakeholder concerns. Ortega-Rodríguez et al. (2020) denoted that NPO leaders who exercise transparency and accountability exemplify the best practices in the sector, good governance, and the effective utilization of funds they receive.

### **Funding Types of NPOs**

NPO leaders require resources to run their operations and remain sustainable. NPO leaders need to have funding sources; however, deciding the best strategies presents challenges. For example, making decisions regarding the appropriate approach to having finances is not easy (Park & Cho, 2020). Every organization requires sources to fund its operations and maintain sustainability. An NPO's nature opens opportunities for many types of funding, such as; cash donations, grants, contributions, membership dues, fundraising campaigns, and many others (Garcia-Rodriguez & Romero-Merino, 2020). These sources of funding help an NPO sustain its activities to meet the organization's missions and objectives.

**Grant Funding.** Grant funding agencies provide much-needed funds to NPOs and may be considered one of the most significant contributors. Many NPO leaders apply to gain the resources needed to run their operations. Grant funding is provided mainly through government resources. NPO leaders can achieve grant funding by organizing proposals that connect the organization's mission with funding (Lu, 2016). Organizations also rely on cash donations, one of the significant ways needed to acquire resources. The source includes other firms and individuals; interested parties donate help in cash (Lu, 2016). While cash donations are an effective and relatively easy form of raising the

needed resources to provide relief to struggling organizations, it is not reliable. Leaders should not count on the approach to gain sustainability.

**Contributions.** Donors also contribute to NPO's sustainability but may have limitations on the extent or amount of total yearly contribution. Cash donations come from other organizations other than partners (Lu, 2016). For example, leaders can create partnerships with other organizations that help provide resources monthly, quarterly, and annually through contributions. These organizations can also rely on the fundraising campaigns implemented using various means (Lu, 2016).

Many organizational approaches go beyond partnerships and may exist through social media campaigns and social events. During events, the sales of tickets benefit the organization directly and channeled to project funding, which uses grants similar to cash delivered donations. The difference with cash donations is that they are usually commodities like food, clothing, transportation, and furniture, whereas grants are strictly monetary donations (Garcia-Rodriguez & Romero-Merino, 2020).

**Fundraising Campaigns.** Memberships can be long-term funding strategies of NPOs, in which members pay an annual fee to support funded operations. Suárez and Gugerty (2016) proposed that NPO leaders should encourage memberships of the business to raise funds. Along with raising funds for the organization, the members also contribute to organizational operations through commitment and involvement in fundraising campaigns at the community level (Suárez & Gugerty, 2016).

Fundraising campaigns could include programs like sports activities. Organizing charity sports programs allows NPO leaders to raise funds through registration fees,

copyright fees, and sponsorship deals. Suárez and Gugerty (2016) indicated that NPO leaders also use public fundraising to sell their mission and vision to potential grantors and sponsors. The direct approach of fundraising enables NPO leaders to explain the purpose of their mission and outline the strategies they would use to implement that ensure benefit to the community (Suárez & Gugerty, 2016).

### **Lack of Funding Strategies in NPOs**

Financing may be the most challenging aspect of operations among NPOs considering the organizational structure is built on a not-for-profit basis. Ko and Liu (2021) alluded to a possible lack of funding strategies among NPOs by arguing that leaders needed to develop strategies to mitigate the decline in government funding. Government funding may not be the only funding strategy NPO leaders implement, but also donor contributions. Mafa and Kang'ethe (2019) suggested that NPO leaders need to diversify their funding sources because of the high risks of relying on donors.

Depending on donations is not an unsound strategy because NPOs have limited funding sources. Investigating the financial viability of NPOs, Mafa and Kang'ethe (2019) found that many NPO leaders struggle financially because they only depend on donations. However, the problem is that donors' overdependence may cause severe crises if donors fail to honor their pledges (Ko & Liu, 2021; Mafa & Kang'ethe, 2019). Mafa and Kang'ethe (2019) opined that donor dependency has dragged many NPOs into cycles of financial instability. Even though donors may be committed to supporting charities' missions, they may not fulfill their obligations when faced with economic crises, causing resource scarcity among dependent NPOs (Mafa & Kang'ethe, 2019).

Many NPO leaders rely solely on donations to fund their operations. When private donations reduce, these organizations can be faced with increased risks of running out of funds (Ko & Liu, 2021; Mafa & Kang'ethe, 2019; Poret, 2019).

NPO leaders who emphasize their funding strategies can enhance their financial independence (Poret, 2019). Indeed, funding strategies are not entirely lacking in the NPO sector. Poret (2019) discovered that most NPO leaders had established partnerships with multinational corporations to receive funding. NPO leaders may increase funding through strategic alliance partnerships. NPO leaders who lack the initiative to create partnerships and only revolve funding strategies around donations may foster the culture of NPO dependency rather than solving the financial struggles (Ko & Liu, 2021; Mafa & Kang'ethe, 2019; Poret, 2019).

### **Marketing Strategies**

NPO leaders who engage and promote marketing may see an increase in potential donors. NPO leaders use various marketing strategies, including social marketing, network marketing, and influencer marketing, to advance their causes (Appleby, 2016; Gordon, 2017; Jahan & Bhuiyan, 2019). Transparency and accountability are important factors for attracting and retaining donors (Wang et al., 2020). Leaders of an organization can help their businesses grow by forming beneficial strategies (Gordon, 2017).

Many marketing strategies leaders can use to advertise their business objectives, vision, and methods. NPO can post photographs of their activities and spearhead discussions about social causes on social media to foster a positive organizational image (Di Lauro et al., 2019). Other marketing advertising methods are traditional, such as;

television, newspapers, and flyers, and used by leaders to reach a vast audience (Appleby, 2016; Gordon, 2017; Jahan & Bhuiyan, 2019). Among central marketing approaches, Gordon (2017) identifies increasing brand awareness, facilitating engagements with all stakeholders, and benchmarking on other competitive methodologies for enforcing profitability. Although many marketing strategies exist, NPO leaders may find social media platforms the most valuable and accessible to promote their missions.

**Social Media.** NPO leaders may capitalize on the vast reach of the internet to advertise on their associated sites. Social media platforms may be helpful to the marketing of NPOs for leaders to tap resources necessary for their mission (Álvarez-González et al., 2017; Di Lauro et al., 2019; Jahan & Bhuiyan, 2019). Di Lauro et al. (2019) noted NPO leaders could use social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube, or their combination. NPO leaders can establish social media pages and post content to inform visitors of their mission and, if possible, include a landing page that directs them on how to make donations or become volunteers (Álvarez-González et al., 2017; Di Lauro et al., 2019); Jahan & Bhuiyan, 2019)

Social media advertising may offer significant benefits to NPOs. Some of the suggested sites, like Facebook, have analytical tools that enable advertisers to target audiences based on their characteristics such as demographics, geographical location, online spending behaviors, and value (Di Lauro et al., 2019; Jahan & Bhuiyan, 2019). By using social media as a marketing tool, NPO leaders may target users who are likely to donate or volunteer to their social cause. Di Lauro et al. (2019) added that social media advertising might enable NPO leaders to promote involvement and engagement,

transparency and accountability, and corporate image. NPO leaders that have implemented social media into their marketing strategies leverage social sites to keep current and potential donors of their activities, spending, and plans (Di Lauro et al., 2019).

NPO leaders use social marketing to design and implement control programs to popularize particular ideas in focus groups (Jahan & Bhuiyan, 2019). NPOs use social marketing to implement philanthropic marketing sponsorship to solicit donations and implement social marketing campaigns like product packaging to convey specific messages to the targeted audience (Jahan & Bhuiyan, 2019). NPOs use social programs to market sponsorships with companies collaborating with the government to finance their social actions (Álvarez-González et al., 2017; Jahan & Bhuiyan, 2019).

Considering that the global market continues to witness digital revolutions and rapid technology changes, businesses are now adopting social media forums as important marketing tools. Appleby (2016) suggested a strong need for NPOs to maximize and measure profitability realized by social media initiatives and campaigns. Appleby (2016) noted that NPOs that have successfully utilized strategic social media platforms have successfully experienced vast improvements and high business capacities.

NPO leaders implement social media marketing strategies to gain mission goals. Social media platforms' growth has made brands shift to influencer marketing to take advantage of these platforms' extensive following (Powers, 2016). Gordon (2017) ascertained that linking social media with essential stakeholders plays a crucial role in ensuring sustainability and can be employed as a fundamental organizational strategy.



Providing an analysis of empirical research, Gordon (2017) highlighted that the application of social media is influential in determining how important leaders interact and form alliances with clients, individuals, the government, and other players in an economy. Gordon (2017) acknowledges that stakeholders' contributions via social media can improve brand quality, leading to superior output development.

**Social Media Strategies.** NPO leaders rely on social media strategies to promote their organizational programs and services as social media advertisements require small budgets (Fernandes & Castro, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Xu & Saxton, 2019). Fernandes and Castro (2020) suggested that social media channels are effective promotional marketing sources NPO leaders use to improve reach and engagement with the stakeholders. NPO leaders use social media to promote brand recognition, news, fundraising, education, and recruitment of volunteers and employees (Fernandes & Castro, 2020). The implementation of appropriate social media strategies can benefit a NPO fully.

Interactive engagement can promote a sense of trust with the audience, creating a larger community. One of the most effective social media strategies is audience engagement with interactive content and information (Xu & Saxton, 2019). Posting interactive content to followers can be a positive strategy for encouraging the audience to take action and get involved with the NPO (Wang et al., 2020). Content such as polls, donation polls, and registration forms effectively promote the NPO leaders' ability to reach out to the target audience (Xu & Saxton, 2019).

NPO leaders should endeavor to inform the public of the organization's mission, what they have accomplished to date and place an appealing message requesting donations. A valuable element of using a social media approach to gain an audience is sound strategies (Fernandes & Castro, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Xu & Saxton, 2019). Hashtags can help magnify the reach of the audience (Wang et al., 2020). Hashtags are just one of many marketing strategies used by business leaders. NPO leaders who attach hashtags to their social media posts can enhance their organization and mission's discoverability. NPO leaders should place importance to promise utmost transparency and accountability in all the advertising messages because they are the basis of a NPOs' performance evaluation.

NPO leaders are responsible for promoting their organization's mission transparently and making it discoverable to their intended audience. Promoting NPO missions is essential to improve the authenticity of the donors and encouragement of volunteers (Wang et al., 2020). Kasri and Putri (2018a) suggested NPO leaders should also apply donor targeting, typical of customer segmentation in the corporate world. NPO leaders should try to reach out to organizations and individuals with similar missions. Kasri and Putri alluded to the need to target foundations, groups, or individuals committed to similar missions will increase the odds of successfully converting the targeted entities into their donor base. By using social media strategies, NPO leaders can maintain an active presence with their audience, deliver an experience to potential volunteers, and offering easy access for the donation of funds to their NPO (Fernandes & Castro, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Xu & Saxton, 2019).

**Partnerships.** NPO leaders should implement strategies to attract potential sponsors and partners to support their activities. Álvarez-González et al. (2017) indicated that partnerships and sponsorships are important to sustain the existence of NPOs and advancing their mission. NPO leaders engage networks to attract and form crucial partnerships and sponsorships to support their operations (Álvarez-González et al., 2017; Trivedi et al., 2018).

Beneficiaries may be declarative because of an inadequate understanding of the usefulness of the strategic analysis. Najev Čačija (2016) highlighted that most NPOs depend on their beneficiaries to fulfill their needs. If problems arise, the beneficiaries are still declarative (Najev Čačija, 2016). NPOs are always focused on their key stakeholders, leading to a better understanding of the organizational rules and regulations (Álvarez-González et al., 2017; Najev Čačija, 2016).

Because of the dynamic nature of the business environment and the complex societal and economic constraints, NPO leaders face competitive pressures (Álvarez-González et al., 2017). As a result, such businesses' capacities to accomplish their goals increasingly rely on developing dependable alliances with notable internal and external stakeholders (Álvarez-González et al., 2017; Gordon, 2017; Trivedi et al., 2018). Trivedi et al. (2018) implied that NPO leaders use network marketing to establish partnerships and sponsorships to support the entities in their operations.

### **Lack of Marketing Strategies in NPOs**

NPO leaders may not understand the need for marketing strategies and the importance marketing their mission can have on the overall success of the NPO. Some

NPOs do not engage in marketing; instead, they continue relying on the traditional approach of social connections and government funding (Cordery et al., 2019; Waldner et al., 2020). Waldner et al. (2020) implied that NPO leaders have not begun transforming their marketing strategies because they rely mainly on fundraising campaigns rather than exemplify advertising similar to the for-profit sector. In the for-profit sector, some of the proven marketing strategies that leaders use to increase customer traffic are numerous such as; search engine optimization, influencers, and content marketing (Waldner et al., 2020). NPO leaders may not have explicit marketing strategies because the organizational structure primarily orients to a social mission; therefore, NPO leaders' marketing strategies are relatively limited.

Despite the lack of resources, an organization may not succeed without marketing, regardless of its form. Cordery et al. (2019) alluded that a possible reason for the lack of marketing strategies among NPOs is resource inadequacy, which encourages leaders to only concentrate on core activities to achieve their mission. Marketing for an organization creates brand awareness, and within NPOs, leaders have the opportunity to engage with their audience to create mission awareness (Cordery et al., 2019; Išoraitė, 2016; Waldner et al., 2020). Brand awareness is a prerequisite for increasing the customer base (Išoraitė, 2016). By overlooking marketing, which is the primary foundation of organizational awareness, NPO leaders miss an opportunity to attract potential donors (Cordery et al., 2019; Išoraitė, 2016; Waldner et al., 2020). Therefore, a donor is unable to contribute to an organization that he or she does not know exists or what the mission set is.

## **Sustainability of NPOs**

Founding and leading a NPO to attain the mission and objectives requires individualized approaches to achieve sustainability. Unlike for-profit businesses, which tailor services and products to the customers, NPO leaders and their organizations depend on individuals' and firms' goodwill to drive the operations (Gazzola et al., 2017; King, 2017; Lee, 2017). The leaders in NPOs gain revenue stream through engagement with their communities, such as fundraising, which makes their investors a part of their mission (King, 2017; Lee, 2017). In the context of social responsibility and tandem with the generation and provision of programs to the benefit of the community, individuals and NPO leaders must develop measures that support sustainability (Gazzola et al., 2017). The strategy is to design procedures and practices that support having sustainable operations and activities.

Nonprofit firms operate in an unpredictable and uncertain environment, which disrupts the organization's sustainability to meet its objectives. Leadership is required to build a sustainable firm, requiring a valuable need for the organization (Lee, 2017). More nonprofit leadership is changing tact to realign with themselves and become sustainable for their mission's greater good to cope with the emerging environment (Gazzola et al., 2017; Lee, 2017). This change has led toward developing innovative practices and strategic responses. The concept of sustainability means NPO leaders can create and maintain strategies sustainable in both the short and long term (Gazzola et al., 2017). In addition, leaders in an NPO creating sustainable strategies can perpetuate and fulfill the mission.

NPO leaders need to have a comprehensive understanding of why, when, and how donors contribute and allocate resources. The founders of NPOs need to have ample skills related to self-actualizations (Arshad et al., 2016). These include self-awareness and self-transcendence in order to put the mission first. Sustainability for an NPO requires committed, dedicated, and focused leaders who can identify the vision amid nothing., these leaders must use sustainability strategies, including values, community resource mapping, and organizational alignment (Arshad et al., 2016; Gazzola et al., 2017).

**Sustainability Strategies.** Hardy (2017) indicated the missions of NPOs are focused on producing sustainable social change and must remain sustainable in the future, even without external organizations. Arshad et al. (2016), Gazzola et al. (2017), and Hardy (2017) identified NPOs leaders must adopt various strategies to remain sustainable. Several strategies include the diversification of resources, subcontracting, and adaptation (Hardy, 2017). Resource diversification reduces the risk of the NPO dissolving if the primary source of funding is withdrawn (Berrett & Holliday, 2018; Gunnerson, 2019; Hardy, 2017).

Resource diversification minimizes donor dependence that might influence the operations of NPOs. Gunnerson (2019) implies that receiving funding grants power to influence organizational decisions depending on the particular donor. Berrett and Holliday (2018), Gunnerson (2019), and Hardy (2017) suggest diversifying resources of NPOs reduces income improbability and enables the organization's leaders to more freedom when making their decisions. Kandaiya and Chavan (2017) indicated that NPOs adopt adaptation strategies, such as alignment and perseverance, to remain sustainable.

NPO leaders organize their programs to align with the requirements of new sponsors or existing sponsors. Alignments usually occur to fit the preferences of the sponsors that are restructuring their activities (Kandaiya & Chavan, 2017). Alignment ensures sustainability by reshaping the organizations' goals, depending on the available funding (Kandaiya & Chavan, 2017). Other adaptive approaches for NPOs include intensifying advocacy engagements and executing collaborative initiatives (Watson et al., 2020). Collaborative initiatives help NPO leaders implement activities to shoulder high-cost burdens through strategic partnerships (Watson et al., 2020). Gunnerson (2019) recommended that NPO leaders apply adaptive strategies to assist in remaining sustainable by facilitating operations at low costs.

### **Transition**

Section 1 began with a background of the problem, followed by the problem statement, purpose statement, and nature of the study. I provided the overarching research question used to frame the exhibited interview questions used for the study participants. Section 1 consisted of the conceptual framework used in the study, operations definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. The significance of the study is presented with the contribution to business practice and the implications for social change. Conclusion of section 1 is a review of the professional and academic literature, focusing on resource dependency theory, NPOs' sustainability, and marketing and funding strategies.

Section 2, I reaffirm the purpose of the study and present the required aspects of the research project to include the role of the researcher, participants, research

methodology and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection, data organization, data analysis, and reliability and validity. In Section 3, I provide the presentation of findings, the contribution to business practices and social change, future action and research, my reflections, and the study's conclusion.



## Section 2: The Project

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore marketing and funding strategies nonprofit leaders use to sustain their NPOs beyond 5 years. The targeted population was three business executives of a NPO located in the northeast region of the United States, who were successful in creating marketing and funding strategies to achieve sustainability of their organizations beyond 5 years. The implication for positive social change includes growth for social innovation, while also improving the NPOs' service and benefits provided.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Research is a compilation of information on a particular subject through a data collection instrument. A primary goal of conducting research is to collect data from a targeted source or audience and examine the information to propose an answer to a research question (Sutton & Austin, 2015). I served as the primary instrument for data collection for this qualitative single case study. I was responsible for analyzing and interpreting the data through this doctoral study. A researcher's leading role is to identify the collection, recording, and analysis methods by generating a large amount of data (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The data collection and recording was done through semistructured interviews with senior leaders of a non-profit organization. Participants involve and collect data from individuals.

In most cases, participants experience the researched problem and take part in contributing valuable information. The participants' answers to the interview questions

could potentially provide their company with value-added results on sustainability. I am employed as a program analyst for the government, and in doing so, I am granted an understanding of the funding strategies used by an organization to meet requirements as it relates to sustainability. I do not have NPO experience and sought to understand the phenomenon through the participant's interview responses. The researcher's responsibility is to remain ethical, mitigate any bias they may have, and avoid utilizing a personal lens to review data (Fusch et al., 2018; Lee, 2018).

Ethical research practices are essential to ensure the data collected was reviewed to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of study, protect participants' rights, and the risks associated with the research can be justified by the study's potential benefit (Lee, 2018). I complied with ethical standards by observing and adhering to *The Belmont Report* protocol's principles and guidelines. *The Belmont Report* contains fundamental principles and standards on how to treat participants ethically. Bromley et al. (2015) stated the importance of following *The Belmont Report* protocol to ensure both the researcher and the participants involved are protected and validate the research. I observed the fundamental principles when working with any individuals during research by respecting the person, being beneficent, just and fair when distributing benefits or costs to potential participants. Participants of this study were willing to give informed consent by signing a consent form outlining the participation and the ability to withdraw at any time.

Fusch et al. (2018) stated that a researcher's interpretation of results in a study can be affected by their background experiences, including biases, values, and ideologies. In

this study, utilizing methodological triangulation and data saturation aided in mitigating bias. Triangulation occurs when a researcher uses multiple sources to verify the data collected to draw a conclusion (Fusch et al., 2018). I ensured data saturation, resulting in my study's reliability and validity by cross-examining multiple data sources and applying triangulation to my study.

To conduct interviews sequentially, I found preparing for the interview was important. Preparation began with providing participants with an interview protocol (see Appendix A). Castillo-Montoya (2016) determined an interview protocol framework is comprised of four phases. The phases aim at refining and systematic development of the interview protocol. The four phases ensure that interview questions align with research questions, construct an inquiry-based conversation, receive feedback on interview protocols, and pilot the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The measures listed were important to support the efforts that aim to strengthen the reliability of the interview protocols used in qualitative research, thus improving the quality of data collected and the findings (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

### **Participants**

The objective of this study was to explore marketing and funding strategies NPO leaders use to sustain their business beyond 5 years. King et al. (2018) declared the responsibility to recruit participants in qualitative studies is with the researcher. Researchers must have a working knowledge of the organization and the business functions before recruitment (Glegg, 2019; King et al., 2018). I selected three NPO leaders in the United States' northeast region who successfully sustained their business

beyond 5 years. To ensure I selected viable participants, the NPO leaders had the experience and knowledge of the research question. The participants of this study were selected based on their understanding of the research topic of implementation of marketing and funding strategies, the phenomenon of lack of sustainability being discussed, and the values they could contribute to the results through their experiences.

To gain access to participants, I sent emails to NPO leaders introducing myself, provided information about my study, my intent to interview, and asked for participation. Giorgi (2021) suggested a researcher should provide detail in email scripts when reaching out to potential participants such as the purpose of the study, full disclosure of ethical requirements, and the reasoning for selecting the participant. I emailed possible participants as the first method of communication and contact.

My goal was to build a working relationship with participants through engagement to gain their trust. A relationship is built with participants through trust and understanding (Giorgi, 2021). Giorgi (2021) further discussed the importance of providing participants with an understanding of the reasoning behind the researcher's study and why the particular participant's interview was relevant and important to the results of the study. Participants may feel more relaxed and comfortable to answer interview questions ultimately leading a researcher to answer the overarching research question.

To align with the research question, the participants had to have similar characteristics. Therefore, the participants had a vested interest in the research topic of marketing and funding strategies, making them the best candidate to gain a deeper

understanding of the phenomenon of a lack of sustainability being studied (Bravington & King, 2019; Glegg, 2019; King et al., 2018). The NPO leaders were willing to participate; therefore, an interview consent form (see Appendix A) was provided to participants by email to ensure the participant understood their role, my role, and the confidentiality of the interview (King et al., 2018).

### **Research Method and Design**

A researcher must have a suitable research method and design to plan, organize, collect and analyze adequate data and techniques (Mullarkey & Hevner, 2019). Researchers who understand method and research design can make an accurate evaluation of the collected data. Research design is important to influence the reliability of research results (Micheli et al., 2019). An effective research method and design can also help the researcher respond to the research questions effectively (Micheli et al., 2019; Mullarkey & Hevner, 2019). The research method and design can be considered the foundations for the collection of data and analysis.

### **Research Method**

Three types of research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method. Researchers use the qualitative methodology to analyze and interpret the subjective significances of a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2015). Qualitative analysis is also important in exploring behaviors through characteristics, choices, and actions that researchers can investigate through interviews. Qualitative research is based on the study of reality and the quest for meaning (Saunders et al., 2015). The intent of my study was to explore marketing and funding strategies nonprofit leaders use to sustain their NPOs

beyond 5 years. Therefore, a qualitative research method was most suitable. Interviewees can contribute to researching findings through their beliefs and values, among other social determinants (Rahi, 2017). A qualitative study was appropriate because marketing and funding strategies vary from one NPO to another, providing an opportunity to explore participants' beliefs.

Researchers use the quantitative research method to examine relationships among variables (Saunders et al., 2015; Taguchi, 2018). Quantitative research methods are essential where there is a need to present hypotheses and use numerical data to compare results and variables (Albers, 2017). I did not intend to examine the significance of the variables' relationship; therefore, a quantitative research method was not appropriate.

Researchers use the mixed method research approach to examine relationships among variables and gather qualitative data elements to gain insights regarding the relationships (Taguchi, 2018; Yin, 2018). Maxwell (2016) explained the use of mixed method in research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research elements in one study. My study did not involve examining relationships among variables; therefore, a mixed-method research approach was not appropriate for this study.

### **Research Design**

Colorafi and Evans (2016) noted that researchers should use a research design that brings together the various elements of a study to enable him or her to address the business problem in question effectively. In qualitative research, a researcher can use four common research designs: phenomenological, narrative, ethnographic, and case study design (Saunders et al., 2015). For this study, I selected a single case study as the

research design to identify and understand the strategies that nonprofit leaders use to sustain their organization beyond 5 years. A case study design allows researchers to respond to what, how, and why questions. Yin (2018) posited that using sources will help a researcher gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. A case study design is the most applicable to this research because I used interviews and other information sources.

Researchers use a phenomenological design when there is a need to understand the real-life meaning of participants' experiences and perceptions from experiencing phenomena (Nazir, 2016; Saunders et al., 2015). Because this study was not focused on understanding the personal meaning of the NPO leaders' real-life experience or perception, a phenomenological design was not appropriate. Scholars and researcher use a larger sample size for a phenomenological study (Dodgson, 2017), which was not necessary for my study.

Researchers use the narrative analysis approach to collect and analyze participants' personal stories (Dodgson, 2017; Saunders et al., 2015). The narrative analysis design is structured so that a researcher collects raw data based on participants' memories and the environmental description to understand participant's views on a situation (Clandinin, 2022). A narrative analysis design was not appropriate for this study because I did not develop a life story.

Saunders et al. (2015) noted researchers use ethnographic design to observe and immerse themselves in the culture set as an active participant. Fusch and Ness (2015) stated researchers use an ethnographic design to use observe participants to understand a

phenomenon being studied. I did not observe participants; therefore, an ethnographic design was not suitable for this study.

In a single case study of a NPO the implication for repetitive interview responses is understood. Fusch and Ness (2015) recommended interviews of participants as a method to reach data saturation, which occurs when no new themes emerge from the responses. Data saturation has been reached when the same data is reiterated by participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Tran et al., 2017). To ensure I reached data saturation, I interviewed my participants until no new information was presented to answer my research question.

### **Population and Sampling**

Taherdoost (2016) noted that a need exists for sample size in research case studies. Between the two types of sampling, probability sampling and non-probability sampling, the latter was used for this study, as no statistical data was being portrayed. Non-probability sampling includes quota, snowball, purposeful, and convenience (Taherdoost, 2016). The sampling method used for this study was purposeful sampling. When analyzing a phenomenon, researchers use purposeful sampling to select participants who have knowledge and experience in the topic (Abrahams, 2017). Participants in NPOs were willing and ready to partake in the study.

The population for this study was NPO leaders in the northeast region of the United States who were successful sustaining their business beyond 5 years by using successful marketing and funding strategies. The leaders selected had experience and knowledge in the phenomenon being studied. In addition to the interviews, I gathered



data from financial records and official documents to ensure data saturation. Data saturation occurs when all data has been collected and exhausted (Fusch et al., 2018). Researchers reach data saturation with the use of methodological triangulation.

There are various criterion for the selection of research participants and interview settings appropriate to the research study (Glegg, 2019; King et al., 2018). One of the criterion was professional experience and knowledge. Experienced professionals have information to share with the researchers and have a network with many research candidates (Glegg, 2019). Other criterion was to select diverse participants in an effort to build relationships and understand the diverse nature of the organization. Diversity is one factor to consider increasing the richness of the research participants (Bravington & King, 2019). Diversity can also create interesting and balanced results for a research study.

### **Ethical Research**

According to Yip et al. (2016) informed consent is achieved when a participant voluntarily confirms the willingness to participate after being informed of all aspects of a research study. Every participant was a volunteer and was required to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix A) agreeing to participate. To meet Walden's requirements for conducting research and to adhere to the established ethical standards, the Institute Review Board (IRB) approval was needed. Upon receiving IRB approval # 10-29-21-0667098, the informed consent process was initiated with participants. The informed consent process begins when the researcher obtains a signed consent form from all participants in the study. Researchers receiving informed consent assures participants of

the ethical protection of their participation (King et al., 2018; Yip et al., 2016). The consent process provides participants with the researchers' intent, purpose of the study, privacy of the participants, and their willingness to participate or withdraw (King et al., 2018; Yin, 2018; Yip et al., 2016). To meet ethical standards, I ensured every participant received and understood the informed consent process through discussion and acknowledgement on the consent form (see Appendix A).

Research participants had the ability to withdraw from the study at any time. A participant wishing to withdraw from the study should inform the researcher (Lynch, 2020). The participant might offer a reason for leaving the study, but it is not mandatory (Lynch, 2020). Voluntary withdrawal was annotated on the informed consent form the participants' sign prior to their interviews. I did not have any participant withdraw from the study.

There were no incentives for participating in the study, aside from the knowledge gained from the results. Sansom et al. (2020) suggested some examples of incentives are gift certificates, access to specialized information, and donations to the charity of their choice. While incentives may motivate participants (Sansom et al., 2020), no incentives were provided to participants, as this was also depicted on the informed consent form.

I took careful consideration to assure the ethical protection of participants. Researchers are responsible for protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality while also keeping data safely stored (King et al., 2018). I preserved the confidential information of both participants and the organization by redacting participants' names from the study in an effort to protect their ethical rights. According to Dulhanty (2021),

protecting the ethical rights of the participants is done by protecting the personal information of the participants. Confidentiality is one of the most valuable ethical and legal concerns during research that involves human participants. I protected the participants' names or affiliate organizations by employing anonymity and confidentiality principles. In an attempt to keep participants confidentiality, I assigned interview numbers as part of the study: E1, E2, and E3. I kept the privacy of the participants by removing their identifying information from any data collected. Any identifying information, such as names and locations, were concealed and safely stored.

I have stored the data collected from the study in a safe and will do so for 5 years, after which it will then be deleted and destroyed. Names of individuals and organizations were removed from this study for privacy reasons. Any identifying information was concealed to maintain the confidential protection of participants (Dulhanty, 2021). Following guidelines ensured that integrity, compliance, and ethical standards were being met (Yip et al., 2016). Walden University IRB approval (approval #10-29-21-0667098).

### **Data Collection Instruments**

In qualitative studies, a researcher is the primary data collection instrument. A researcher should continue with data collection until no new data or theme is identified (Runfola et al., 2017). The process of collecting data until no new theme emerges ensures that data saturation is reached. Throughout the study, I was required to collect, record, analyze, and verify the data's authenticity. Additional data collection instruments, including informal or semistructured interviews, in-depth phenomenological interviews, and the review of company documentation, were used to aid in the process of data

collection (Runfola et al., 2017). I conducted semistructured interviews as part of my data collection method. A semistructured interview was suitable for the study because of the flexibility and openness between the researcher and the interviewees, making it easier to observe behavior and thoughts (Peterson et al., 2016). According to Brinkmann (2016), semistructured interviews are the most commonly used data collection instrument for qualitative studies. I conducted semistructured interviews as an essential process of data collection. The analysis of other data, such as the NPO's financial documentation, was crucial to understanding the phenomenon being studied.

I used a specific interview protocol (see Appendix A) for the semistructured interviews to ensure each participant was provided a uniform list of questions, and probing has been adopted for each interviewee. An interview protocol was essential in developing trust between the interviewer and the interviewees and explaining the objective of the study to the participants. Data analysis from multiple sources was also essential to a better understand the research topic. Ensuring methodological triangulation improves the conceptualization of the problem statement studied (Gibson, 2017). Company documentation, including financial statements, annual reports, and work plans, were analyzed for my secondary data collection instrument.

Throughout the data collection process, researchers are required to adopt measures to ensure that the data collected is valid and reliable (Hadi & Closs, 2016). Recordings are used during the semistructured interviews to ensure interviewees' responses are captured correctly; and to support summary of the interview (Crozier & Cassell, 2016). During my data collection, I recorded the responses of participants and

immediately followed by transcribing the data to provide the same participants with their responses for member checking. Birt et al. (2016) reiterated the importance of checking participants' responses throughout the interview process through member checking, promoting the validity and reliability of the results. Validity and reliability occurred when interviewees verified that the data interpreted, conducted by researchers, was consistent with the responses provided. Reliability and validity increase the credibility of my study results and inferences; therefore, I provided participants with their transcribed interviews and asked for their verification.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The primary objective of this study was to explore the marketing and funding strategies used by nonprofit leaders to sustain their organization beyond 5 years. Semistructured interviews and the review of documentation were the data collection techniques commonly used in case studies. Semistructured interviews were the most preferred data collection technique for the study to help build relationships between the researcher and the participants, nurturing cooperation and openness during the study (Harrison et al., 2017; Runfola et al., 2017). Within qualitative studies, researchers use interviews as their primary data collection technique. I began my search for participants by sending introductory emails (see Appendix B) and asked for participation in an over the phone or online interview to four NPO leaders of various successful NPOs with only one response from the CEO who participated in my study.

The CEO of the NPO I studied, also provided me email contact information for the two additional leaders within the organization that I could request an interview with. I

emailed three participants of one single organization to ask for their participation in my study. The three NPO leaders of the one organization agreed to participate with no additional permission needed. I collected data using semistructured interviews with three NPO leaders whose marketing and funding strategies resulted in successful sustainment beyond 5 years. The participants chosen were NPO leaders working in a NPO at least 5 years. I also reviewed the organization's financial documents to complement and verify the participants' responses.

The design of interview protocols is necessary to guide the process of acquiring the relevant information from the study participants (Alexander et al., 2017). The specific interview protocol (see Appendix A) was designed to collect data from participants about the success of funding and marketing strategies through semistructured interviews. I conducted the interviews on the Zoom platform. I collected the interviews by recording the participant's responses through my Apple Macbook and my Apple iPhone voice memos. Technology in the form of recording and transcribing devices were used to enhance data collection; during the virtual, online, interviews, the recording and transcribing devices effectively captured data from the participants. I used the recording application on my Apple Macbook computer, voice memos, to record all interviews, which were then uploaded into the NVivo software.

I considered using the Livescribe pen as a data collection tool to capture audio during the interview but chose a digital recorder. The Livescribe pen records and captures handwritten notes in an instance that both notes and audio are systematic (Zelege et al., 2019). Zelege et al. (2019) highlighted researchers and scholars use the Livescribe smart

pen allows to take key notes without fear of referencing later. Digital recorders, such as voice memos on Apple devices allow live recording of interviews and was more preferable because the ability to provide a visual addition to the data compared to the Livescribe pen.

Semistructured interviews were suited for several tasks, especially when more than one open-ended question was required as a follow-up query. DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) suggested that semistructured interviews are the most effective methods for data collection as required by the researcher; however, other methods for data collection involved review of company documents. Hammarberg et al. (2016) noted the analysis of documents in qualitative data collection helps researchers to learn about private knowledge.

I achieved triangulation through the review of multiple sources of data collected to include the interviews, as well as the organizations' public annual financial report to better understand how the organizational leaders monitored their operations, identify the sources of income, and keep track of the deductible expenses. I accessed the organization's annual financial report through their public website. The information gleaned from the organization's only annual financial report included earned revenue through business sales and incurred expenses resulted in three themes (a) organizational behavior, (b) marketing, and (c) funding. Using multiple sources of data during a research study has many advantages (Fusch et al., 2018). Because NPO leaders are the same individuals making the company documents, there is a probability of collecting false and inaccurate data if there is a manipulation of the records (Hammarberg et al., 2016). In

most cases, the review of company documents, such as financial records of donations collected and how revenue was earned, will validate the data collected from interviews (Fusch et al., 2018). I ensured the data collected was consistent with the meaning the participants wanted to convey through member checking of the participants transcribed interviews, besides conducting a thorough interview and analyzing the companies' financial document accessed on their public website about their earned revenue through business sales and expenses.

A disadvantage of using semistructured interviews in qualitative research is the large intake of social data and assuming that the data was honest and accurate. Through the use of semistructured interviews, researchers can build relationships with participants in an effort to exercise open and honest responses (Harrison et al., 2017; Runfola et al., 2017). However, without observation of the lived experiences of the participants, I relied on member checking to ensure the responses were of quality data.

McGrath et al. (2019) suggested member checking as essential a follow up to the data collection of interviews to validate participant's responses. Member checking was important to gain trust of the participants and to ensure trustworthiness of the researcher, even if there were opposing views of the data (McGrath et al., 2019). I had an obligation to ensure the data I collected was interpreted as the participant intended for and have done so through member checking of the transcribed interviews. I emailed the interview summaries to the three participants and asked for their review. The three participants were given a week to respond, and I received no suggested changes to the interview summaries. The participants agreed with the interview summaries.



### **Data Organization Techniques**

After data collection, I placed importance on ensuring the data collected was safely recorded, and participants' confidentiality was maintained. Data is essential to effective analysis of the study outcome. Data organization facilitated easy access to the collected data and effective analysis. I ensured that the computer-stored information had entry dates, titles, and remain stored in specific files to enhance the ability to recall information. I used labeling systems and codes, such as masking participant's names and replacing with a single letter and number, to categorize data into a type, name, and data when collected during the research, which was an approach supported by Bree and Gallagher (2016). The data collected was extensive; therefore, it was necessary to facilitate easy access to the data. During the collection and analysis of data, I used several software programs. I selected the NVivo software to transcribe the data collected during interviews. Other programs such as, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel, were effective primary tools for data organization (Jefferson et al., 2016; Watkins, 2017). Participants' confidentiality was a priority in this study, I assigned interview numbers as part of the study: E1, E2, and E3. To protect the NPO leaders' identity and knowledge, I ensured my personal computer had the necessary authentication requirements such as password protection to prevent unauthorized entry and access. In addition, files relating to participants, company data, recordings, and other electronic data were encrypted. The encrypted files were assigned with codes to facilitate easy access. Each participant's open-ended interview forms were stored safely along with other hard-copied documents of financial data and annual reports of companies. The data collected from the study is

stored in a safe will remain stored for a period of 5 years, after which I will delete and destroy the files by shredding all paper documents and break the flash drive of electronic files by smashing it with a hammer.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is considered an investigation of information by examining, analyzing, displaying information to feature helpful data, recommend results, and support dynamics (Noble & Heale, 2019). Information examination has various aspects and approaches, incorporating various procedures under an assortment of names, in various business, science, and sociology spaces. Triangulation occurs when a researcher uses more than one strategy to gather information on a similar subject (Abdalla et al., 2018). Four types of triangulation exist: (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) a methodological triangulation (Abdalla et al., 2018). Through the use of methodological triangulation, a researcher can collect and compare findings from multiple data (Yin, 2018).

I guaranteed the legitimacy of research to gather information on a similar point through the use of multiple data collection of semistructured interviews and review of the annual financial report. In any case, the motivation behind triangulation is not really to cross-approve information yet instead catch various elements of a similar marvel (Noble & Heale, 2019). I incorporated methodological triangulation by collecting data from multiple sources, including interviews and the organization's public annual financial report, located on their website, in this qualitative single case study, resulting in three emergent themes: (a) organizational behavior, (b) marketing, and (c) funding. From the

organization's annual financial report, I was able to cross check interview responses to actual earned sales and expenses to better understand the company's funding strategies for sustainability as shown in the organizational behavior and funding themes.

Methodological triangulation includes using more than one type of data to examine a phenomenon (Fusch et al., 2018; Haydn, 2019).

Data analysis occurs when a researcher categorizes themes, testing evidence, and analyzes collected data to conclude a set of results (Yin, 2018). I began data analysis by coding themes and seeking the consistency of the literature. Upon completion of my data collection, I correlated key themes to emerging literature to ensure contribution that my study was valid. Fusch et al. (2018) recommended using different methods in the data analysis phase. For this study, methods I used for data analysis were (a) methodological triangulation, (b) member checking, (c) interview protocol, and (d) NVivo version 1.0 data analysis software. Yin (2018) proposed that researchers prepare and arrange data into themes and codes. NVivo is a data analysis software program that will code and organize text into categories; therefore, I used the NVivo software to identify themes to correlate to the literature and conceptual framework.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity exist when the research conducted are consistent with the responses provided by interviewees. Birt et al. (2016) reiterated the importance of checking participants' responses throughout the interview process through member checking, promoting reliability and validity of the results. Reliability and validity increase the credibility of the research. Demonstrating credibility, transferability,

dependability, and confirmability in research conclude validity in qualitative research studies (Mohajan, 2017).

### **Reliability**

Reliability is the degree to which a research method produces long-lasting, consistent results (Bolarinwa, 2015). Mohajan (2017) indicated dependability measures the trustworthiness of the research. The dependability of research is essential in the information used to examine the phenomenon (Mohajan, 2017). A study will have dependability and validity when all data is exhausted through data saturation (Fusch et al., 2018). Data saturation is met when a researcher finds there are no new themes emerging from the data collected, therefore the results of my study were reviewed to ensure there were no new themes to ensure that saturation had been met.

### **Validity**

Validity refers to the accuracy of the research (Mohajan, 2017). Validity is an important aspect of a research study because it establishes if the concluded results meet all of the requirements of the research method (Mohajan, 2017). To ensure validity occurs, results must align with the phenomenon studied (Bolarinwa, 2015). The researcher must take steps to collect valid data. I used methodological triangulation, data saturation, interview protocols, and member checking of the interview summaries, to ensure validity. Methodological triangulation is useful in providing researchers the validity of their research by exhausting all data and verifying data from multiple sources (Fusch et al., 2018). Methodological triangulation has been necessary for offering confirmation of research findings, comprehensive data, enhanced understanding, and

increased validity of the phenomenon under research study (Ashour, 2018). A study is considered valid only when the results align with the research question (Bolarinwa, 2015). Validity is achieved by adopting the right methodology and meeting the criteria to ensure credibility, transferability, and conformability depicted (Mohajan, 2017).

Credibility can be achieved through many data collection techniques such as data saturation, interview protocols, and member checking. Liao and Hitchcock (2018) denoted that a researcher establishes credibility by using data collection techniques to produce trustworthy qualitative researcher. By using member checking, I confirmed accuracy of the data collected and reduced the risk for participate bias. McInnes et al. (2017) declared that member checking can be used to establish credibility. Through the use member checking, along with several other techniques, such as data saturation and interview protocols, I was able to achieve credibility.

Yin (2018) defined transferability as the benefits from which the research can transfer from organization to another. Transferability occurs when the researcher summarizes study disclosures and attempts to apply them to various conditions and settings. I provided suggestions for further study in Section 3 in an effort to meet transferability.

Confirmability is the last criteria of trustworthiness that a qualitative researcher must establish (Kyngäs et al., 2020). The criterion of trustworthiness has to do with confidence that the research study's findings are based on the participants' narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases. Member checking is a method researchers can take to ensure confirmability. Member checking occurs when a researcher provides

interview summaries to the participants to verify the response given (McInnes et al., 2017), all of which the participants did not have any changes for the interview summaries. Confirmability in research verifies that participants shape the findings more than they are shaped by the qualitative researcher (Kyngäs et al., 2020). As the researcher, my responsibility was to ensure confirmability by providing evidence that the results from my study were trustworthy. Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated researchers can use audit trails to ensure transparency of the research with a thorough recording of data collected. I assured confirmability by addressing an audit trail through member checking by providing the participants with their transcribed interviews.

Data saturation is achieved when similar data is echoed by participants and there are no new emergent themes (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Tran et al., 2017). To ensure I reached data saturation, I exhausted all forms of data collection until no new themes transpired (Giorgi, 2021). I incorporated triangulation to reach data saturation.

To meet the criterion and to ensure my results were reliable and valid, I used methodological triangulation. Giorgi (2021) advised that methodological triangulation can be achieved through analysis of literature, content analysis of documents produced by an organization, and semistructured interviews. The research I conducted resulted in validity and reliability through analysis of literature in my topic of study, thematic analysis of the semistructured interviews, member checking of the interview summaries, and review of the organization's annual financial report that was accessed through their public website.

### **Transition and Summary**

Section 2 consisted of reacquainting the reader with the study's purpose, including the description and justification of utilizing a qualitative single case study research design. Additionally, Section 2 included subsections describing the researcher's role, participant selection, research methodology and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection, data organization, data analysis and reliability, and validity. In Section 3, I will provide a presentation of my findings and the contribution to business practices and social change. Section 3 will also include recommendations for future action and research, my reflections, and the study's conclusion.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

#### **Introduction**

In the qualitative single-case study, I explored nonprofit leaders' marketing and funding strategies to sustain their NPOs beyond 5 years. Data collection was from company documents and semistructured interviews with three business leaders working for a single NPO in the northeast region of the United States who experienced creating successful marketing and funding strategies to sustain their business beyond 5 years. The participants read, signed, and returned a signed consent form to participate in the research study. The consent form included information about the study, confidentiality, and the process for voluntarily withdrawing from the study.

Study participants included three leaders within a single NPO located in the northeast region of the United States who successfully created marketing and funding strategies to sustain their business beyond 5 years. The study participants responded to open-ended interview questions based on the interview protocol (see Appendix A). Data saturation was achieved and ensured after the third interview. Member checking was employed to ensure proper interpretation of the participant's response and in the data saturation process. With the use of thematic data analysis and auto coding in NVivo, three themes emerged: (a) organizational behavior, (b) marketing, and (c) funding. I presented the findings in this section, namely: themes. I also discussed the application to professional practice, implications for social change, and how the results of this study apply to business practice. Finally, I offered suggestions for future research and provided a final reflection of this study and an overall conclusion.



### **Presentation of the Findings**

The research question for this qualitative study was: What marketing and funding strategies do NPO leaders utilize to sustain their business beyond 5 years? I used a qualitative research method and a single case study to answer the research questions. The data collection process included interviews with three leaders of a single NPO located in the northeast region of the United States who experienced success in creating marketing and funding strategies to sustain their business beyond 5 years. Participants were eligible to participate if they: (a) were funding or marketing leaders, (b) were located in the northeast region of the United States, and (c) were successful in creating marketing and funding strategies to sustain their business beyond 5 years. I conducted all three interviews between December 01, 2021, and January 31, 2022. I sent out four invitations to NPO leaders, with only one CEO responding and providing me with two additional NPO leaders within their organization to request participation. I emailed all three participants of one organization asking for their participation, receiving a confirmation from all three with no additional permission. No participants withdrew from the study, and no incentives were provided to the participants for their participation.

I followed the interview protocol in Appendix A. Interviews were conducted using Zoom video calls. After I recorded the responses, I conducted member checking by drafting a summary of each interview and emailing the participants. I followed up with an email to ensure I accurately captured all the interview answers. Three participants replied to my email, confirming that the information I provided in the interview summary was accurate. I continued the member-checking process via email until no new information

was received from the participants. The three participants received one email each requesting their review of the interview summary and asked to do so within a week; all of them responded with no suggested changes.

Once the member checking process was completed and all data checked for accuracy, I uploaded the data into NVivo, a qualitative analysis tool. I subsequently analyzed the data using Yin's (2018) guidelines. These guidelines included: (a) a review of the collected data, (b) data organization, (c) data coding, and (d) themes developments to draw inferences and conclusions. The analysis of all data sources advanced three emergent themes: (a) organizational behavior, (b) marketing, and (c) funding. These themes align with the different marketing and funding strategies defined in the conceptual framework, which focuses on resource dependency. The RDT framework aligns with the findings in this study because of the examination of resource acquisition to organizational behavior. The RDT founders (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) suggested that organizational leaders engage in transactions with other organizations to achieve resource acquisition. I concluded that resource dependability transactions are advantageous and simultaneously dependent on each other, depicted in the three themes of the study, by using the resource dependency theory as my framework and researching the data. The three themes and four subthemes are explained in more detail by linking the previous literature and the conceptual framework and using participant quotes to support claims in the following sections.

### **Theme 1: Organizational Behavior**

The first emergent theme from the data analysis process was organizational behavior. Two subthemes emerged under the organizational behavior theme: (a) mission and (b) business. All participants (E1, E2, and E3) discussed the leadership teams' work to support employees and encourage them to participate in the decision-making exercise. The effectiveness of an organization is dependent on stakeholder standards, views, and interests, as well as the leadership's efficiency and scope, to fulfill promises to the stakeholders (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2021; McSweeney et al., 2021). An organization's effectiveness depends on the leader's capacity to fulfill promises to the stakeholders and meet economic goals (McSweeney et al., 2021). The understanding, management, and prediction of organizational behavior individually and in the group is evident by all participants in the organization. All participants concurred that their employees are aware that their input is of great significance and that the company depends on them to achieve its goals. E1 confirmed the importance of involving employees:

Very few dollars get raised without our youth being in the driver's seat. So, if a foundation wants to come and visit, we have our youth give the tour. We have foundations that want to come by and learn about the programming, and we let our young people answer it.

In most NPOs, the difference in leadership dynamics affects their decision-making and shifts organizational behavior. According to Weatherly (2021), organizational behavior is defined by what the management can provide and how employees react. E3 confirmed the importance of communication:

Coming up with consistent means of communication as a team across departments and having weekly meetings to sit together and look at the social media calendar and our marketing calendar. We discuss items such as our email marketing and come to an agreed-upon marketing plan for content. My belief is that being consistent with people in that process from the beginning is probably one of the most important parts that have worked well for us over the past couple of years. It is a collaborative process from start to finish, and if we bring in more people, we take care to make sure that they are caught up to where we are at in the marketing.

Engaged workers may find every reason to be part of the change process. Nyberg et al. (2021) noted that leadership is guided by cultural practices, values, and beliefs to see that changes are implemented correctly. In most cases, decision-making becomes a matter of collective responsibility (Luthans et al., 2021). E3 asserted, "Working with our young people, to teach skills about social media and professionalism around social media. So doing that with frequent check-ins from the beginning helps to be aligned with the different department standards, and everyone is working together." NPOs engage employees at all levels to create a healthy working environment, balancing a healthy relationship with them by maintaining effective communication and creating a platform that ensures the organization remains effective, independent, and balanced (Ye & Gong, 2021). Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) proposed that organizational leaders cope with environmental constraints of how different strategies influence leadership outcomes and behaviors. Organizational behavior is defined by how well stakeholders are prepared to work closely to deliver the desired outcome to acquire resources to meet mission goals.

Resources are central to the level of organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Access and control of resources are the foundation of power in the organization (Ye & Gong, 2021; Yeh et al., 2020).

Participants agreed that organizations lacking resources would depend on external organizations to get the resources needed to achieve short and long-term goals. The resource environment can change because of a shift in economy, society, and politics, making it necessary for organizations to create and sustain strategic alliances for resource dependency (Berrett & Holliday, 2018; McSweeney et al., 2021). Firms requiring valuable resources are not in control of resources and must use marketing and funding strategies to gain resource control (Dosi et al., 2020; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2021; Yeh et al., 2020). All participants agreed that many organizations struggle financially because they depend on donations and other revenue streams from the government, which is unsustainable and dissatisfying, considering that operations within entities are informed by leadership's expertise, skills, and knowledge. Leadership is the appropriate approach to accessing primary resources (Berrett & Holliday, 2018). Participants agreed there are adverse effects on the organization when management fails to follow the proper communication channels and how best issues are solved to ensure success. NPOs do not exist in isolation and cannot escape the external pressures that prevent them from acting independently. Leaders in NPOs are consistently in direct or indirect contact with other firms in the environment, which provide the resources needed for sustainable operations (Dosi et al., 2020; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2021; Yeh et al., 2020).

Many factors can influence an organization's network survival, including the degree of over-reliance and the level of substitution of the networks. Organizations within the network find every reason and evidence to collaborate and work effectively with other stakeholders. However, finding the correct elements that ensure survival is not easy. E1 and E2 participants suggested that NPOs find it tough to survive without environmental dependency. Ideally, environmental dependence falls under social, political, or economic (Wegner et al., 2022). Lengnick-Hall et al. (2021) implied that organizational leaders create dependency by building strategic alliances or relationships with other businesses to secure needed resources. Through collaboration, NPO leaders can alter their dependency on other organizations. All participants agreed that environmental dependency is achieved through diversification to bring a new perspective into the whole organization. Diversification of a firm is to be independent and diverse from competitors and is one of the central themes in resource dependency theory (Chen, 2019). E3 further confirmed diversity in an organization is successful:

I think being able to share that as responsibility is a good thing because we do not have a dedicated marketing department. The diversity has helped us with some of our success, and it has forced us to dive in together when we were doing the annual appeal and the initial report.

Sustainability in nonprofits can be achieved by aligning the organization's mission with the revenue sources. Bocquet et al. (2020) suggested that adequate funding is essential for the smooth running of NPOs. Chen (2019) indicated that when firms diversify, the main objective is to manage the interdependence and relationships within

an environment. All participants affirmed that an organization must first define its mission and strategic objectives. After mission identification, leaders should identify the volunteers and potential donors (Stühlinger & Hersberger-Langloh, 2021). Marketing the NPO's mission to the identified segments is recommended to improve revenue generation.

Without adequate revenues, some organizations cannot operate sustainably. Therefore, identifying the appropriate revenue streams and running campaigns for fundraising can help such NPOs access donor funding and sustainably run their operations (Appleton, 2021). The participants confirmed that NPOs might also consider advocacy to source more funds and finance their operations. Some channels that could be used for advocacy include social media platforms that have significantly grown in popularity.

Researchers who understand RDT can provide valuable information relating to the interaction between NPOs and their donors in their operating environment. The specificity of NPOs and the gradually demanding resource environments they thrive in require leaders to adopt individual marketing efforts (Park & Cho, 2020). The connection between organizational strategies of marketing and funding has high visibility to business leaders to depict the association between donors and the market (Searing et al., 2022; Ye & Gong, 2021). Searing et al. (2022) suggested that nonprofit organizational leaders need a diversification strategy to ensure different revenue sources, leading to a higher degree of market orientation toward prospective donors. Information from the organization's annual financial report shows the diversification of the

organization, through earned revenue sales and fundraising from donors, supporting this theme. Because of globalization, organizational behavior reflects the culture and diversity present in the community (Arefieva et al., 2021). Unless the organization leaders work with a selected demographic, there is likely someone who has a different culture or background than other people in the place of work.

### ***Mission***

The mission of a NPO affects organizational performance. The organization's missions influence the employees' performance and motivation to work within the organization (Buonomo et al., 2020). Wang (2022) indicated that the organization's mission defines the commitments of the NPOs. Meaningful mission statements are practical strategic tools that can help employees align with organizational values. Each participant is committed to developing the proper marketing and funding strategies to sustain operations beyond five years. E2 discussed the organization's success in sustainability:

It is part of the reason we have successfully passed that five-year mark and have continued to thrive because our mission is such a selling point for us. When we are trying to convince a foundation to grant us a large fund, we love to leverage our mission that earning revenue matches the money that funders are donating in the business.

The long-term sustainability of NPOs depends on the commitment of the employees to the organization's mission and the potential of the mission statements to motivate employees. NPO leaders are more likely to increase organizational performance



by developing mission statements to inspire the organization's members and promote shared values. Kasri and Putri (2018b) suggested that mission statements are valuable in strategic planning. The participants agreed that their mission statement promotes idealized views and focuses on achieving defined goals.

Marketing for the mission entails ensuring every stakeholder understands the undertaking of the social enterprise. NPO leaders want consumers to participate in the business, but the mission marketing strategies achieve business sustainability. E1 confirmed marketing for both the business and mission are in alignment:

You want people to come and shop at your business because they think it is a great business and they love the products. They will return because they also love the mission, but if you do not have a good business, do not have good products, and do not have good service, the mission will not carry us enough, and we do want it to.

Consumers will return because they love the mission and the organization's commitment to establishing an environment where every buyer feels a greater sense of responsibility. E2 stated, "When we sell a product, that is great, and it is important, but what is more important is if the person understands our mission and what they are actually supporting and have that follow through."

### ***Business***

The success of an organization depends on the marketing strategy employed by leadership. In the competitive consumer world, organizations strive to remain relevant. Ideally, many consumers are informed in making purchase decisions before they visit the

brand's stores or website. An informed consumer is a wise buyer who makes ethical investments by researching organizations participating in labor exploitations (D'Attoma & Ieva, 2022). NPO leaders rely on prospective consumers for business sales and potential donors. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) defined reliance as the effect vital resource needs have on an organization's functioning. Dependency comes when an organization lacks the resources to deliver an increment in value.

NPO leaders understand that information is an effective method of ensuring consumers are made aware of their brand. E3 confirmed the importance of using the information to market:

By utilizing the information, we can look at how someone initially interacted with us and did they check off that they are interested in certain information going out. We can then create more segmented marketing for very small or specific tasks for those smaller groups. For instance, if an individual is specifically interested in our advocacy work, then we share that marketing with them. We do this because it takes a lot of specific support to get bills through a legislator, and so people who are willing to speak on our behalf or help push a bill, we want to be getting those specific emails.

NPO leaders can gain control of resources to reduce dependency. Transparency and accountability are valuable factors for attracting and retaining donors (Wang et al., 2020). Customers tend to express their trust and confidence in organizations that align themselves with transparency rather than a misdemeanor (Tacke et al., 2022). E1 stated, "We describe ourselves as a hybrid social enterprise and, from my perspective, a really

sustainable model because we are not overly reliant on one type of funding; we are between 40 and 50 percent self-generating." NPO leaders also collaborate with other companies to reduce the power of dependency and support inquests made by stakeholders interested in the mission. The brand personality of an NPO is a central reminder for people engaging in pro-social behavior. Employees love to work in an environment where they are easily engaged and allowed to offer suggestions for improvement. Earned revenue information from the company's annual financial report supported the development of this theme and information from the interview participants.

### **Theme 2: Marketing**

The second emergent theme from the data analysis process was marketing. Two subthemes emerged under the marketing theme: (a) mission marketing and (b) social media. All participants agreed that marketing is essential for the success of an organization to attract potential donors and build revenue. NPO leaders use various marketing strategies, including social, network, and influencer marketing, to advance their causes (Appleby, 2016; Gordon, 2017; Jahan & Bhuiyan, 2019). E3 stated, "A part of our marketing that has worked well for us has been understanding our supporters and using every support we can in every facet we can."

A successful marketing strategy shows elements of creativity and innovation. NPO leaders who engage and promote marketing may see increased potential donors. The success of a NPO is also dependent on marketing practices employed by the organization. According to Shah and George (2021), marketing is often an avoidable overhead in NPOs. Shah and George further revealed that it is challenging to measure

nonprofit performance because of the multiple tangible and intangible outcomes. E3 confirmed, "The tough part is not having a marketing team or a marketing department, so we have to pull resources from different places that we are doing marketing from, which has worked fairly well over the last few years." However, Shah and George observed that the performance of the nonprofits depends on the behavioral and attitudinal changes within the target segments.

Marketing can be a vital tool for promoting changes in the attitudes and behaviors of the targeted market segment. The marketing approach can be an adaptive strategy designed to ensure that both leadership and management receive the needed resources (McSweeney et al., 2021; Park & Cho, 2020). Shah and George (2021) affirmed that nonprofits could utilize marketing to improve their mission-based performance outcomes. All participants agreed that a marketing strategy should make people aware of the services and products offered.

NPO leaders are tasked with defining marketing strategies that enhance growth and increase sales while sustaining a profit with a changeable offer. NPO leaders engage all stakeholders in the industry. E3 shared that the organization's success is linked to the communication of all stakeholders:

We have had a lot of success in utilizing our mission and business together, not just focusing on a customer being a customer but expanding on additional opportunities through our marketing efforts. By focusing our marketing efforts either to those specific individuals or to those groups.

Orucevic (2019) revealed that NPOs experience many challenges because of their overreliance on volunteer-based and part-time marketing staff. E3 confirmed, "We would work with Commonwealth for volunteers, and so as a frontline staff, we do not have a ton of bandwidth to put our efforts into just social media marketing or having a marketing strategy. More specifically, we have to think about how we incorporate on tiers, what about the newsletter, and what about the store?"

Marketing strategies are valuable and essential to communicate the brand value and stimulate support for NPOs. Orucevic (2019) argued that adopting influencer marketing and setting aside budgets for promotional campaigns can be vital in improving the performance of organizations. NPO leaders leverage uniqueness and quality in order to market. E1 stated, "We have two different types of marketing needs for more than words. Further confirmed by E2 stated, "Both types of marketing have a very specific purpose. We are never going to get completely away from business marketing, but that shift to realizing the importance of mission marketing is huge." NPO leaders employ a market strategy that focuses on helping their businesses grow, forming beneficial strategies (Gordon, 2017).

### ***Mission Marketing***

The success of a brand depends on how well the target consumers understand its mission. An organization's mission statement is a strategic tool that emphasizes the uniqueness and identity of the brand (Alegre et al., 2018). As confirmed by E2, "We also are mission marketing, which is really the high-level strategy part." Alegre et al. (2018) further suggest that organizations extensively use mission statements but are poorly

researched in theory. As strategic tools in organizations, mission statements help define the objectives and the strategies that the brands seek to utilize. There is a need for organization leaders to popularize their mission statements and establish an identity that the target segments can embrace. E1 stated, "We really need to think about how to balance all those different types of marketing needs; marketing for the business and marketing for the organization."

Ensuring the mission is clear and relatable can boost organizational performance in NPOs. Accomplishing the organization's missions and implementing a range of strategic activities directly link to the market orientation designed towards donors (Ye & Gong, 2021). According to Jonyo et al. (2018), the institutions' mission directly influences their performance and competitiveness. Marketing thus emerges as a strategic tool that organizations can use to communicate their missions and build support for the defined missions (Foxall et al., 2020). Marketing also enhances the competitiveness of the brands and makes it easier to achieve the organization's missions. Marketing for an organization creates brand awareness, and within NPOs, leaders can engage with their audience to create mission awareness (Coupet & Broussard, 2021; Waldner et al., 2020). All participants agreed that marketing the mission has been more successful. E1 stated, "They have beautiful pictures, anecdotes, and stories, but then you also can see the data about outcomes, and you see the financials, and it really compelling. It is the marketing material we use, and I think that is a key takeaway we implement. I think that it is very imperative to have this very solid piece of collateral material to look at, which tells the really meaningful mission moments but also gives people a sense of their return on

investment." Brand awareness is a prerequisite for increasing the customer base (Išoraitė, 2016).

Marketing the mission of an NPO brings awareness to potential donors. By overlooking marketing, the primary foundation of organizational awareness, NPO leaders miss an opportunity to attract potential donors (Rosokhata et al., 2020; Waldner et al., 2020). Therefore, a donor cannot contribute to an organization that he or she does not know exists or what the mission set is. E2 confirmed the importance of mission marketing by stating:

Our funders and corporate partners really love to hear that piece of marketing. I think really understanding that balance between marketing and influencing, knowing how to get a message across, and getting someone to listen to what we have to say, is important because it strikes what is most interesting about us and our nonprofit, making it feel genuine.

NPOs leaders focus on establishing personal encounters with customers and allowing them to access quality products and services. E3 further confirmed:

We have had a lot of success in utilizing our mission and business together, not just focusing on a customer being a customer but expanding on additional opportunities through our marketing efforts. By focusing our marketing efforts either to those specific individuals or to those groups.

NPO leaders organize their programs to align with new or existing sponsors' requirements that restructure their activities (Fortuño, 2021). Alignment ensures sustainability by reshaping the organization's goals depending on the available funding

(Fortuño, 2021). Duncan (2020) recommended that NPO leaders apply adaptive strategies to remain sustainable by facilitating low-cost operations. First-hand information is needed when dealing with customers (D'Attoma & Ieva, 2022). E1 stated:

We have marketing for the businesses, the way any business would need it, such as; we have a sale, come by our bookstore, or rent our space, but then you also have the marketing of the mission. Marketing for the mission is about making sure people understand the mission of the social enterprise, which is different. We want to do both, and we want them to, at some point, connect, but they are different.

E2 further confirmed:

The real advancement is if there is someone gets brought in through the mission, they are more likely to buy products more than just like a one-time purchase. So really having that high-level awareness, selling a product is a transaction, but buying into the mission is a belief system that is going to carry that person along with you. It is about making people feel informed about our mission and keeping them updated.

In marketing, positioning is a crucial strategy. Most NPOs intend to develop a brand so that consumers perceive it differently. Other funding strategies for NPOs include building a solid reputation and diversifying revenue streams (Cazenave & Morales, 2021; Searing et al., 2022). A decent brand reputation can facilitate the residence of existing grantors and sponsors and attract potential donors. Enchil (2020) suggested that sponsors and grantors often associate with NPOs with respectable brand



reputations. NPO leaders can build their reputations by ensuring ethical excellence and financial compliance with the appropriate regulators (Lu et al., 2020). NPO leaders must reinforce the market perception of their business to have uniqueness and show the value of their mission to enhance brand reputation.

Tharpe (2019) suggested significant effects of integrated marketing communication on stalled donors and support growth. Through online marketing platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, NPO leaders can reach their target segments. Through integrated communication and marketing, Tharpe (2019) noted that a NPO would be able to retain past donors and attract new donors for stalled or newly initiated projects.

All participants confirmed that a successful strategy to attract donors was email marketing. Notifications are sent to consumers and potential donors on new products or events. E2 confirmed:

We also utilize Constant Contact very heavily, and that is how we send out our email communications to all of our partners and supporters. They are similar to like MailChimp, which is a platform that allows you to have mailers, organize them and then design email campaigns to send out to the various listeners. We do our annual newsletter, our quarterly newsletter, to our supporters through Constant Contact.

Including links that can easily be tracked in an email marketing strategy is prudent. People who click are automatically re-directed to the landing pages.

Additionally, this is the right platform to optimize the landing pages to secure search engines making things easier for customers and the organization. E2 further confirmed:

Within Constant Contact, we can have time, our general email list, and we can break it out into what people's interests are. So, I think that is another way that we are working to not overwhelm inboxes. Constant Contact has been huge for us, especially with tracking and metrics that allow us to measure how successful the emails actually are. We know what emails are doing well, what format works, and we can tweak the format once in a while to see where people click.

### *Social Media*

Social media is a means of technological innovation. Many factors are fueling the new technological change. However, the emergence of social media is considered the most significant driver. NPOs leaders understand the need to embrace new technologies and social media platforms to stakeholders. E1 confirmed, "Social media is a bigger deal now than when I founded the organization 17 years ago." E2 further confirmed the importance of social media by stating, "It has been developing a social media calendar and making sure we are really up to date on our social media."

By forming social media-enabled online communities, NPOs can better interact with stakeholders. Social media platforms may be helpful to the marketing of NPOs for leaders to tap resources necessary for their mission (Bocquet et al., 2020; Mato-Santiso et al., 2021). NPOs use social programs to market sponsorships with companies collaborating with the government to finance their social actions (Bocquet et al., 2020; Mato-Santiso et al., 2021). E2 stated:

I think there was a time when social media marketing was seen as an additional part of a business that was fun and extra, but it has grown because that is where people are now. People are carrying their cell phones around with them more than they are sitting on a laptop. By being embedded in social media marketing, we are literally putting ourselves in people's hands.

Engaging with consumers on social media is dynamic in allowing consumers to choose products that best define their needs. Rosokhata et al. (2020) noted that NPO leaders could use social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or their combination. NPO leaders can establish social media pages and post content to inform visitors of their mission and, if possible, include a landing page that directs them on how to make donations or become volunteers (Bocquet et al., 2020; Mato-Santiso et al., 2021). Social media postings include a link that can easily track the exact number of people who have visited the site and their general demands, needs, interests, and expectations (Vrontis et al., 2021).

The opportunities that social media provides seem to be unlimited. Although many marketing strategies exist, NPO leaders may find social media platforms the most valuable and accessible to promote their missions. Marketers use social media as a means of innovation. With prospects of multi-faceted benefits, social media has proliferated worldwide (Ibrahim, 2022). NPO leaders use social marketing to design and implement control programs to popularize particular ideas in focus groups (Ibrahim, 2022).

Marketers focus on social media platforms to reach consumers who understand new practices and strategies in the globalized world. In most nations, buyers prefer online

purchases because of the convenience associated (Ibrahim, 2022; Vrontis et al., 2021). Many emerging technologies can help business-to-consumer marketers respond to consumer demand and needs (Alsaad et al., 2019). Such technologies include content intelligence, customer journey analytics, augmented and virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and the internet of things (Ibrahim, 2022). NPO leaders should resort to creative advertising technology. Ideally, creative advertising technology entails marketing displays and product placement. Consumers are informed about products that meet their needs, demands, interests, and expectations. NPOs use social marketing to implement philanthropic marketing sponsorship to solicit donations and social marketing campaigns like product packaging to convey specific messages to the targeted audience (Ibrahim, 2022). E2 stated:

Other marketing methods, like a paid advertisement, we have tried out and continue to through Facebook and Instagram. Because social media is all about algorithms, we have to put some money behind it to get up there, but I think just learning the power of social media is marketing in itself.

Many innovative marketing tools enable brands to create experiences that are not original and highly favored among consumers, bringing to light the aspect of augmented reality. Most forward-thinking agencies and brands are well versed in augmented reality. Marketers look for products that revolve around AR experiences, and their use of this technology has made it possible to initiate new policies that align with the majority's aspirations (Ibrahim, 2022). Marketers should understand that augmented reality is similar to other digital technologies because it is mainly used via smartphones and is

highly interactive for consumers. Ideally, augmented reality brings digital coverage to the physical environment. It is changing how people shop online and engage with brands. Social media help create a new marketing model that can bring a different perspective on marketing.

The internet revolution has made it easier for NPOs to advance their agenda in different areas. The revolution considers the re-emergence of partnership, social enterprise, and capital (Rosokhata et al., 2020). NPO leaders may find dilemmas in staying committed to current, profitable technology and how it can respond to the established buyers' needs, interests, and expectations, creating a vast need to adopt sustainable technologies and social media. Some technologies emerging enterprises adopt are sustaining in nature (Salem & Salem, 2021). Also, the majority of innovators are sustaining in nature. In global marketing, there is a need to embrace new technologies and social media because this is the best way to allow marketers to reach as many consumers as possible and in the shortest time possible (Rosokhata et al., 2020).

Using social marketing to design and implement control programs to popularize particular ideas in the stakeholder group is necessary for creating brand awareness. Mato-Santiso et al. (2021) identified increasing brand awareness, facilitating engagement with all stakeholders, and benchmarking other competitive methodologies to enforce profitability among the leading marketing approaches. The participants agreed that developing a social media presence was necessary to create a strong brand. NPO leaders are responsible for promoting their organization's mission transparently and making the message discoverable to their intended audience. Promoting NPO missions is valuable for

improving donors' authenticity and volunteers' encouragement (Wang et al., 2020). NPO leaders should inform the public of the organization's mission and what they have accomplished to date and place an appealing message requesting donations. NPO can post photographs of their activities and spearhead discussions about social causes on social media to foster a positive organizational image (Ibrahim, 2022; Rosokhata et al., 2020). NPO leaders should prioritize promising utmost transparency and accountability in all the advertising messages because they are the basis of a NPOs' performance evaluation.

The number of followers NPOs attracts on various social media platforms becomes significant for social media marketing. Consumers are guided to understand product features (Ibrahim, 2022). By using social media strategies, NPO leaders can maintain an active presence with their audience, deliver an experience to potential volunteers, and offer easy access to the donation of funds to their NPO (Fernandes & Castro, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Consumers also get the opportunity to select more satisfying and fulfilling products. Companies can build meaningful connections with consumers on social media to drive long-term brand loyalty.

Consumers want information quickly and effectively. Furthermore, social media offers quick and convenient services (Domenico et al., 2021). One of the most effective social media strategies is audience engagement with interactive content and information (Domenico et al., 2021; Xu & Saxton, 2019). Content such as polls, donation polls, and registration forms effectively promote the NPO leaders' ability to reach out to the target audience (Xu & Saxton, 2019). Posting interactive content to followers can be a positive

strategy for encouraging the audience to take action and get involved with the NPO (Wang et al., 2020). Interactive engagement can promote a sense of trust with the audience, creating a larger community.

When the organization is marketing its products or services to consumers on social media, consumers see the marketed products/ services on their own time. Whether it is their email or social media feed, consumers can access the ad when it is convenient.

E2 stated:

In some ways, we are measuring success in our social media. Our social media has been beneficial because there are a lot of tracking metrics at our disposal. Some tracking mechanisms are; follower count and how many likes we are getting on certain posts, which are the obvious metrics in social media. But on a business profile, which we have, there are additional metrics that we look into, such as what posts are doing better than others and where do people click. Other metrics exist, such as what posts people look at the longest and does a certain picture really draws more attention than other pictures. It has been amazing because we are really learning from all of those social media metrics.

Using social media to market sponsorships in collaborating with the government and other stakeholders to fund and support their social actions is pragmatic. Kasri and Putri (2018a) suggested that NPO leaders should also apply donor targeting, typical of customer segmentation in the corporate world. Kasri and Putri alluded to the need to target foundations, groups, or individuals committed to similar missions to increase the

odds of successfully converting the targeted entities into their donor base. NPO leaders should try to reach out to organizations and individuals with similar missions.

### **Theme 3: Funding**

The third emergent theme from the data analysis process was funding. Two subthemes emerged under the funding theme: (a) fundraising to potential donors and (b) earned revenue through business sales. Every organization requires sources to fund its operations and maintain sustainability. A NPO's success depends on volunteer engagement and financial sustainability (Ilyas et al., 2020). Ilyas et al. (2020) noted that nonprofits should build trust through accountability and transparency. Earned revenue sales and fundraising from donors in the organization's annual financial report support the development of this theme and information from the interviews of the participants.

The participants confirmed that funding is gained through the government, fundraising to a potential donor, and earned revenue through business sales. Without adequate funding, Ilyas et al. (2020) suggested that nonprofits may not be able to deliver on their missions. Stühlinger and Hersberger-Langloh (2021) noted that funding could influence the prioritization of activities of the nonprofits, with tasks of more significant and more measurable rewards more likely to be implemented in cases of inadequate funding. According to Liu and Kim (2022), nonprofits should diversify their revenue sources to guarantee smooth operations. Leaders use diversification to enable the firms finance all their missions and planned activities effectively and timely. E1 stated:

As we have found success with bringing in more money and have funding partners who are understanding our mission and spreading the word on our behalf,



we are able to grow. Once we have that kind of growth opportunity, we have the time to convey who more than words are now. There are times we still need to look at our materials and possibly rethink strategies.

NPOs use funding sources to sustain their activities to meet the organizational missions and objectives. NPOs because leaders rely on resources to remain sustainable and meet their financial goals leading to an approach to access primary resources (McSweeney et al., 2021). An NPO's nature opens opportunities for many types of funding, such as; cash donations, grants, contributions, membership dues, fundraising campaigns, and many others (Garcia-Rodriguez & Romero-Merino, 2020).

Grant funding is provided mainly through government resources and constitutes a private-public partnership. Government funding allows for the provision of products and services to more people. Grant funding agencies provide much-needed funds to NPOs and may be considered one of the most significant contributors. Many NPO leaders apply to gain the resources needed to run their operations. NPO leaders can achieve grant funding by organizing proposals that connect the organization's mission with funding (Lu et al., 2020).

Fundraising is also a valuable source of funding; ideally, donations are given to help the organization meet some of its daily expenses. The participants confirmed that their NPO had diversified their funding sources and structures because of the high risks of over-reliance on charities and government funding. Organizational leaders help maintain the organization's sustainability by minimizing vulnerabilities associated with periodic funding failures when diversifying revenue streams (Haberbosch, 2021; Liu &

Kim, 2022). On the other hand, Stühlinger and Hersberger-Langloh (2021) suggested that the organization's mission predetermines nonprofit funding sources. Some NPOs rely on donations to fund their operations. In such cases, when private donations reduce, the organizations can face increased risks of financial crisis and debt to service. In NPOs, the leadership is responsible for engaging all stakeholders and informing them about their roles in ensuring success.

Successful organizations emphasize the right funding strategies that can help enhance their financial independence and give room for establishing the proper organizational behavior. Liu and Kim (2022) suggested that NPO leaders who cultivate amounts of revenue from different sources are less vulnerable to financial crises than those relying on single-source revenue. All participants confirmed that they guide employees and other stakeholders on strategies to minimize unpredictability in resource management.

### ***Fundraising to Potential Donors***

Engaging potential donors is one way of ensuring that NPO leaders address long-term goals. E1 states, "It makes it a lot easier to fundraise because people feel like their money is leveraged by the fact the youth are generating part of their own solution." Stühlinger and Hersberger-Langloh (2021) concluded that an organization's mission affects the available or potential funding sources and influences the extent to which the organizations can invest in their capacities. E1 states, "We have to do traditional nonprofit fundraising with foundations, corporations, individuals, and we also have a

growing government contract." Diversifying revenue streams may instill confidence in potential sponsors and grantors.

All participants indicated a reliance on donations by a potential donor to fund operations. E1 stated:

There is actually a whole movement called community-centric fundraising (CCF), and it is really focused on changing the whole framework for fundraising in the nonprofit sector to make it less exploitive and more focused on lifting up the voices of the community that is trying to solve a problem versus this very kind of top-down philanthropist knows better approach.

NPO leaders use funding strategies to help enhance the company's financial dependence and long-term commitment to change. Liu and Kim (2022) recommended revenue diversification as one of the strategies that NPO leaders can use to address NPOs' financial challenges. Revenue diversification refers to a shift from relying exclusively on grants and an earned income strategy to mitigating the uncertainties associated with donations (Bocquet et al., 2020; Liu & Kim, 2022).

Communication and coordination between various parties implementing the marketing and funding strategies are fundamental in creating the organization's sustainability. The resource sustainability of the organization, depicted in the RDT, also affects the organization's marketing strategies. The success of the marketing and funding strategies is measured by reviewing the financials and raising the required money for operations. The specificity of NPOs and the gradually demanding resource environments they thrive in require leaders to adopt individual marketing efforts (Park & Cho, 2020).

The marketing approach can be an adaptive strategy designed to ensure that both leadership and management receive the needed resources (Park & Cho, 2020; Ye & Gong, 2021). Accomplishing the organization's missions and implementing a range of strategic activities directly link to the market orientation designed toward donors (Bocquet et al., 2020; Searing et al., 2022). A consistent means of communication will ensure that particular challenges are adequately addressed. E3 stated:

So I think that if you do leave it at your book donor or leave them as a financial donor, you are sort of preventing yourself from engaging with them as something more for the business. If we are not engaging with them to see what we are doing and supporting the mission, we are potentially leaving money and resources on the table. They might not be able to contribute financially, but they could be a great connection for us, a partnership, or a new product that we could have in the store that can in-kind donations. So, I think it is not closing those doors but really opening doors to opportunity with those people.

### ***Earned Revenue through Business Sales***

When reviewing the financial statement, the NPO leaders manage the organization's short-term debt obligations. Before an organization prospers in the long term, it must be able to survive in the short term. NPO leaders who emphasize their funding strategies can enhance their financial independence (Poret, 2019). The overview of assets, liabilities, and stockholders' equity reflects the organization's health. E2 stated, "One thing we did was launch our e-commerce website, which has been a huge success

for us and allows us to sell directly. We are selling our books online directly from our company to the customers."

All participants stated that the company reported an increase in net sales in the year ending 2021 on their annual report. Functional and sales expenses show how much money the NPO has used. Total revenue of 1.4 million dollars was reported in the financial statement for the ending 2021, which was the operating revenue generated from the core business activities of the organizations. The total revenue of 4.1 million dollars is recorded in the three-year financial document. E1 confirmed the revenue by stating, "We also rent out our event space for larger events. In combination, we are generating almost \$4 million from that set of activities, which is tremendous and not typical in the nonprofit sector." A financially healthy NPO with adequate equity balances, administrative allocations, positive operating margins, and diversified revenue sources fosters flexibility even during financial downturns (Liu & Kim, 2022). The participants agreed that they are positioned to monitor the NPO operations, identify sources of income, and keep track of the deductible expenses.

The goal of every business is to make a profit. Tian et al. (2021) stated that the competition to earn a profit drives innovation and improved services in an enterprise. Without profit, there is no motivation to continue operating in the market, potentially harming sustainability. McSweeney et al. (2021) suggested that NPO leaders diversify their funding sources because of the high risks of relying on donors. Once an organization gets into a near-term revenue position, it can limit or reduce the

concentration of issuing shares and instead use debt apparatus as a means of financing (Katsikas & Murugan, 2021).

According to E3, other income evident in the company's financial statement include gains from the sale of long-term assets such as vehicles and subsidiaries. Expenses linked to secondary activities are also evident in the organization's income statement; interest paid on debt and loans are included. The money resulting from a transaction is measurable with certain reliability. A buyer of specific goods and services is obliged to remit funds that match the stated price tag of the materials or products. E3 stated:

If we are looking at the sheer data for store sales or for online sales that would come from the sales data and it could be a total earned revenue number or how many they were doing the sale around the product. Did we turn down any sales due to inventory, or how many do we sell down on? That would be pretty much how we could attract success, and if we saw that we were not having traction with certain items, especially when it comes to online engagement, we would reassess. Was it the timing, as it the product, was it the actual promotion, or was it where we were posting our sales are some measurable items we look at? Same for social media, did we see a drop in a certain type of followers by putting a lot more of one kind of content up? That is how we track success with those things.

Companies are valued based on their revenue (Ali, 2022). Identifying the appropriate revenue streams and running campaigns for fundraising can help such nonprofits access donor funding and sustainably run their operations (Appleton, 2021).

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

I explored funding and marketing strategies NPO leaders used to sustain their business beyond 5 years. The results of this study advanced three main themes, (a) organizational behavior, (b) marketing, and (c) funding. The findings of this study may provide NPO leaders with knowledge of successful strategies to achieve long-term sustainability.

The findings highlighted in this study are helpful to NPO leaders by providing insight into successful funding and marketing strategies that achieve sustainability. The concept of sustainability means NPO leaders can create and maintain strategies sustainable in the short and long term (Haberbosch, 2021). Duncan (2020) confirmed that leadership is a valuable need for the organization build a sustainable firm. The lack of marketing and funding strategies may hinder the sustainability of some NPOs.

NPO leaders who create sustainable strategies can potentially perpetuate and accomplish their mission. Enchil (2020) suggested that most NPOs experience potential issues with business sustainability because leaders are faced with challenges that effectively fit their customers' preferences. NPOs are often confronted with dependency constraints because they need resources from other organizations. Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) determined that organizational leaders create an effort to control constraints, acquiring resources from the environment. The findings highlighted in this study are helpful to NPO leaders. All three themes support professional practice.

The organizational behavior theme can help NPO leaders understand that behavior is defined by the environment in which resources are attained. Enchil (2020)

suggested that an organization's behavior is subject to external resources acquired and executed. Enchil (2020) denoted that NPO leaders validate the organization's value by fulfilling the mission and communicating its significance to remain relevant.

The marketing theme allows NPO leaders to build strategies that direct attention to their mission and business marketing to gain potential funding. NPO leaders who engage in and promote marketing may see an increase in potential donors by advertising their business objectives, vision, and methods. Tavanti and Tait (2021) suggested a strong need for NPOs to maximize and measure profitability realized by social media initiatives and campaigns.

NPO leaders can use the funding theme as a reminder of the importance of implementing good funding strategies to earn revenue through potential donors and business sales. Hung and Hager (2019) reported that 95% of NPOs depict financial health and sustainability with revenue diversification beyond traditional funding sources. Of the many priorities of NPO leaders, securing new funding and maintaining the existing funding sources are essential. NPO leaders' decision-making of funding helps an NPO sustain its activities to meet the organization's missions and objectives.

### **Implications for Social Change**

NPO leaders have an integral role in their communities by demonstrating a concern for social change based on their organizations' missions. NPO leaders are focused on their organization's mission to successfully create strategies to produce sustainable social change (Duncan, 2020; Enchil, 2020). The findings from this study may influence positive social change by providing NPO leaders with new funding and



marketing strategies to create long-term sustainability to influence economic development and community engagement positively. The leaders in NPOs gain their revenue stream through engagement with their communities, such as fundraising, which makes their investors a part of their mission (Liu & Kim, 2022). NPO leaders who secure sustainable funding using marketing strategies, leaders may influence community support by maintaining resources and contributing to communities' economic development. Increasing sustainable funding through effective marketing strategies may drive social change since it may channel other resources to support NPOs' support of communities.

### **Recommendations for Action**

Based on the study findings, I recommend that NPO leaders increase their knowledge of organizational behavior, marketing, and funding strategies. Many NPO leaders may fail to create sustainable strategies to become operational beyond 5 years because they rely on traditional funding sources such as government grants and donor contributions. NPO leaders must adopt various strategies to remain sustainable (Duncan, 2020; Enchil, 2020). The findings of this study resulted that sustainability involves the continuance of mission marketing, fundraising events, and sustenance of the organization's results after the initial grants. I recommend that NPO leaders implement various strategies to ensure the sustainability of their organizations.

The first recommended strategy was for NPO leaders to implement a strong mission statement with a long-term vision. Setting a long-term vision for the organization will ensure that NPO leaders can quickly draft various resources required to achieve long-term goals (Bocquet et al., 2020). The organization can explain to donors their long-

term goals, processes, and resources needed to guarantee their success with data and facts. Sustainability for an NPO requires committed, dedicated, and focused leaders who can identify the vision amid nothing. These leaders must use sustainability strategies, including values, community resource mapping, and organizational alignment (Duncan, 2020; Enchil, 2020; Haberbosch, 2021).

Second, I recommend that NPO leaders develop a strong communication strategy utilizing social media platforms. Leaders should enhance establishment on various platforms for increased marketability (Weerawardena et al., 2021). The results of various mission initiatives can be shared with a larger audience. Well-documented outcomes may assist the organization in acquiring support from various stakeholders and donors. Rosokhata et al. (2020) ascertained that linking social media with essential stakeholders is crucial in ensuring sustainability and can be employed as a fundamental organizational strategy.

My final recommendation is for NPO leaders to diversify their funding resources. The most significant aspect of sustainability is diversifying one's donor base and further developing long-term partnerships with donors to get support for various activities. NPO leaders who emphasize their funding strategies can enhance their financial independence (Cazenave & Morales, 2021).

NPO leaders who follow these recommendations may gain knowledge of new marketing and funding strategies that can be used to sustain their businesses beyond 5 years. I will provide the participants in this study and stakeholders with a summary of the findings. I intend to disseminate the results of this study to all three participants along

with a final publication. Additionally, I seek to publish this study in the ProQuest dissertations database to make it available to other researchers for their use.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

In this qualitative single case study, I explored the marketing and funding strategies three NPO executive leaders used to achieve sustainability. The limitations of this study included a limited number of interviewees who accurately responded to the interview questions and a limitation on results from other successful NPO leaders in other geographical regions. To address these limitations, I recommend that future researchers expand their research by (a) increasing the number of participants through a multicase study, (b) widening the geographical spread of participants, or (c) conducting a quantitative study on the correlation between marketing and funding strategies and sustainability. Future studies may consider how leaders of NPOs in other geographical areas sustain their businesses beyond 5 years with successful marketing and funding strategies.

### **Reflections**

During my doctoral study journey, I explored the marketing and funding strategies NPO leaders used to sustain their business beyond 5 years. Upon enrollment in the Doctor of Business Administration with Walden University, I was unaware of the extreme focus it would take to complete this journey. My gratitude is unmatched by the privilege I was awarded to work alongside fellow aspiring doctors, faculty, and three energized NPO leaders. My initial contact with participants was met with the challenge of the unavailability of leaders to partake in interviews. The participants were impressed

with my persistence in researching their organization for this study. The participants of this study offered a first-hand perspective on the driving factors it takes to be successful in an NPO. The participants inspired me as I witnessed their motivation and connectedness to their business and mission. The societal influence NPOs have on their communities is central to sustainable growth. My research with Walden University gave me a deeper understanding of the effects NPOs have on the community and the global economy.

The Doctor of Business Administration program was rigorous, challenging, but beyond rewarding. I experienced competing priorities with personal and professional challenges; however, I was motivated and determined to finish strong. Without the support of my chair, I do not know if I would have had the courage to keep going during the hardships. I am so thankful for the relationships I have built during this time and look forward to continuing to build on those relationships in the future. Walden University provided me with exponential resources valuable to completing this qualitative single case study. I am now forged with enhanced research and writing skills. I will apply these skills in future endeavors by continuing to explore my field of study.

### **Conclusion**

This qualitative research case study aimed to explore marketing and funding strategies that NPO leaders used to sustain their business beyond 5 years. Raffo et al. (2016) reported that 83% of NPO leaders identified challenges securing funding for their organizations beyond traditional funding sources. NPO leadership must build a sustainable firm, a valuable need for the organization (Duncan, 2020; Enchil, 2020).

There are several resources NPOs use that can create and maintain sustainable strategies the short and long term (Haberbosch, 2021). I selected the resource dependency theory as the conceptual framework for the study. Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) resource dependency theory can explain behavior, structure, stability, and organizational culture to provide insight into marketing and funding strategies used by NPO leaders to create sustainability.

I interviewed three NPO leaders to gain insights into the marketing and funding strategies to remain a sustainable business. To ensure the validity and reliability of the interviewee responses, I used member checking, triangulation of the data, and data saturation. Following data analysis, these three themes emerged: (a) organizational behavior, (b) marketing, and (c) funding. NPO leaders may apply the findings from this study to their business practices for positive change in their sustaining activities.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Location: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Introduction**

Thank you for your participation in this study. I, Tara Murray, a doctoral student of Walden University, will be conducting this interview. Your participation in the interview process is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw or discontinue participation at any moment without penalty. The interview is audio recorded and will last approximately 45-60 minutes. Summaries of the interviews are analyzed as part of the case study. You will be given a copy of the interview summary and have the opportunity to review and clarify statements, via a process called member checking.

You will not be identified by name on any reports used for this study. Your confidentiality will remain secure during this study. If you wish to continue with the interview, I will begin recording your response to the following questions.

### **Interview Questions**

1. What are the successful marketing and funding strategies used for sustaining the business beyond 5 years?
2. What social media marketing and funding strategies have you used?
3. How successful have the social marketing and funding methods been in sustaining the business beyond 5 years?
4. How did you develop the marketing and funding strategies to increase brand awareness to sustain business beyond 5 years?

3. How did you develop the marketing and funding strategies to increase brand awareness to sustain business beyond 5 years?
4. Describe how you implemented the marketing and funding strategies to sustain business beyond 5 years?
5. What challenges did you face when implementing marketing and funding strategies to sustain business beyond 5 years?
6. Describe how you overcame the key obstacles you faced when implementing marketing and funding strategies to sustain business beyond 5 years?
7. How did you measure the success of the marketing and funding strategies to sustain business beyond 5 years?
8. What additional information would you like to add regarding marketing and funding strategies you find useful for sustaining your business beyond 5 years?

### **Follow Up/Wrap Up**

This concludes our interview. Thank you again for your voluntary participation in this study. I will provide you a summary copy of the interview for your review. Do you have any questions for me?

## Appendix B: Introductory Email

Good morning,

My name is Tara Murray and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am conducting a doctoral study on NPOs sustainability and during some research found your organization to be of interest for my study. I am reaching out to you to see if yourself and other Executive team members would be interested in participating in interviews for my study. If so, I would like to send an invite email and an informed consent form to you and these members. I am in need of a minimum of three interviewees but am willing to always take more for complete data saturation. If we could discuss this further over the phone, that would be great. Please let me know a good contact number and a day/time we would be able to discuss.

Thank you for your time today.

Sincerely,

Tara Murray, MBA, Doctoral Student, Walden University