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Exploring the Career Experiences and Leadership Perceptions of Nonprofit Executives in Central Florida: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Central Florida: A Mixed-Methods Study

by
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Approval Page

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Statement of Original Work

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Abstract

Exploring the Career Experiences and Leadership Perceptions of Nonprofit Executives in Central Florida: A Mixed-Methods Study. JahKiya S. Bell, 2016: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education. Key Words: nonprofit organizations, leadership effectiveness, leadership qualities, administrator characteristics

This applied dissertation was designed to explore the professional and leadership development thoughts and experiences of nonprofit administrators in the Central Florida region.

Administrators play a significant role for in ensuring the sustainability and success of nonprofit organizations. Administrators must possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will allow them to lead their organization to accomplish goals while securing necessary funding from diversified sources.

In Central Florida—defined in this study as Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties—as of 2012 there were 1,485 health and human services nonprofit organizations in the region, which is 42% increase in the number of nonprofit organizations in the past ten years. An increase in the number of nonprofit organizations is indicative of an increase in competition for available funds.

The problem addressed by this research was that while research is available about general leadership practices and the knowledge and skills necessary to become a leader, there was a lack of knowledge regarding the specific experiences of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida. This study collected and discussed the academic and professional credentials held by participating nonprofit administrators and leaders in the Central Florida, as well as reviewed these leaders' perspectives on the knowledge, skills, and leadership practices required to lead a nonprofit organization.

Table of Contents

Appendices

Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Substantial research, to include Balser and Carmin (2009), Glavin (2011), and Sarros, Cooper, and Santora (2011), has examined the general practices and the knowledge thought necessary to exhibit leadership skills. As noted by Suarez (2009), general leadership practices are of importance to nonprofit employees, especially those at the administrator level, who enter the nonprofit sector through a variety of means including advancing in the nonprofit sector through work experience and through obtaining extensive educational credentials. Van Brackle (2011) indicated that increasing demands on nonprofit organizations require increased organizational effectiveness and management. Nonprofit organizational sustainability is accomplished--in part--by recruiting and placing nonprofit staff members that possess the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to set organizational objectives, manage the organization and its staff, and accomplish program level outcomes. Froelich, McKee, and Rathge (2011) report that the senior management of nonprofit organizations typically enjoys a long tenure, which provides the organizations with necessary stability while avoiding the disruption that could accompany turnover at the leadership level. Froelich et al.'s (2011) research also indicate the expectation and dependence on the stability and continuity of an organization's senior leadership often results in a lack of succession planning through the deliberate identification of internal candidates and a procedure for identifying external candidates.

The topic. As discussed by Gothard and Austin (2013), the departing of a nonprofit's executives can be planned or unplanned. In the case of an unplanned exit, the

lack of succession planning within an organization can have a significant impact on the organization's ability to continue operations without major disruptions (Gothard & Austin, 2013). Thus, the leadership of a nonprofit organization plays a major role in the overall sustainability of the organization, which likely indicates the importance of understanding the role senior executives play in a nonprofit organization and the knowledge and skills required that might allow an individual ascend to the leadership level in an organization.

The research problem. Nonprofit employees, especially those aspiring to rise to at the administrator level, enter the nonprofit sector through a variety of methods including advancing through the nonprofit sector due to their work experience (applied/practical background) and through obtaining extensive educational credentials (Suarez, 2009). The role of administrators in nonprofit organizations is significant. Leadership maps the plan of action for the organization (especially during turbulent times), motivates employees, serves as figures of hope and resilience, and are instrumental in the organization's ability to strategically grow and change in response to issues affecting the organization and the sector (Stoner & Stoner, 2013). While research is available about general leadership practices and the knowledge and skills necessary to become a leader, there is a lack of knowledge regarding the specific nonprofit leadership trends in Central Florida and the experiences of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida. Therefore, this mixed methods research study was designed to explore the academic and professional credentials of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida, as well as administrators' perceptions regarding the knowledge, skills, and leadership practices required to lead a nonprofit organization effectively. It was anticipated that this

research study will add to the body of knowledge related to nonprofit management and leadership specifically to the Central Florida nonprofit sector. This research study was designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data from multiple levels of nonprofit leaders to include administrators holding the president, chief executive officer, or executive director positions, as well as administrators holding functional area leadership positions (such as vice president, division director, or department director).

Background and justification. The nonprofit sector has evolved rapidly since its inception, and the means of entering the sector as an executive includes both long-term sector careerist and individuals from other sectors (Hoefer & Sliva, 2014; Suarez, 2009). The evolving nonprofit sector requires the leadership of executives with the knowledge and skills to navigate the challenges affecting the sector and acquiring these skills on the job may no longer be sufficient (Suarez, 2009). Though increased life expectancy and the delayed retirement of leaders in the baby boomer generation can indicate more of these individuals will remain in nonprofit leadership positions, it could reason that the educational attainment and skills acquisition of younger workers could have an impact on the sector in that these workers are better situated to fill open leadership positions (Johnson, 2009). Thus revealing the conundrum of what is more desired in nonprofit leadership: the knowledge and skills acquired through years served in the sector, the knowledge and skills gained through an advanced education, the knowledge and skills gained through work in other sectors, or a combination of these options (Johnson, 2009).

Deficiencies in the evidence. While there is significant research about leadership and nonprofit leadership, little information exists about the specific experiences and perceptions of nonprofit leaders in Central Florida. About the experiences of nonprofit

leaders, Suarez (2009) studied the executive careers of the administrators at 200 nonprofit organizations and concluded that participants had various backgrounds related to educational attainment and managerial experiences before becoming senior leadership in their organization. However, Suarez's (2009) research was limited to nonprofit organizations in the 10-county San Francisco Bay Area. Further, Froelich et al. (2011) surveyed the executives of 106 nonprofit organizations for the purpose of learning about executive recruitment strategies. The results of the research indicated that participating charities considered the characteristics of their executives were difficult to replace. Thus, succession planning was critical to the organization's continuity (Froelich et al., 2011). However, this research was limited to nonprofit organizations in two Midwestern states.

Studies related to the skills required to acquire a leadership position within a nonprofit organization include research conducted by Hoefer and Sliva (2014), which suggested that while leadership intervention training can be used to increase the knowledge and skills of nonprofit employees, more than training is required to sustain the knowledge and thus employees must have the means to practice and demonstrate acquired skills in the workplace. Hoefer and Sliva's (2014) research, however, focused on a specific intervention tool (the CAN-DO Administrative Job Skills Inventory) used in one small nonprofit organization where only seven of 15 staff members participated. Carman, Leland, and Wilson (2010) studied both executive level turnover and succession planning and career development among young nonprofit professionals. The findings from the research noted executive directors were primarily recruited from the nonprofit sector, followed by the for-profit sector, government or foundations, universities or public education, or other sectors (Carman et al., 2010). Further, the research revealed

that amongst young professionals, obtaining a graduate or professional degree was seen as key to obtaining senior level positions in nonprofit organizations (Carman et al., 2010). While revealing both experiences and perceptions related to nonprofit management, Carman et al.'s (2010) study was limited 110 nonprofit organizations in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Audience. The results of this study were designed to make a contribution to leadership research in the nonprofit sector by revealing the perceptions, credentials, experience, knowledge, and skills of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida. This study provides readers--including current and future nonprofit professionals seeking to advance into leadership positions within the nonprofit sector--with insight on the experiences and perceptions of current nonprofit administrators who have participated in the research.

Definition of Terms

Central Florida. Defined in this study as Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties in Florida.

Collective impact. An approach to addressing social solutions through the commitment of a group stakeholders from multiple sectors to work together to address community issues with a common agenda (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

Communications/marketing/public relations. The ability to adequately inform and influence constituencies regarding a nonprofit organization ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012).

Constructive/developmental theory. The study of an individual's meaning-making of self and their environment (Kegan, 1980).

Cultural competency and diversity. The ability to work in or with culturally diverse populations ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012).

Functional area leadership. Leadership position in an organization that is below in ranking of the president/chief executive officer/managing director position.

Governance and advocacy. The role and responsibilities of a nonprofit's board of directors and other advocates related to operational policies and procedures ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012).

Leadership. The influence, relationship, or process used to achieve goals and objectives (Redekop, 2010).

Legal and ethical decision making. Laws, requirements, and regulations that govern the nonprofit sector and nonprofit operations ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012).

Lived experiences. Phenomenological study whereby the purpose is to uncover the meanings of a phenomenon by comparing and contrasting research participant life experiences and describing the commonalities ("Phenomenology", 2009).

Nonprofit leadership. For this study, defined as the management group and professional positions of a nonprofit organization who are tasked with planning, organizing, and controlling the work of the organization (Carroll, 2008).

Nonprofit management. For this study, defined as the responsibilities related to overseeing the operations and day-to-day work of a nonprofit organization. Includes organizational planning, organizing, employee and volunteer motivation, and control (Carroll, 2008).

Nonprofit organization. A mission-based organization created for the purpose of

providing a public benefit or service, are self-governed by a board of directors, and primarily receive funding from the government, public, and private contributions; also referred to as not-for-profits, or public charities (Carroll, 2008).

Nonprofit sector. The general name given to nongovernmental, public charities and organizations; also referred to as the independent sector, the not-for-profit sector, the third sector, the philanthropic sector, or the voluntary sector (Carroll, 2008).

Personal and professional development. Ongoing individual and organizational development designed to increase knowledge, skills and abilities ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012).

Phenomenology. Qualitative research designed to investigate a phenomenon through the review and examination of experiences described by research participants ("Phenomenology", 2009).

Program development. The design, implementation, and evaluation of nonprofit programs and services ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012).

Resource development and management. Knowledge and skills related to fundraising/resource acquisition and competent financial management ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012).

Volunteer and human resources management. The knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to recruit effectively and retain volunteers and paid staff. ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The impact of the recession has been especially difficult for nonprofit organizations, as the sector has witnessed a decrease in available funding streams coupled with an increase in the demand for services (Cole & Swartz, 2011). Therefore, the accountability of nonprofit organizations has grown in its significance (Cole & Swartz, 2011) as nonprofit organizations must be able to demonstrate capacity and sustainability when seeking new or additional funding. Nonprofit organizations must have strong leadership teams, and the senior administrators of the organizations must have the skills and abilities to lead their organizations successfully. This proposed study will investigate the experiences and perceptions of health and human services nonprofit administrators in obtaining and maintaining their positions and contributing to the overall effectiveness of their respective organizations.

As a part of the proposed study, this literature review discusses the history and purpose of the nonprofit sector in the United States of America, the types of organizations included in the nonprofit sector, and will specifically review human services organizations. Next, the literature review will discuss the research on nonprofit organization sustainability. The literature review will also consider nonprofit administrators and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of leaders in ensuring nonprofit sustainability and organizational effectiveness. The literature review also discusses the underpinning theories of leadership and constructive/developmental theory, then finally presents the selected research methodology and the rationale for choosing a mixed methods research approach and support the background and purpose of the research.

The Nonprofit Sector

There are indications in the research that the nonprofit sector has a history connected to the religious and ethical foundations of Judeo-Christian tradition in terms of acts of charity and the individual's role sharing the gifts that are bestowed by a higher power (Orosz, 2011). In other words, people of faith act in mercy to relieve the suffering of others (Orosz, 2011). Furthermore, Orosz (2011) points out that the nonprofit sector's foundation can also be related to classical Greek and Roman philosophy of how people could live together in a civilized democracy and how systems impact the ability to relieve human suffering.

Nonprofit organizations have long been a part of United States history, dating back to colonial times, with roots in the early years of the Pilgrims of Plymouth, Massachusetts (Martinelli-Lee, 2011). However, it must be noted that more than 90% of today's nonprofit organizations have only been in existence since the 1950s (Hall, 2010). Most notably, the "nonprofit sector" achieved coherence due to a need to classify organizations for tax and regulatory purposes (Hall, 2006). Nonprofit organizations represent the most rapidly growing sector in the world (Hall, 2010; Roeger, Blackwood, & Pettijohn, 2012). According to research conducted by Roeger et al. (2012), more than 2.3 million nonprofit organizations are operating in the philanthropic sector in the United States. The nonprofit sector represents a large scope of organizations that includes "informal grassroots organizations with no assets and no employees to multi-billion dollar foundations, universities, religious bodies, and health care complexes" (Hall, 2010, p. 3).

According to the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities, 501(c)(3), nonprofit

organizations are classified into 26 groups, under 10 primary classifications: "(1) arts, culture, and humanities; (2) education; (3) environment and animals; (4) health; (5) human services; (6) international, foreign affairs; (7) public, societal benefit; (8) religion related; (9) mutual/membership benefit; and (10) unknown/unclassified" (Collins, 2011, p. 22). Human services organizations, charitable entities that focus on meeting human needs through programs and services, make up the largest number of nonprofits in the sector, estimated at more than a third of the sector (Collins, 2011). Human services organizations provide programs, goods, and services that address a number of issues with the objective of meeting and/or improve human needs (Collins, 2011).

Role of Human Services Nonprofit Organizations

The historical role of nonprofit organizations is to offer a system that meets the needs of individuals in society. With this in mind then, the role of human services nonprofit organizations is to support the welfare of the community through the provision of goods and services designed to improve the lives of people (Collins, 2011; Rodriguez, 2011). Therefore, human services nonprofit organizations act to fill in the human services gaps that cannot be met by government and/or private entities (Rodriguez, 2011). In general, the role of human services nonprofit organizations is to work with state and federal government for the purposes of "community awareness and education, information gathering, policy creation, direct service delivery, and performance evaluation," (Norris-Tirrell, 2010, p. 374).

Kincaid (2009) attempts to define the human services field, and thus the importance of organizations that provide human services, by using discourse analysis to examine key sections of human services textbooks to include the preface, introduction,

first three chapters, and glossary and examining the philosophical statements of eleven

universities for common themes, theories, values, and definitions. While the researcher

did not find a definition for the human services sector that was consistent across the

examined literature, examining the data revealed the following recurring themes: "(a)

integrated interdisciplinary knowledge base, (b) client self-determination, (c) processes to

facilitate change, and (d) systemic change at all levels of society" (Kincaid, 2009, p.14).

The resulting definition points out that key components of human services organizations,

programs, and services include an interdisciplinary approach that addresses client self-

determined systemic change in society, to include the individual, family, organizations,

the community, and global (Kincaid, 2009). Organizations seeking to provide human

services must meet ethical standards designed to empower those served and respect the

integrity and welfare of those served at all times ("Ethical Standards", 2010). With this in

mind, it is not unreasonable to infer that the leadership of human services organizations is

responsible for ensuring the organizations they lead and the staff they employee are held

to human services ethical standards, thus increasing the opportunity for viability and

sustainability.

Nonprofit Leadership Competencies

The Nonprofit Leadership Alliance surveyed more than 3,200 nonprofit leaders

across the United States for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive research study to

understand the skills and abilities required by nonprofit administrators ("Nonprofit

Leadership Alliance", 2011). While research respondents represented an array of

nonprofit organizations, the majority--35%-- represented the human services sector

("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2011). In addition, 35% of the participants were at the

executive director of chief executive officer level within their respective organizations ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2011). Research participants were asked to complete an online survey and rank nonprofit leadership competencies at both the mid- and executive-levels. Results of the research identified 13 core competencies: (1) board and committee development, (2) community outreach, marketing and public relations, (3) diversity awareness, (4) ethics and values, (5) fundraising, (6) historical and philosophical foundations, (7) information management and technology, (8) nonprofit accounting and financial management, (9) nonprofit management, (10) risk management and legal issues, (11) program planning, implementation, and evaluation, (12) volunteer management, and (13) youth and adult development ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2011). The results of the research (Table 1) indicate that ethics and values are the most important leadership competency for all levels of nonprofit organizational leaders ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2011). Following this, the importance of the remaining 12 competencies varies depending on the leader's experience and level within the organization. However, the listed was culled down to identify the ten most important competencies, which fuel's the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance's work as a part of their Certified Nonprofit Professional (CNP) credential. The ten competencies are: (1) communication, marketing and public relations, (2) cultural competency and diversity, (3) financial resource development and management, (4) foundations and management of the nonprofit sector, (5) governance, leadership, and advocacy, (6) legal and ethical decision making, (7) personal and professional development, (8) program development, (9) volunteer and human resource management, and (10) future of the nonprofit sector ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012). Focusing on executive leaders, the top five

leadership competencies were identified as (1) ethics and values, (2) board and committee development, (3) nonprofit accounting and financial management, (4) diversity management, and (5) nonprofit management ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2011).

Table 1

Ranking of Leadership Competencies by Importance

	Entry to Mid-Level Managers	Mid-Level to Executive Leaders
Most Important ↑ ← → ↓ **Less Important**	Ethics and Values	Ethics and Values
	Diversity Awareness	Board and Committee Development
	Board and Committee Development	Nonprofit Accounting & Financial Management
	Nonprofit Management	Diversity Awareness
	Community Outreach/Marketing and Public Relations	Nonprofit Management
	Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation	Community Outreach/Marketing and Public Relations
	Nonprofit Accounting & Financial Management	Risk Management and Legal Issues
	Volunteer Management	Fundraising Principles and Practices
	Fundraising Principles and Practices	Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation
	Risk Management and Legal Issues	Volunteer Management
	Information Management & Technology	Historical & Philosophical Foundations
	Youth and Adult Development	Information Management & Technology
		Youth and Adult Development
	Historical & Philosophical Foundations	

Ethics and values. While the initial values of an organization are established by its founder, as the senior most leadership in the organization, nonprofit administrators are responsible for communicating and demonstrating the current ethics and values of the organization (Alaimo, 2011). It is the responsibility of the current organizational leadership (which does include the governance provided by the nonprofit organization's

board of directors) to uphold the original ethics and values of the organization and/or exemplify the new and current values (Alaimo, 2011). Ethics and values in nonprofit organizations speak directly to the organization's ability to remain viable and sustainable (Barrett, 2011). According to Barrett (2011), only those nonprofit organizations whose leadership holds ethics and values in high regard are considered healthy and stable. Therefore, nonprofit administrators are directly responsible for ensuring a foundation of values and ethics exist in the organization, all employees of the organization are held accountable for upholding ethics and values, and swift and decisive actions are taken if organization ethics and values are breached (Alaimo, 2011; Barrett, 2011).

Board and committee development. Volunteers at all levels provide nonprofit organizations with valuable resources that can assist the organization in furthering its mission and vision (Harder, Pracht, & Terry, 2011). While volunteer can provide a range of support and resource to an organization (Harder, Pracht, & Terry, 2011), key contributions to a nonprofit organization include the involvement of volunteers in governance and oversight roles, typically associated with the board of directors and through sub-committees of the board (Curran & Totten, 2010). Board and committee development is a key skill for nonprofit administrators as the board of directors is responsible for providing governance and oversight, thus monitoring the ongoing effectiveness of the organization and its senior level leader (Curran & Totten, 2010). While the nonprofit organization chief executive officer essentially reports to the board of directors, it is this administrator's responsibility to manage the ongoing relationship with the board of directors and ensure the board is working within its own identified and required competencies (Curran & Totten, 2010).

Nonprofit accounting and financial management. Nonprofit organizations of all sizes have specific guidelines and rules to adhere as a part of ongoing financial management responsibilities ("Fiduciary financial management", 2012). Therefore, nonprofit administrators must be well versed in sound financial governance requirements to include state and federal regulations, financial risk management, fiduciary oversight, and financial transparency ("Fiduciary financial management", 2012). While organizations may rely on the guidance of a chief financial officer (or similar role) with the support and guidance of finance and/or audit sub-committees of the board of directors, ultimately it is the senior nonprofit administration who is responsible for understanding the organization's financial management system and ensuring appropriate levels of fiscal oversight,

Diversity management. Promoting and valuing diversity in a nonprofit organization has several pervasive arguments, one of which is how a diverse knowledge, skills, and perspective can help the organization achieve its goals (Mcginnis, 2011; McNett, 2012). Research indicates that a diverse workforce and volunteer base allows nonprofit organizations to take advantage of a variety of knowledge, skills, and abilities and ensures the organization is more accepting of change and is able to use their diverse knowledge and skills to address any ambiguities (Mcginnis, 2011; McNett, 2012). Therefore, nonprofit administrators must possess the skills required to understand what diversity means, how diversity impacts the organization, and how the organization can develop, implement, and maintain a credible organizational diversity initiative (Mcginnis, 2011).

Nonprofit management. Visionary leadership is an important skill for nonprofit

administrators, as visioning allows leadership to plan for the future of the organization

(Stid & Bradach, 2009). However, visionary leadership is not a substitute for

leadership's ability to exercise sound management practices that ensure organization

productivity and goal accomplishment (Stid & Bradach, 2009). Nonprofit administrators

demonstrate management practices through actively participating in strategy development

and change management, reviewing and discussing data produced by the organization

regarding its finances and outcomes measurements, and ensuring and cultivating the

connection between the organization's leadership and management structure with

programmatic and/or direct services structures (Stid & Bradach, 2009).

Nonprofit organizations are only as strong as its weakest board members and/or

staff members. Therefore, nonprofit leaders are responsible for ensuring the highest level

of organizational commitment by those who have the knowledge and abilities to help the

organization achieve its goals. As indicated by the research, the knowledge and skills

possessed by nonprofit administrators are integral to the organization's ability to be

viable and sustainable.

Nonprofit Leadership and Organization Sustainability

The role of nonprofit administrators, regarding senior leadership at the

president/chief executive officer level, includes responsibility related to administering,

managing, and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the nonprofit organization

(Farruggia, 2011). The sustainability of a nonprofit organization is generally governed by

the degree of trust in the organization's leadership by its staff, its board of directors, and

its funders (Brothers & Sherman, 2011). These key constituents must believe that the

organization's administrators have the knowledge and skills necessary to lead the

organization and ensure its sustainability, which includes providing administrative

support to the organization's board of directors, providing oversight and responsibility for

the organization's program services, ensuring the timely evaluation of the organization on

its ability to achieve goals, and ensuring there are adequate resources that will allow the

organization to achieve its goals (Farruggia, 2011).

In a study of the founders of 31 nonprofit organizations in Charlotte, North

Carolina, Carman and Nesbit (2012) found that in order to be successful, nonprofit

administrators—especially those administrators of new and/or small nonprofit

organizations—require the education and training necessary to ensure a stable and

sustainable organization. These skills include fundraising, financial management, and

program development and evaluation (Carman & Nesbit, 2012). To conduct the study,

the researchers identified a random sampling of newly founded nonprofit organizations

created during a specific timeframe (Carman & Nesbit, 2012). Open-ended interviews

were conducted with each of the research participants and data were analyzed to identify

why the founders created the new nonprofits and how these nonprofits collaborated with

other organizations in the community. Results of the research include that while there are

no barriers to creating a nonprofit organization, the lack of knowledge and skills

possessed by nonprofit administrators combined with competition in the sector impacts

the new nonprofit's ability to be sustainable (Carman & Nesbit, 2012). If nonprofit

organizations are not positioned to effectively implement sound technology and

fundraising efforts, the organizations are not positioned to be sustainable (Carman &

Nesbit, 2012).

The stability and sustainability of a nonprofit organization are also discussed in

the case study research conducted by Balser and Carmin (2009) of a nonprofit environmental organization after its founder stepped down and was succeeded by new leadership. The purpose of the study was to understand leadership succession and the impact on both the organization's employees and organizational identify. The researchers reviewed the organization's history (covering the span of its founding to the founder's separation from the organization), conducted interviews with the organization's board members and staff, as well as individuals affiliated with the organization during the transitional period (Balser & Carmin, 2009). Results of the research indicate that an organization's leadership must have a clear understanding of the organization's identity and how changes to the organization's purpose, vision, and programs and services impact that vision (Balser & Carmin, 2009). Changing an organization's focus or services (especially those features deemed integral to the organization's identity) can result in internal resistance and conflict, which can severely impact the organization's viability and sustainability. The researchers emphasized that to lead an organization effectively and ensure its sustainability, the nonprofit's leadership must reconcile the need to engage the organization in change with addressing the needs of stability and familiarity for its current constituents, including the organization's staff (Balser & Carmin, 2009).

Glavin (2011) in describing the relationship between government and nonprofits, notated that "government at all levels accounts for 29.4% of nonprofit revenues, provided as grants and contracts," (p. 8). Thus, the majority of a nonprofit's revenues comes from their earned revenue, which could be as much as 50% of total revenues (Glavin, 2011). However, an increase in nonprofit organizations coupled with a decrease in available funding streams will have a significant impact on nonprofit sustainability (Suarez, 2011).

Suarez (2011) analyzed the data from a sample of 200 501(c)(3) charitable organizations from the 10-county San-Francisco Bay Area for the purpose of understanding nonprofit organizational management and issues affecting nonprofit management to include organizational resources and results of the research indicated that "collaboration and professionalization are relevant for procuring government grants and contracts, even after controlling for prior public sector funding" (p. 319). In other words, due to increased demand and limited resources, nonprofit organizations—especially those focusing on human services—must be positioned to apply for and secure government funding (as well as other funding sources) to maintain sustainability.

Nonprofit Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness

As the prior research has indicated, the leadership of any organization—especially nonprofit organizations—is integral to its success and overall effectiveness. LeRoux and Wright (2010) conducted a study of the executive directors and chief executive officers of 314 nonprofit organizations from sixteen metropolitan statistical areas across the United States. The purpose of this research was to determine how nonprofit organizational leaders use performance measures to determine organizational strategy and effectiveness (LeRoux & Wright, 2010). The researchers asked participants to complete a survey that detailed how they describe their organization's effectiveness and how performance measures were used to indicate organizational effectiveness (LeRoux & Wright, 2010). The results of the research indicate that nonprofit administrators indeed use measures of their organization's performance to determine organizational effectiveness and make strategic decisions regarding the organization's strategy (LeRoux & Wright, 2010). The measures most frequently used by nonprofit organization

administrators include unit costs and production efficiencies, the results of program

outcome based evaluation, employee workload and output quality, and external audits of

the organization (LeRoux & Wright, 2010). This research indicates to ensure

organizational effectiveness, nonprofit administrators must be aware of their

organization's performance based on a variety of factors and use the information to make

strategic decisions.

The research of LeRoux and Wright (2010) is supported by research conducted by

Mitchell (2012) in a study of 182 international nonprofit organizations, which included

152 interviews with nonprofit organization leaders in the United States for the purpose of

defining organizational effectiveness. Mitchell (2012) found that the majority of

nonprofit leaders felt outcome accountability is a key component of organizational

effectiveness. This effectiveness includes setting organizational goals and actively

measuring the organization's progress toward meeting goals. Mitchell's (2012) research

indicates that meeting an organization's goals is seen as "promise keeping" by nonprofit

organization leaders, whereby it allows an organization to communicate what they will

do, and results will communicate that the organization has done what it says it will do.

Regardless of the methods, nonprofit leaders use to measure effectiveness, the research

indicates that an organization's ability to demonstrate effectiveness is essential to

maintaining the organization's accountability (Mitchell, 2012).

Mitchell's (2012) research is echoed in the research conducted by Lee and

Whitford (2012) in the examination of the organizational effectiveness of public agencies

in the United States. The purpose of the study was to study the impacts of organizational

resources on organizational effectiveness (Lee & Whitford, 2012). Through the study of

US federal organizations looking specifically at their administrative, human, financial, physical, political, and reputation resources, researchers found professional employees and presidential attention to be among the chief contributors to organizational effectiveness. Also, the researchers found that organizations with more professional leadership at the top of the organization's structure had the biggest impact on organizational effectiveness while a high number of non-professional leaders had negative effects (Lee & Whitford, 2012).

While the research implies the importance of leadership and how a leader's knowledge and skills contribute to organizational effectiveness, the research also indicates that a leader's skills have a significant impact on organizational effectiveness. According to Clawson (2012), organizational structures can inhibit effectiveness by restricting the talents of its staff rather than supporting it. Therefore, an emerging trend in organizational effectiveness is making the most of employee skills and abilities by allowing employees more freedoms and reducing bureaucracies (Clawson, 2012). This notion of organizational effectiveness is supported by the work of Fernandez and Moldogaziev (2012) in studying the responses to 221,479 survey responses from federal government employees ranging from nonsupervisory to senior executives. The purpose of the study was to explore employee empowerment and the results on organizational effectiveness. Results of the research indicate that efforts to control employees have a negative impact on organizational effectiveness while goal setting and clear communication about an employee's performance fosters effectiveness, especially when leaders focus on key indicators of meeting goals and celebrating successes (Clawson, 2012; Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2012).

Similar research was conducted by Foldy, Goldman, and Ospina (2008) who studied "sense giving", defined as "disseminating new understandings to audiences to influence" the way influenced individuals makes sense of the situation for themselves (Foldy, et al., 2008, p. 515). The purpose of this study was to evaluate how an organizational leader helps to facilitate cognitive shifts among followers to create buy-in to the organization's vision and goals. To conduct the study, the researchers used data from the Leadership for a Changing World program by interviewing the 20 award recipients named in 2001. The researchers analyzed interview transcripts to identify each interviewed organization's goals and vision, the proposed solutions for meeting a specific community issue, and how the organization rallies constituents into support the organization to address the identified community issue. Results of the research indicate that effective organizations use three approaches: 1) changing perceptions regarding the issue being addressed; 2) stimulate discussion on the issue by creating a cause for addressing the identified issue; and, 3) creating understanding regarding the scope of the issue being addressed (Foldy, et al., 2008). Effective nonprofit organizations can successfully lead its constituencies to understand the root causes of a particular issue and understand the solutions to the issue and how each constituent plays a role in providing the solution (Foldy, et al., 2008). Key to this research is the role of nonprofit leaders in the sense giving process. The researchers indicate that sense giving is a leadership task in nonprofit organizations (Foldy, et al., 2008), meaning that if effective nonprofit organizations can mobilize its constituencies around social and community issues, it is due to the knowledge and skills of the organization's administrators.

An example of the linkage between organizational performance and

organizational leadership is found in Packard's (2010) study of nonprofit organizational

performance. Research questions included the factors that impact program performance

(as indicated by an organization's staff) and the most appropriate ways to measure

program performance. Packard (2010) began the research by reviewing the literature to

identify the concepts related to performance, which has been identified as outputs,

outcomes, productivity, and quality. Next, the author administered questionnaires to the

staff of fourteen programs of not-for-profit community-based organizations, the juvenile

court, and community schools in San Diego. The most notable results of this survey

indicated that of the factors that contribute to a nonprofit organization's success are

"adequate salaries, qualified staff, a facilitative organizational structure" (Packard, 2010,

p. 982). Furthermore, respondents indicated that a nonprofit organization must have

professional staff that have specific training, education, and work experience. The

inference, then, is since organizational leadership controls the function and resources of

the organization, leadership has a direct impact on the organization's ability to ensure

organizational success.

The research indicates that nonprofit administrators are integral to an

organization's ability to be sustainable and work toward meeting its intended mission and

vision. Important to the nonprofit administrator's ability to effectively perform at this

level relies on the individuals' skills and abilities, as well as those skills and abilities of

the nonprofit organization's leadership team. The implication is that leadership team of an

organization supports the nonprofit's chief executive officer by providing day-to-day

management of the organization's functional areas, as well as filling the gaps of expertise

and knowledge the chief executive officer may lack (Stid & Bradach, 2009). As

discussed by Austin, Regan, Samples, Schwartz, and Carnochan (2011), an organization's functional area leadership must possess the vision, leadership skills, and management competencies required to assist the organization's chief administrator in ensuring the organization's ability to survive and thrive in the nonprofit sector. Since human services organizations use a multidisciplinary approach that typically includes business and organization management, fundraising and grant writing, marketing/communications, social responsibility, public policy, and advocacy to provide services to program participants that volunteer to receive the organization's services, all while advocating for community level change (Kincaid, 2009).

Nonprofit Organizations in Central Florida

According to data provided by the National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute [NCCS] (2010), as of 2009 there were 75,418 nonprofit organizations in the state of Florida. 52,121 nonprofit organizations were designated 501(c)(3) public charities, which represented 84.1% increase in public charities since 1999. Furthermore, 501(c)(3) public charities represented 69.1% of all nonprofit organization in Florida (NCCS, 2010). However, of the 52,121 501(c)(3) public charities, only 18.3% are considered reporting public charities, meaning only 13,828 completed and submitted a Form 990 to the Internal Revenue Service in 2009 (NCCS, 2010).

While the region identified as East Central Florida includes Volusia, Lake, Sumter, Seminole, Orange, Osceola and Brevard counties (Enterprise Florida, 2013), the purpose of this research is to focus on the region identified as Central Florida, consisting of Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties. According to more recent data compiled by NCCS (2014), there are 7,782 charities registered in Central Florida. Of this number,

5,376 organizations or 69%, submitted an IRS Form 990 reporting revenues equaling $9,163,337,302 and assets equaling $22,494,048,566 (NCCS, 2014). The number of nonprofit organizations designated as human services equals 1,485, which is approximately 19% of charities registered in Central Florida (NCCS, 2014). This is a 42% increase in the number of human services nonprofit organizations registered in Central Florida, which equaled 1,047 approximately 12 years ago (NCCS, 2002).

The increase in the number of human services organizations in Central Florida supports the notion that there has also been an increase in competition for public and private funding (Hodge & Piccolo, 2011). Organizational leadership—in the form of the organization's administration—is integral to the health and sustainability of a nonprofit organization. It is not unreasonable, then, to assume that a nonprofit organization's leadership plays a key role in the viability and sustainability of the nonprofit organization and the organization's ability to remain competitive and thrive in the sector.

Leadership Theories

The study of leadership theories can trace back to Taylor's (1911) scientific study of work, performance, and employee productivity. Taylor (1911) conducted this work because in his opinion, at the time there had been "no public agitation for 'greater national efficiency,'" (p. 6) despite the need to understand and increase workplace efficiencies. Thus, Taylor (1911) sought to demonstrate the impacts of workplace inefficiency, ascertain a systematic approach to increasing efficiencies, and describe a productive management approach best suited to increase and maintain high workplace efficiencies. Taylor's (1911) study is credited as being part of the foundation for modern leadership theory in that the study focused on managing the initiative of workers.

Taylor's (1911) seminal work lead to additional research to include: (1) Max Weber's 1920s study of the charismatic leader, charismatic authority, and the moral authority and legitimacy of the leader to inspire followers (Parsons, 1947), (2) Gulick's (1936) study on the division of work and the role of executives described as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting, and (3) Barnard's (1938) study of authority and leadership to influence the behavior of employees. From the foundations noted in this study and many additional studies, the philosophies of leadership have produced several theories or approaches to leadership, designed to describe the form and function of leadership.

One of the earliest leadership theories, the "Great Man" theory emphasizes the characteristics of those individuals viewed historically as being great leaders in the political, social, and military areas (Northouse, 2012). Carlyle (as cited in "Leadership", 2012) examined the lives and leadership approaches to identify those traits that seemed to be innate. Carlyle's work evolved to Stogdill's study of the trait theory of leadership and the traits required to be a leader ("Leadership", 2012). The early 1960's included a significant emersion of behavior theories and how leaders act and behave (Northouse, 2012).

Current leadership theories include implicit leadership theory which focuses on how observers' assumptions, stereotypes, and beliefs judge an individual's leadership competencies (Nichols & Erakovich, 2013). The implication is that an individual's perceived effectiveness as a leader is influenced by observing the individual in the leadership role, which influences how followers are expected to behave (Nichols & Erakovich, 2013). Graen and Schiemann (2013) explored leader-member-exchange

theory, which focuses on strategic alliances in the workplace whereby leaders agree to the exchange of knowledge, information, or resources that will enable involved parties to accomplish stated goals and objectives. Additional leadership theories to emerge or evolve in the 21st century include transformational leadership, authentic leadership, spiritual leadership, and servant leadership (Northouse, 2012). The implication for the purpose of this research study is not to conduct an in-depth review and discussion of the many historical and current leadership theories, but rather to point out that the extensive focus on leadership, what inspires leadership, and what makes great leaders is integral to the study of both individuals, organizations, and communities.

Constructive/Developmental Theory

The conceptual framework selected for this study focused on Kegan's (1980) seminal study of constructive/developmental theory, defined through the basic tenets that humans make meaning of the systems to which they are involved through their experiences, these experiences are colored by the meanings to which are developed by the individual, these meanings inform and influence individual behavior, and that these meanings influence evolvement as an individual and future actions and decision-making. Kegan's (1980) research of constructive/developmental theory includes Kegan's theory of social orders of consciousness, which is described as the developmental stages an individual uses to create an understanding of their experiences (Barbuto & Millard, 2012). As an individual ages, has more exposure, and increases their knowledge, the likelihood the individual will increase their understanding of self-identity, awareness, and understanding increases (Barbuto & Millard, 2012). However, this does not guarantee an individual will reach the highest stage of development, whereby the individual's

perceptions are not focused solely on themselves, but on understanding the multiple perspectives and value systems that exist (Barbuto & Millard, 2012).

Kegan's (1980) theory builds on the foundation presented in Kolberg's research, which indicates individuals create their version of reality based on their experiences (Hayes, 1994). Essentially, individuals have experiences, organize these experiences into meanings, and use these meanings to make sense of the experience and shape future experiences. Kohlberg's influence is also found in Torosyan's (1999) review of how life influences learning in discussing Roots of Knowing (ROK) developed by Rachel Lauer. In summary, an individual's concept of "knowing" is based on their perception, evaluation, decisions, and action as a result of their experiences (Torosyan, 1999). In summary, Kegan's (1980) research bridges two approaches to human development. First, an individual's world is created by how that individual chooses to discover the world; and two, individuals grow and change over time, to include their qualitative cognition (Berger, 1999). The constructivist approach to human development focuses on how individuals create meanings for their life, surroundings, and experiences while the developmental approach focuses on how life experiences impact an individual's cognitive, moral, and social development (Berger, 1999).

Bugenhagen and Barbuto (2011) continue the discussion of constructive/ developmental theory by studying the relationship between individuals' constructive development level and their sources of work motivation. The implication is that as individuals progress through their careers, they make understandings of their experiences which inform their motivations and future achievements. To conduct their study, the researchers collected data self-reported data and conducted subject–object interviews

with a sample of community leaders in training settings across the United States

(Bugenhagen & Barbuto, 2011). Results of the study indicated that as participated moved

through the phases of constructive development, their motivations for work transitioned

as well (Bugenhagen & Barbuto, 2011). As explained by Barbuto and Millard (2012),

there is a plausible link between constructive/developmental progression and the gaining

of wisdom, in that as leaders are able to increase their capacity of understanding the

broader meaning of their life experiences, knowledge and wisdom also increase. The

importance of this research lies in the possibility to influence leadership development and

build on current leadership theories. If experienced leaders have reached a level of

cognitive growth whereby they recognize their current perceptions can, and most likely

will, be influenced by future life experiences, then the concept of leadership and

developing leadership skills can be enhanced through transformational learning (Barbuto

& Millard, 2012).

The implication for this research study is how the development of meaning in

regards to the leadership experiences of those senior administrators of Central Florida

nonprofit organizations shaped their work and motivations. Also, this study sought to

understand how the research participants' experiences shaped their behavior and actions

in the past and current leadership positions and what they desire from future leadership

positions (if applicable). By conducting this study with the constructive/developmental

theory in mind, this research sought to understand how leader experiences have impacted

those currently serving in leadership roles in nonprofit organizations and what potential

and future leaders can learn from these experiences.

Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design

Research is a process of closely examining an issue by using a methodical approach to asking questions, collecting data, analyzing the results, and providing potential answers to the questions (Creswell, 2012a). Therefore, the purpose of research is to add to the collective knowledge on an issue or subject, suggests improvement for practices, processes, and additional research, and inform the development of future policies and procedures (Creswell, 2012a). Creswell (2012a) offers that the process of research includes identification of the research problem, a literature review, detailing the purpose of the research, data collection, analysis, and interpretation, and reporting research results.

In general, research usually falls into two categories: 1) quantitative research design, and 2) qualitative research design. The quantitative research approach seeks to describe a problem or issue through trends and questions using large quantities of numeric data and the testing of the hypothesis that are specific and measurable (Creswell, 2012a). However, qualitative research is used when an issue or problem should be explored to study a group or population through stories, experiences, and perceptions (Creswell, 2012b; "Qualitative Research", 2009). It must be noted, that the mixed methods research design, which includes elements of quantitative and qualitative research, is used when there is a need to conduct both experimental-quantitative and interpretative-qualitative methods as a part of the investigation (Howe, 2011).

This research study was conducted using a convergent parallel mixed methods design whereby quantitative and qualitative data were collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and then merged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this study, an electronic

survey with open- and closed-ended questions was used to collect both quantitative statistical results and qualitative phenomenological perceptions from research participants. In this approach, survey data was used to identify the credentials possessed by nonprofit executive research participants and identify the trends in the data. At the same time, open-ended questions were specifically designed to explore research participant's perceptions regarding the criteria required to be an executive of a nonprofit organization. The reason for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data was to compare results of the two forms of data to bring greater insight into the problem.

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research requires a systematic scientific method to uncover the relationships between variables (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). The use of a survey provides numerical data that describes the trends related to the population studied (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative research as a scientific method has a high probability of collecting unbiased data. As discussed by Riemer (2011), in quantitative research the collected data is either numerical or is coded as such so the data can be sorted and counted. Further, using the survey approach allows the researcher to ask each research participant questions using a questionnaire and the results are coded and counted (Riemer, 2011). The quantitative data collected as a part of the research study was used to collect and analyze the demographic data for research participants (such as age, race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) as well as the academic and professional credentials held by each administrator (such as educational level, number of years worked in the nonprofit sector, number of years as a nonprofit administrator, etc.). This data was analyzed to identify any commonalities and the differences amongst research participants, which was

compared to the perceptive qualitative data that collected in this research study.

Qualitative/Interpretive Phenomenological Research

Conducting qualitative inquiry requires the researcher to make sense of stories, actions, and experiences by identifying commonalities (Glesne, 2011). The characteristics of qualitative research include fieldwork data collection in a comfortable and natural setting for the research participants, using multiple methods of story and experience collection as necessary, inductive and deductive reasoning, a focus on uncovering the meaning and multiple perspectives research participants have attributed to their experiences and perceptions, and exposing the researcher's background in terms of how it impacts the research (Creswell, 2012b; "Qualitative Research", 2009). With this in mind, researchers must identify to the appropriate qualitative research framework that will allow for the collection of appropriate data to address the research question (Creswell, 2012b; Glesne, 2011). The purpose of framework identification is to understand the theory to which the research will be conducted and interpreted.

Hermeneutical phenomenology focuses on lived experiences and the interpretation of those experiences (Creswell, 2012b; "Interpretive Phenomenology", 2008). Hermeneutical phenomenology requires the researcher to reflect on their assumptions regarding the phenomenon, enter the hermeneutic circle for data collection, and interpret the meanings research participants have attributed to their experiences to identify commonalities and differences ("Interpretive Phenomenology", 2008). Thus, interpretive phenomenological analysis studies how the hermeneutic circle understands their life experiences and the personal sense-making attributed to their experiences (Murray & Holmes, 2013; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2012). In essence, interpretive

phenomenological analysis uncovers not only the research participants' experiences, but how they have reacted to these experiences, and how these experiences influence future actions, behaviors, and decision-making (Murray & Holmes, 2013). Therefore, the data collection methods used as a part of interpretive phenomenological analysis must be designed to allow for the transference of rich data through free reflection and storytelling (Smith et. al, 2012). These data collection methods include interviewing individuals and conducting focus groups.

Surveys/Questionnaires

Though surveys are more prevalent in quantitative research, surveys can be a useful tool as a part of qualitative research in that the function of a survey or questionnaire is to collect general characteristics from research participants (Riemer, 2011). To maintain the qualitative level of the work, researchers must ensure any questions used in a survey or questionnaire include open-ended questions (Zohrabi, 2013). However, it must be noted that the return rate for surveys/questionnaires is low, so researchers should take this into consideration in determining if survey/questionnaire completion will occur online, by mail, on in person in conjunction with the researcher interview (Zohrabi, 2013).

Summary

Nonprofit organizations require strong leadership teams that possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively lead the organization and manage day-to-day operations. Sustainability and viability are especially important for nonprofit health and human services organizations since historically these organizations have been responsible for filling in the gaps and providing communities with the support and ability

to lead healthy and productive lives. Accomplishing these goals requires nonprofit administrators to possess and exercise specific leadership competencies. Effective leadership and management skills have a direct correlation with the nonprofit organization's sustainability, which includes board engagement, organizational oversight, and evaluating the organization's ability to achieve its goals and objectives. The organization's status as sustainable, then, indicates a high level of organizational effectiveness and the ability to adequately and successfully meet or exceed established goals and objectives.

Central Florida is home to approximately 1,485 human services nonprofit organizations, which represents a 10% increase in organizations over the ten-year period of 2002 to 2012. The increase in the number of human services organizations has most likely led to an increase in competition for diversified funding streams to include local, state, and federal government, private foundations, corporate sponsors, and individual donors. This research study sought to gain an understanding of human services nonprofit administrators regarding their perspective on the knowledge and skills required to management a successful organization in Central Florida and their experiences in gaining these abilities.

Key to this discussion is the notion of leadership and how prevalent leadership theories impact the vision of a nonprofit leader. Furthermore, constructive/developmental theory aided in understanding how nonprofit administrators view themselves and understand their experiences in becoming leaders and maintaining viable nonprofit organizations. Implementing a mixed methods research design allowed for the collection of unbiased quantitative data as well as personal opinions and experiences qualitative

questions. The interpretive phenomenological analysis allowed for the careful and deliberate coding of research to identify commonalities and differences in response to the qualitative research questions.

Purpose of the Study

The intent of this mixed-methods study was to compare the credentials and perceptions of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida with their observations of the credentials and skills required to effectively lead a nonprofit organization. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was used, whereby quantitative and qualitative data were collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and then merged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). An electronic survey with open- and closed-ended questions was used to collect both quantitative statistical data and qualitative phenomenological perceptions from research participants. Using this approach, survey data identified the academic and professional credentials possessed by nonprofit administrator research participants and identify the trends in the data. At the same time, open-ended questions explored research participants' perceptions regarding the criteria required to be an executive of a nonprofit organization. Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data allowed for the comparison of results from the two forms of data to bring greater insight into addressing the research problem.

Research Questions

For the quantitative stage of the proposed research study, the following research questions were the focus:

1. What are the academic and professional credentials held by current (and potentially recently retired) nonprofit administrators in Central Florida?

2. What results and trends emerge from exploring the self-reported quantitative data on the knowledge, skills, and credentials held by nonprofit administrators?

For the qualitative stage of the study, the research question focused on:

3. What are the perceptions of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida regarding the knowledge, skills, experiences required to successfully lead a nonprofit organization?

Using a triangulation approach with a convergence design, the final research question for this mixed methods research proposal was:

4. What results emerge from comparing exploratory qualitative data from nonprofit administrators about their perceptions of the nonprofit leadership knowledge, skills, and credentials requirements with the quantitative, self-reported quantitative data on the knowledge, skills, and credentials held by current nonprofit administrators?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Participants

Research participants must be selected based on their ability to provide insight on the phenomena being examined (Smith et. al, 2012). Therefore, the unit of analysis selected for this study was nonprofit organizations in Central Florida, defined as Orange, Osceola, and Seminole county for the purpose of this study. The criterion sampling approach was used because the research project required participants to meet specific criteria for the study ("Purposive Sampling", 2008). The target participants for this research study was senior level administrators of nonprofit human services organizations in Central Florida (Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties). Participants must currently hold a position of vice president (or the equivalent) or above in a nonprofit, health and human services organization. Participants who meet the criteria described above, but have retired or relocated in the last two years were also be eligible to participate in the research study. Purposive sampling required this researcher to identify potential research participants based on the identified criteria ("Purposive Sampling", 2008; "Sampling in Qualitative Research", 2009). In addition, a snowball sampling technique was used to identify additional potential research participants whereby research participants were asked to refer others who may be interested in contributing to the research study (Creswell, 2012b). The snowball sampling technique allowed for the purposeful identification of potential research participants based on the identified criteria (Creswell, 2012b; "Purposive Sampling", 2008).

Using data provided by the Central Florida Foundation's Nonprofit Search, which identifies nonprofit organizations who have completed a comprehensive portrait detailing

each organization's mission, programs, board and governance, leadership and staff, and

financials, 650 nonprofit organizations were identified. In the service area, 78% (504)

were physically located in Orange County, Florida, 5% (32) were physically located in

Osceola County, Florida, and, 18% (114) were physically located in Seminole County,

Florida. This list of nonprofit organizations was further refined to include only those

organizations that are considered to be health and human services and only those

organizations with active Central Florida Foundation nonprofit search profiles. The result

was a list of 105 nonprofit organizations in the service area, whereby 74% (77) were

physically located in Orange County, Florida, 10% (11) were physically located in

Osceola County, Florida, and, 16% (17) were physically located in Seminole County,

Florida. A review of each organization's Central Florida Foundation public profile and

website revealed the name and/or contact information for administrators in each

organization, resulting in the identification of 155 potential research participants,

whereby 78% (121) were from organizations physically located in Orange County,

Florida, 8% (13) were from organizations physically located in Osceola County, Florida,

and, 14% (21) were from organizations physically located in Seminole County, Florida.

The email addresses of identified nonprofit administrators were taken from the

organization's Central Florida Foundation public profile or the nonprofit organization's

website. If email addresses could not identified from these sources, a general internet

search was conducted using Google.com to identify an email address from a publically

accessible website. If email addresses could not determined from a general internet

search, then the naming convention used for other emails found through the

organization's Central Florida Foundation public profile and/or organization's website

was used to deduce the email address if a nonprofit executive's name was identified.

Nonprofit administrators were contacted by email and asked to complete a mixed methods survey providing both quantitative and qualitative data, to include information regarding the executives' perception of their knowledge, skills, and abilities as leaders. Contacted nonprofit administrators were also asked to refer other administrators who could contribute to the proposed research by sharing the researcher's name and contact information and/or forwarding to the researcher the name and contact information of potential research participants.

To recruit participants, a description of the research study along with a link consent form was be emailed to potential research participants (Appendix H). The invitation email explained the purpose of the study, the role of the researcher, and the role of research participants. Included in the email was a link to the online consent form that reiterates the purpose of the study, the potential risks, the estimated time commitment, the procedures in place to ensure participant confidentiality, and how the results of the study will be used (Creswell, 2012b). In addition, the online consent form described the right to withdraw from the research project voluntarily if desired, the steps taken to ensure participant confidentiality, any known risks of participating in the research, and any benefits as a result of the research project (Creswell, 2012b). Finally, the consent form informed participants that completing the online survey signifies their understanding of the proposed research and their rights as a participant (Creswell, 2012b).

Instruments

An online survey was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from survey participants. Quantitative data was in the form of research participant

demographics and credentials. Qualitative data was in the form of opinions and

perceptions regarding the credentials and skills needed for nonprofit management.

The first part of the online survey (Appendix F) consisted of items designed to

collect demographic information regarding research participants to include age,

race/ethnicity, gender, educational level, the number of years the participant has worked

in the nonprofit sector, the number of years the participant has served at the administrator

level over the course of their career, and the number of years the participant has served at

the administrator level with their current organization. The responses to this data were

used to develop a profile of survey participants, to include any similarities or differences.

The second part of the online survey consisted of the Leadership Practices

Inventory (LPI) Self-Assessment Tool, which was selected to collect quantitative data

related to the nonprofit administrators' practice of Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five

Practices of Exemplary Leadership. The LPI selected for this research is a self-report tool

that uses 30 questions and a Likert-type scale to collect participant feedback regarding

how frequently nonprofit administrators model behaviors and actions that are seen as

fundamental to effective leadership. The LPI is structured so that there are six questions

that measure for each of the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership using a Likert-type

scale that ranges from 1 (almost never) to 10 (almost always), thus, the score for each

leadership practice ranges from the lowest possible score of six to the highest possible

score of 60 (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The total LPI score for each individual was

calculated by averaging all of the five separate scores into one final score (Kouzes &

Posner, 2012).

Reliability refers to the consistency of the tool's performance over time (Creswell

& Plano Clark, 2011). The reliability of an instrument, referring to the extent of

measurement errors that can impact scores, must have reliability above .60 to be

considered a reliable tool (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The internal reliability of the LPI

self-report tool typically measures between .77 and .87, which is above the lowest

acceptable range for reliability (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

The validity of an instrument refers to the instrument's ability to measure the

factors the tool was developed to measure (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). The types of

validity most impactful on a research tool include internal validity, external validity,

construct validity, and statistical conclusion validity (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013).

Kouzes & Posner (2002) report the LPI tool to have excellent levels of face validity,

empirical validity, and discriminant validity, indicating that the use of the LPI over two

decades of research and results analysis have demonstrated consisted validity (Kouzes

and Posner, 2002).

To collect qualitative data, the final part of the online survey consisted of

phenomenological questions designed to gain insight on the perceptions of nonprofit

leadership required knowledge, skills, and credentials to be an effective nonprofit

administrator. The qualitative questions have been adapted from Clawson (2012) as

follows:

Questions about Self-Perceptions/Experiences

1.   What has your life taught you thus far about what it means to be an

effective leader?

2.   What are your core leadership principles?

3.   How much time do you spend in strategic thought, creating a vision for:

      a. Yourself?

      b. Your workgroup?

      c. Your organization?

4.   Based on the changes you have noted in the nonprofit sector, your work, and your organization over the past five years, what trends and issues will face your generation of leaders over the next five years?

Questions about Perceptions for Future Leaders

5.   Why is it important for a potential leader to have a clear vision or dream in order to become an effective leader?

6.   Based on the changes you have noted in the nonprofit sector, your work, and your organization over the past five years, what trends and issues will face the next generation of leaders over the next five to ten years?

Formative and summative committees were used to evaluate and validate the qualitative phenomenological questions that were used for data collection, along with questions designed to collect demographic information from research participants. The formative committee (Appendix C) consisted of three individuals who have nonprofit management expertise and will evaluate the first draft of the qualitative research questions in conjunction with the researcher. The formative committee was sent an invitation to participate by email (Appendix A) and an informed consent form which included an overview of the proposed research project. Once formative committee members returned their completed and signed consent forms, each member received a copy of the demographic and phenomenological questions to be evaluated, along with a review form to be used to record their feedback (Appendix E).

The summative committee (Appendix D) consisted of three individuals with philanthropic, foundation, and/or college/university backgrounds. The summative provided expert feedback and validated the work of the formative committee. The summative committee was sent an invitation to participate by email (Appendix B) and an informed consent form which included an overview of the proposed research project. Once the summative committee members returned their completed and signed consent forms, each member received a revised copy of the demographic and phenomenological questions, as finalized by the formative committee, for review and validation along with a review form to be used to record their feedback (Appendix E). The work of the formative and summative committees resulted in the finalized demographic and phenomenological questions to be incorporated into the research survey (Appendix F).

Procedures

The proposed research study was conducted using the convergent parallel mixed methods research design whereby quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, however, each strand of data was analyzed separately, and then the data sets were merged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently using the same online survey. Both strands of data carried equal priority and emphasis to answering the proposed research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This research design was selected as it allowed the researcher to collect different, but related, types of data from research participants at the same time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The mixed methods study took advantage of the strengths offered by both quantitative and qualitative research designs while minimizing the weaknesses or barriers offered by each design. The quantitative data collected as a

part of this mixed methods research collected data that could be used to identify trends and/or make generalizations regarding the educational and/or professional credentials described by research participants. Further, the quantitative data identified the commonalities and differences in leadership practices as collected using the LPI self-assessment tool. Comparatively, the collected qualitative data allowed for the collection of lived experiences and perceptions, as described by the research participants. The convergent design was selected due to the researcher's objective to collect both types of data at the same time, the need to use both the qualitative and quantitative to answer the proposed research questions, and the goal of merging the two sets of data into one summarized result (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The Central Florida Foundation's Nonprofit Search was used to ascertain potential research participants, resulting in the identification of 650 nonprofit organizations. These organizations were broken out by the county where it was physically located. Using a table of random numbers, 50% of the agencies in each county were selected for participation in the proposed study, which will equal approximately 252 organizations physically located in Orange County, Florida, 16 physically located in Osceola County, Florida, and 57 physically located in Seminole County, Florida. This list of nonprofit organizations was further refined to include only those organizations that are considered to be health and human services and only those organizations with active Central Florida Foundation nonprofit search profiles. These steps resulted in a list of 105 nonprofit organizations in the service area, whereby 74% (77) were physically located in Orange County, Florida, 10% (11) were physically located in Osceola County, Florida, and, 16% (17) were physically located in Seminole County, Florida. Executives of the

identified nonprofit organizations were asked to complete the mixed methods online

survey, providing both quantitative and qualitative data.

Then entire survey--quantitative and qualitative--was administered using the

SurveyMonkey.com web-based tool that is accessible through a specific uniform resource

locator (URL) that was sent to all identified research participants by email. The benefit of

using a web-based survey tool was that it allowed for the electronic delivery of surveys

and the analysis of collected data using computer-assisted programming ("Web Survey",

2008). The web-based survey tool also allowed for the informed consent form to be

included on the first page of the survey, requiring research participants to select a button

acknowledging receipt of informed consent and agreeing to participation before accessing

the research questions. A link to the survey was emailed to all detectable administrators

of nonprofit organizations as identified through the Central Florida Foundation database.

Quantitative data. The first two sections of the online survey were designed to

collect quantitative data from research participants. The first section of quantitative data

included demographics to collect specifics regarding research participants' age,

race/ethnicity, gender, as well as the academic and professional credentials held by each

administrator (Appendix F). The demographic data survey contained multiple questions

that provided research participations with the opportunity to reveal key demographic data

about themselves, such as age range, gender, ethnicity, race, highest completed

educational level, and current administrator level. Open-ended demographic questions

included the number of years the participant has worked in the nonprofit sector, the total

number of years the participant has worked at the administrator level, and the total

number of years the participant has served at the administrator level with their current

employer. The purpose of collecting and analyzing demographic data as a part of this research study is to identify the social phenomena that exists amongst research participants ("Demography, Social", 2008). The demographic data collected as a part of this research study helped to describe commonalities and differences amongst research participants.

The second section of quantitative data was the LPI self-assessment instrument. The 30 questions and Likert-type scale were recreated in the Survey Monkey online tool for completion by research participants. The LPI allowed research participants to indicate how frequently the individual models behaviors and actions that are seen as fundamental to effective leadership under the dimensions identified by Kouzes and Posner (2002) as Modeling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act, and Encouraging the Heart, suggesting the actions that serve as the foundation of these leadership practices can be translated into behavioral statements. The implication for this research project was that pairing the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership with a frequency (Likert-type scale) designed to indicate how often the individual models the behavior will reveal quantitative data that could be cross-referenced with the qualitative data provided by research participants.

Qualitative data. A section of the online survey consisted of open-ended questions designed to collect the qualitative phenomenological perceptions of nonprofit leadership in Central Florida regarding the knowledge, skills, and credentials to be an effective nonprofit administrator (Appendix F). First, research participants were asked to describe their self-perceptions and experiences in becoming a nonprofit administrator. Next, research participants were asked their perceptions of the knowledge, skills, and

credentials future leaders will need to obtain and maintain administrator positions in nonprofit organizations.

Data collection progressed as follows:

1. The researcher developed qualitative phenomenological questions adapted from Clawson (2012). These questions, along with questions collecting demographic data, were provided to formative (Appendix C) and summative (Appendix D) committees for review and validation.

2. An online research request form was completed and submitted to The Leadership Challenge, a Wiley Brand, to gain permission to use the LPI online.

3. The complete online survey tool was developed using SurveyMonkey.com. This online tool included the validated demographic questions and phenomenological survey questions, as well as the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) questions.

4. Before collecting data from nonprofit administrators identified as research participants, the appropriate materials were submitted first to this researcher's dissertation committee for review and approval, and then to Nova Southeastern University's Institutional Research Board (IRB) for additional review and approval.

5. An email (Appendix H) was sent to potential research participants asking them to complete the online survey tool by the identified deadline.

6. A follow-up email was sent to all potential research participants thanking them for their participation and reminding them to complete the online survey tool by the identified deadline.

7. After the survey deadline had passed, the collected survey data was downloaded and reviewed for completion.

Data Analysis

The quantitative demographic data were analyzed by identifying the number of participants who completed the study and using numeric coding to identify the number of participants who selected from the available responses for age, race/ethnicity, gender, and educational level. A numerical count was provided based on the responses for the number of years worked in the nonprofit sector and the number of years as a nonprofit administrator. Results of the LPI self-assessment were be analyzed using descriptive statistics for each of the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, to include ranges, standard deviations, and means.

Qualitative data were analyzed in accordance with IPA and Colaizzi's strategy of descriptive phenomenological data analysis (Shosha, 2012), which first required reviewing transcriptions carefully through multiple readings (Shosha, 2012; Smith et al., 2012). This step of the analysis process required the development of descriptive comments focused on what research participants have said, linguistic comments focused on the language used by research participants, and conceptual comments representing the researcher's interpretation of participants' comments (Shosha, 2012; Smith et al., 2012). The researcher reviewed the transcripts of each response for emergent themes, which allowed for identifying similar themes across all of the responses (Shosha, 2012; Smith et al., 2012).

Limitations

One limitation of this proposed study is the specific population targeted for this study, which was limited to three counties in Central Florida. This proposed study was not inclusive of the larger Central Florida area and surrounding counties. Another

limitation of this proposed study is the study sample, which is limited to organizations that are actively providing information to the Central Florida Foundation Knowledge Base. Only a fraction of the organizations in the targeted service area submit data to the Central Florida Foundation and actively update their respective organization's profile and information. This lack of data leads to an additional limitation regarding the number of administrators that opted into the research project. The results on behalf of a limited number of nonprofit administrators cannot necessarily apply to all nonprofit administrations in Central Florida, nor the greater nonprofit sector.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to compare the academic and professional credentials of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida with their perceptions of the credentials required to effectively lead a nonprofit organization. To conduct the research study, more than 155 nonprofit administrators--defined as the president, chief executive officer, or executive director positions, as well as administrators holding functional area leadership positions (such as vice president, division director, or department director)-- were contacted and asked to participate in the study. Participants were also able to recommend other nonprofit executives in Central Florida who may be interested in participating in the study.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from survey participants using the Survey Monkey online survey and data collection tool. As discussed by Dodd (2008), the advantage of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data is triangulation, thus decreasing the chances of uncertainty and oversimplification by improving the analytical strength of the research. The quantitative data were collected in the form of demographics (such as age, race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) as well as the academic and professional credentials held by each administrator (such as educational level, number of years worked in the nonprofit sector, number of years as a nonprofit administrator, etc.). Demographic information were collected from research participants as the characteristics of the participants may influence how participants respond to research questions (Girard, 2010). Qualitative data in the form of phenomenological perceptions were collected for the purpose of asking research participants to describe the phenomena based on their understanding, so the researcher may decode the experience for commonalities and

differences, thus leading to potential knowledge about the phenomena (Sergi & Hallin, 2011).

Data were collected using the SurveyMonkey.com web-based tool. The web-based survey methodology was chosen due to the opportunity to collect large amounts of data from multiple participants at minimal costs (Yun & Trumbo, 2000). Further, the specifically selected tool provided the researcher with the opportunities to examine submitted survey responses collectively to identify the phenomena amongst the research participants, as well as the opportunity to review the specific data submitted by each research participant.

Research Questions

For the quantitative stage of the proposed research study, the research questions were:

1. What are the academic and professional credentials held by current (and potentially recently retired) nonprofit administrators in Central Florida?

2. What results and/or trends emerge from exploring the self-reported quantitative data on the knowledge, skills, and credentials held by nonprofit administrators?

These questions were developed to ensure participants met the criteria for participation in the research study. Further, the demographic information on educational level, the number of years in the nonprofit sector, and the number of years as an administrator were designed to learn more about the background of research participants and determine if their background influences their response to the qualitative questions.

For the qualitative stage of the study, the research questions were:

3. What are the perceptions of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida regarding the knowledge, skills, experiences required to successfully lead a nonprofit organization?

Using a triangulation approach with a convergence design, the final research question for this mixed methods research proposal is:

4. What results emerge from comparing exploratory qualitative data from nonprofit administrators about their perceptions of the nonprofit leadership knowledge, skills, and credentials requirements with the quantitative, self-reported quantitative data on the knowledge, skills, and credentials held by current nonprofit administrators.

Participants

A total of 57 nonprofit administrators responded to the email invitation and submitted responses to the survey. The following tables summarize the demographic characteristics as reported by research participants. It is important to note that some participants skipped questions in the survey, but the lack of responses does not have a significant impact on survey results.

A total of 57 nonprofit administrators responded to the first question asking participants to identify their age range (Table 2). The highest number of respondents at 47.37% (27 respondents) identified their age in the range of 55 to 64 years old, followed by nonprofit administrators identifying themselves as between the ages of 45 to 54 years old, which equaled 16 or 28.07% of respondents. No respondents self-identified as 24 years old or younger and only one respondent identified in each of the ranges 25 to 34 and 75 years of age or older.

Table 2

Participant Age

Age Range	Participant *n*	Participant % (*N* = 57)
18-24 years old	0	0.00
25-34 years old	1	1.75
35-44 years old	7	12.28
45-54 years old	16	28.07
55-64 years old	27	47.37
65-74 years old	5	8.77
75 years or older	1	1.75

The majority of research participants identify as female at 75.44% or 43 of the 57 respondents (Table 3). The remaining 24.56% (or 14) respondents identified as male. No respondents selected the other category offered to survey participants.

Table 3

Participant Gender

Gender	Participant *n*	Participant % (*N* = 57)
Female	43	75.44
Male	14	24.56
Other	0	0.00

Only 54 respondents answered the question regarding ethnicity (Table 4), with a small percentage--3.70% (or two respondents)--identified as Hispanic or Latino, while the majority of the respondents--52 (or 96.30%) identified as Non-Hispanic or Latino.

Table 4

Participant Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Participant *n*	Participant % (*N* = 54)
Hispanic or Latino	2	3.70
Non-Hispanic or Latino	52	96.30

Only 56 respondents answered the demographic question related to race (Table 5).

94.64%, or 53 research participants, identified as white. 5.36%, or 3 respondents,

identified as black. No respondents identified as American Indian and Alaska Native,

Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or two or more races.

Table 5

Participant Race

Race	Participant *n*	Participant % (*N* = 56)
American Indian and Alaska Native	0	0.00
Asian	0	0.00
Black or African American	3	5.36
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.00
White	53	94.64
Two or More Races	0	0.00

All 57 respondents provided their educational level (Table 6), with the majority

56.14% (32 participants) indicating a master's degree, followed by 28.07% (16

participants) with a bachelor's degree, and 10.53% (6 participants) with a doctorate. Two

respondents (3.51%) indicated a professional degree and 1.75% (1 respondent) indicated

some college credit, but no degree. Zero respondents reported being only a high school

graduate (or equivalent).

Table 6

Participant Education Level

Highest Completed Educational Level	Participant *n*	Participant % (*N* = 57)
High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent	0	0.00
Some college credit, no degree	1	1.75
Trade/technical/vocational training	0	0.00
Associate degree	0	0.00
Bachelor's degree	16	28.07
Master's degree	32	56.14
Professional degree	2	3.51
Doctorate degree	6	10.53

Participants were asked to identify the total number of years worked in the

nonprofit sector (Table 7). These responses were categorized in ranges. Of the 57 total

responses, the majority at 33.33% (19) responses reported working in the nonprofit

section between 16 and 25 years. The ranges with the lowest responses were 7.02% (four

respondents) in the ranges of less than five years and more than 36 years respectively.

Table 7

Number of Years in the Nonprofit Sector

Years in the Nonprofit Sector	Participant *n*	Participant % (*N* = 57)
Less than 5	4	7.02
5-10	3	5.26
11-15	10	17.54
16-25	19	33.33
26-35	17	29.82
36+	4	7.02

To ensure the qualitative data collected were from senior level executives within

nonprofit organizations, participants were asked the number of years employed as an administrator in the nonprofit sector (Table 8). Responses to this question were also categorized in ranges. Of the 57 responses, the majority (17 or 29.82%) reported being an administrator between five and ten years, followed by 19.3% (11 respondents) in the range of 16 to 25 years. The fewest respondents (3 or 5.26%) had the longest tenure at 36 or more years.

Table 8

Number of Years as an Administrator the Nonprofit Sector

Years as a Nonprofit Administrator	Participant *n*	Participant % (*N* = 57)
Less than 5	8	14.04
5-10	17	29.82
11-15	10	17.54
16-25	11	19.30
26-35	8	14.04
36+	3	5.26

For clarity, respondents were asked to indicate their level of administrator responsibility (Table 9) in one of three categories: top (such as chief executive, president, or executive director), senior executive (such as departmental head, managing director, director, or vice president), or other with space provided so participants can provide additional information. All 57 participants provided a response, with the majority (37 or 64.91%) indicating the top level of responsibility as the chief executive, president, or executive director of their organization.

Table 9

Administrator Level of Responsibility

Level of Responsibility	Participant *n*	Participant % (*N* = 57)
Top	37	64.91
Senior Executive	20	35.09
Other	0	0.00

Only 55 of the 57 respondents answered the question related to the number of years they have served as an administrator with their current employer (Table 10). Like with previous questions, answers were categorized into ranges, with the majority of respondents (21 or 38.18%) serving fewer than five years. The highest range, 26 to 35 years, was selected by only two respondents (3.64%) who answered at 27 years and 30 years respectively.

Table 10

Number of Years as an Administrator the Nonprofit Sector With Current Employer

Years as a Nonprofit Administrator	Participant *n*	Participant % (*N* = 57)
Less than 5	21	38.18
5-10	13	23.64
11-15	10	18.18
16-25	9	16.36
26-35	2	3.64
36+	0	0.00

The final demographic question asked of research participants was regarding the organization's size--specifically the organization's annual operating budget--of their current employers to ensure a cross-section of nonprofit organizations were represented in the study (Table 11). 19.30% (or 11 respondents) reported working for organizations

with annual operating budgets in the range of $10,000,000 to $25,000,000, representing

the largest group of respondents. This range is followed by the annual operating budget

range of $2,500,001 to $5,000,000 at 17.54% or 10 respondents. The two smallest

responses of three respondents (5.26%) were from organizations reporting annual

operating budgets of $500,000 or less and $25,000,001 to $50,000,000 respectively.

Table 11

Organization Size

Annual Operating Budget	Participant n	Participant % ($N = 57$)
$500,000 or less	3	5.26
$500,001 to $1,000,000	7	12.28
$1,000,001 to $2,500,000	6	10.53
$2,500,001 to $5,000,000	10	17.54
$5,000,000 to $10,000,000	9	15.79
$10,000,000 to $25,000,000	11	19.30
$25,000,001 to $50,000,000	3	5.26
$50,000,001 or more	8	14.04

The qualitative data collected for this research project focused on the participants'

thoughts regarding the knowledge and skills required to successfully lead a nonprofit

organization. Through the survey tool, research participants were able to provide their

written feedback, which was analyzed for commonalities, trends, and differences (Glesne,

2011). Where appropriate, research participant responses were compared to the Nonprofit

Leadership Alliance's ten competencies for their certified nonprofit professional

credential ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012) to determine if there was any

congruency between the identified competencies and current nonprofit administrator

thoughts. Table 12 provides a comparison of the certified nonprofit professional

competencies, research participant feedback, and terms/themes identified from analyzing

research participant feedback for the top five most commonly identified phenomena from

the 53 respondents.

Table 12

What Has Your Life Taught You Thus Far About What It Means to Be an Effective Leader

Nonprofit Leadership Alliance Competency	Key Terms / Themes	Sample Participant Response
Governance, Leadership, and Advocacy	• Accountability • Authority ≠ Leadership • Atmosphere of Trust	…authority does not make you an effective leader. Being a genuine, considerate, respectful and knowledgeable individual does
Volunteer and Human Resource Management	• Clearly Communicate Expectations Fairness • Clearly Communicate Metrics for Results • Flexibility • Recognizing Others • Trust in Others	…effective leadership has been accomplished through an overarching attitude of openness to new ideas, collegial and collaborative conversations, pursuing innovation and welcoming staff into the process
Personal and Professional Development	• Delegate / Share Responsibilities • Respect and Use Knowledge of Others	Directing the spotlight of achievement on others comes back in greater performance
Communication, Marketing and Public Relations	• Clear Communications	Effective leader must be an effective communicator/ influencer
Program Development	• Common Goals • Defined Growth • Outcome Based Results	The ability to create a common mission and goals through a team approach creating synergy between staff and volunteers

Table 13 identifies the responses from the research participants regarding their

self-identified leadership skills and the common terms/themes based on the responses.

The table also provides a few sample responses from research participants to the

qualitative question (N = 53).

Table 13

What Are Your Core Leadership Skills

Key Terms / Themes	Sample Participant Responses
Communication Skills	• Effective Communication and Listening • Good Communication • Interactional Communications Skills • Listening / Seeks Input
Human Resources Management (Staff and Volunteers)	• Board Development • Developing Staff • Empowerment • Mentoring • Team Building
Problem Solving	• Analysis and Problem Solving • Critical Thinking • Problem Solver • Problem Solving
Strategy / Strategic	• Strategic Thinker • Strategic or Long Term Thinking/Planning • Strategic Planning
Vision / Visionary	• Visionary • Implement the Vision • Articulate a Vision with Passion

Participants were asked to describe the amount of time spent per week engaged in strategic thought. This question had three parts as it asked participants to think about the amount of time thinking strategically about themselves, on behalf of their team (if applicable), and on behalf of their nonprofit organization as a whole. Table 14 provides a summary of participant responses.

Table 14

How Many Hours per Week Do You Spend in Strategic Thought, Creating a Vision

Hours Per Week	Yourself? ($N = 53$)	Your team/department (if applicable)? ($N = 42$)	Your organization? ($N = 53$)
0 to 2	45.28	21.34	16.98
3 to 5	28.30	26.19	22.64
6 to 8	3.77	11.90	15.09
9 to 11	11.32	11.90	22.64
12+	7.55	16.67	16.98
Other	3.77	11.90	5.66

Table 15 provides a summary of the issues research participants identified as important to current nonprofit leaders over the next five years. Participant responses were analyzed for similarities and key themes based on the literature. The top five trends and issues are presented, along with sample responses from the 53 respondents.

Table 15

What Trends and Issues Will Face Current Nonprofit Organization Leaders over the Next

Five Years

Key Terms / Themes	Sample Participant Responses
Resource Development and Sustainability	• The ability to do more with less • Creating a sustainable model
Volunteer and Staff Management	• Finding qualified staff • Workforce expectations • Keeping high quality staff
Marketing and Communications	• Donors wanting to be communicated with in different ways • …mission and being able to communicate that across age, gender and culture lines
Government / Legislative Impacts	• Compliance • Increased regulations
Technology	• Trends in technology

Research participants were asked the importance of having a clear vision as a

measure of effective leadership. Table 16 provides an overview of the 53 responses,

whereby 75.47% of research participants indicated that having a clear vision is a part of

effective leadership. The table also provides sample responses from the 53 respondents.

Table 16

Do You Think It Is Important for a Potential Leader to Have a Clear Vision or Dream in Order to

Become an Effective Leader

Response	Participant *n*	Participant % (*N* = 53)	Sample Participant Responses
Yes	40	75.47	• Having a vision, strategic plan and the ability to deliver are very important elements to become an effective leader • I do believe that it is essential for a potential leader to have a clear vision in order to be effective- and they must be able to paint that picture for others as well- team members and community supporters alike. This vision is the guide--one has to know where they are going if they are leading people anywhere
No	13	24.53	• Not necessarily, as the vision of the leader may be quite different than the vision of the team and or a Board of Directors. Leader must be flexible • No...If their vision is too clear, they might miss opportunities presented by others. They need to provide some vision/dream and then allow their team to grow/modify it

The final qualitative question asked participants about trends and issues impacting

future nonprofit leaders over the next five to ten years. Participant responses were

compared to the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance's ten competencies for their certified

nonprofit professional credential ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012) to determine if

there was any congruency between the identified competencies and thoughts of the issues

impacting future nonprofit administrators. Table 17 provides a comparison of the

certified nonprofit professional competencies, research participant feedback, and

terms/themes identified from analyzing research participant feedback for the top five

most commonly identified phenomena from the 53 respondents.

Table 17

What Trends and Issues Will Face the Future Nonprofit Organization Leaders over the Next Five

to Ten Years

Nonprofit Leadership Alliance Competency	Key Terms / Themes	Sample Participant Response
Financial Resource Development and Management	• Competition • Resource Availability	• Pressure to develop an earned revenue funding source • … raising the nonprofit status from a "charity who needs your donations" to helping a community better understand nonprofit is a business in need of investment…
Future of the Nonprofit Sector	• Relevance / Sustainability • Social Trends	• Social entrepreneurship, adaptable business model and financial sustainability • Redefining the nonprofit culture in an environment that demands deliverables in return for funding
Volunteer and Human Resource Management	• Human Resources Management • Volunteer Recruitment & Retention	• …learning to leverage volunteers • Keeping an excellent workforce in changing times • … leadership development in light of the impact that social media has had on personal growth for younger workers
Communication, Marketing, and Public Relations	• Social Media • Marketing / Communications	• Keeping current with social media marketing, engagement and technology • …making your organization stand out in a sea of organizations…
Governance, Leadership, and Advocacy	• Legislative Impacts • Government Regulations	• More government regulations • Changes in laws • Uncoordinated political directions

The final set of collected data using the survey tool focused on the LPI self-

assessment instrument, which includes 30 questions and a Likert-type scale. The

questions asked each respondent to indicate how frequently the individual models

behaviors and actions that are fundamental to effective leadership under the dimensions

identified by Kouzes and Posner (2002). Responses to the 30 questions were then

grouped under Kouzes's and Posner's (2002) leadership dimensions of Modeling the

Way (demonstrating how people should be treated), Inspiring a Shared Vision (creating

and enacting a vision for the future), Challenging the Process (organization and/or sector

improvement), Enabling Others to Act (building and sustaining teams), and Encouraging

the Heart (inspiring hope and determination). Responses for each leadership dimension

can range from a total score of 6 to a total score of 60. Table 18 provides an overview of

how the 51 research participants responded to the survey questions.

Table 18

LPI Self-Assessment

Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership	Mean	Standard Deviation
Model the Way	47.20	6.23
Inspire a Shared Vision	45.53	8.19
Challenge the Process	46.78	6.99
Enable Others to Act	50.43	4.41
Encourage the Heart	46.69	7.29

Summary

The purpose of this research was to discover the perceptions of nonprofit

administrators in Central Florida and reveal how their experiences have influenced their

thoughts on what it takes to effectively manage a nonprofit organization. To collect this

data, four research questions were developed, and a mixed-methods study was designed to collect data using the SurveyMonkey.com web-based tool. Invitations to participate in the research study were emailed to 155 nonprofit administrators in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties, Florida. A total of 57 individuals participated in the research study.

Research Question #1: What are the academic and professional credentials held by current (and potentially recently retired) nonprofit administrators in Central Florida?

All 57 respondents provided their educational level (Table 6). The majority of respondents at 56.14% (32 respondents) reported holding a master's degree, followed by 28.07% (16 respondents) with a bachelor's degree, 10.53% (6 respondents) with a doctorate degree, 3.51% (2 respondents) with a professional degree, and one respondent with some college credit, but no degree. Research participants were also asked the total number of years they have worked in the nonprofit sector (Table 7). Of the 57 research participants, 33.33% (19 respondents) reported working in the sector for 16 to 25 years, followed by 29.82% (17 respondents) reporting 26 to 35 years, 17.54% (10 respondents) working 11 to 15 years, four respondents with less than five years and 36 or more years respectively, and three participants reported working in the nonprofit sector between 5 to 10 years. As a point of further clarification, the 57 respondents reported their level of administrator responsibility (Table 9). 64.91% (37 respondents) reported serving as top administrators (such as chief executive, president, or executive director) and 35.09% (20 respondents) reported serving as senior executives (such as departmental head, managing director, director, or vice president).

Research Question #2: What results and/or trends emerge from exploring the self-

reported quantitative data on the knowledge, skills, and credentials held by nonprofit administrators?

The research participants (N = 57) responses to the question regarding their education level (Table 6) indicated that zero participants (0.00%) held only a high school diploma or equivalent and only one research participant (1.75%) held only some college credit, but no degree. Further, eight research participants held degrees higher than the master's level with two research participants (3.51%) reporting holding a professional degree and six research participants (10.53%) reporting a doctorate. Collected data also allows for the comparison of the number of years the research participants have served as an administrator in the nonprofit sector (Table 8) with the number of years the research participants have served as an administrator with their current nonprofit employer (Table 10). While three participants (5.26%) reported serving as a nonprofit administrator for 36 or more years (Table 8), zero (0.00%) research participants reported serving for 36 or more years with their current employer (Table 10). On the other end of the spectrum, 14.04% (8) participants reported serving at the administrator level for less than five years (Table 8) while 38.18% (21) research participants reported serving at the administrator level with their current employer (Table 10).

Research Question #3: What are the perceptions of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida regarding the knowledge, skills, and/or experiences required to successfully lead a nonprofit organization?

Qualitative data were collected in the form of open-ended questions that allowed research participants to provide their thoughts on the knowledge, skills, and/or experiences required to effectively lead a nonprofit organization. A total of 53

respondents answered the question "what has your life taught you thus far about what it means to be an effective leader?" Responses were compared to the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance's ten competencies for their certified nonprofit professional credential ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012). Responses to the question (Table 12) resulted in feedback including the following direct quotes from research participants:

- My life has taught me that authority does not make you an effective leader. Being a genuine, considerate, respectful and knowledgeable individual does. It means that you have an obligation to try to do the right thing, in the right ways, for the right reasons. To be effective as a leader, you have to have vision and passion, but be open and honest to create an atmosphere of trust with those that work with and for you.

- Being an effective leader means cultivating an atmosphere of trust and candor with my leadership team. Communication is key throughout the whole organization. Directing the spotlight of achievement on others comes back in greater performance. Keeping others inspired do meet our mission is critical.

- I have learned that a good leader demonstrates clarity of vision; openness to listen; acceptance of responsibility along with recognition that it is OK to take risks that sometimes fail; willingness to "roll up sleeves"; set high expectations and provide positive reinforcement for accomplishments.

Research Question #4: What results emerge from comparing exploratory qualitative data from nonprofit administrators about their perceptions of the nonprofit leadership knowledge, skills, and credentials requirements with the quantitative, self-reported quantitative data on the knowledge, skills, and credentials held by current nonprofit administrators?

Research participants were asked, "what are your core leadership skills?" A summary of responses is provided (Table 13), but direct quotes from research participants include:

- My core leadership skills are good communication, being results oriented, mission focused, able to get work done through others and visionary. I also believe that I am approachable, which is important in setting an atmosphere of respect.

- Being steady and predictable in my moods, responses and core values, and beliefs. My team knows how I think and will use that knowledge to problem solve. Taking a teaching approach to developing staff. Always being willing to be wrong and listen to others. Outside of the box thinking.

- Critical thinking and problem solving, ability to see the best qualities in others and to motivate others to succeed, ability to see all obstacles as challenges, willingness to take risks, the ability to continue to change and move forward and not become complacent, to lead by example, to let the work speak for itself and to avoid self-promotion--quality and quantity of work will bring success in the long run along with true respect.

Research participants were also asked, "what trends and issues will face current nonprofit organization leaders over the next five years?" (Table 15). Responses to this question included the following direct written responses from research participants:

- "The ability to do more with less. Developing nonprofit leaders. The ability to collaborate with others. Creating a sustainable model."

- "Competition for funding; multiple organizations doing similar work; workforce expectations."

- "Financial pressures as government seeks to push more to the non-profit sector to relieve themselves of service delivery burdens without adequate funding. Finding and keeping high-quality staff."

- "Changing demographics affecting resource development (millennia's choices about how to give); leadership vacuum from retirement of current, baby boomers in leadership positions; growing disparity between wealthy and struggling classes."

The quantitative data, including responses to the LPI self-assessment instrument and the responses to the open-ended questions, were compared to provide insight in the answers for each of the research questions developed for this study. Discussion of the findings is reviewed in chapter five.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this mixed-methods research study was to compare the credentials and perceptions of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida with their observations of the credentials and skills required to lead a nonprofit organization successfully. The study sought to understand the credentials, knowledge, and skills of current nonprofit administrators in Central Florida, as well as their thoughts on the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully lead a nonprofit organization over the next five to ten years. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to understand better the information provided by research participants. In support of this research project, chapter two discussed the role the nonprofit sector plays in society and the importance of a nonprofit's leadership in ensuring the organization has the guidance necessary to reach its stated mission and goals. While there are various leadership theories and types of leaders, the key implication is that a nonprofit organization's senior leaders play a significant role in organizational sustainability and viability. In chapter three, the methodology for the research study was discussed, including the significance of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from the identified pool of potential program participants. Administrators of nonprofit health and human services organizations located in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties, Florida were identified for participation. 155 nonprofit administrators--defined as the president, chief executive officer, or executive director positions, as well as administrators holding functional area leadership positions (such as vice president, division director, or department director)--were contacted and asked to participate in the study. Chapter four provides the data collection results, including any key themes identified from the coding of qualitative data. This chapter of the report

discusses the data collection results. Each of the research questions previously discussed in this paper is revisited, along with insights provided by the data from research participants. The limitations of this study and implications for future research focused on the Central Florida nonprofit sector are discussed.

To learn more about nonprofit administrators and their perceptions, a list of potential research participants was developed, targeting senior level administrators of nonprofit human services organizations in Central Florida (Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties). The Central Florida Foundation's Nonprofit Search tool was used, which identified 650 nonprofit organizations over the targeted service area. This list of organizations was culled to include only those organizations that are considered to be health and human services and only those organizations with active Central Florida Foundation nonprofit profiles detailing current administrative data, resulting in a list of 105 nonprofit organizations. To identify potential research participant, each organization's Central Florida Foundation public profile was reviewed to identify email addresses. If limited email addresses were available on the Central Florida Foundation public profile, the email addresses of identified nonprofit administrators were taken from the organization's website. If email addresses could not be identified from these sources, a general internet search using Google.com was conducted to identify an email address from a publically accessible website. If email addresses could not be determined from a general internet search, then the naming convention used for other emails found through the organization's Central Florida Foundation public profile and/or organization's website was used to deduce the email address if a nonprofit executive's name were identified.

A total of 155 nonprofit administrators were contacted by email and asked to complete a mixed methods survey providing both quantitative and qualitative data, to include information regarding the executives' perception of their knowledge, skills, and abilities as leaders. To participate in the study, potential participants were directed to the SurveyMonkey.com web-based through a specific URL address. The first screen/page of the survey provided the title of the research study, as well as identified the principal investigator, co-investigator, and contact information for Nova Southeastern University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) should there be any questions or concerns. The second screen detailed the IRB approved informed consent for participation in the research study, detailing the study description, risk/benefits, confidentiality, and research participant's rights. Research participants were advised that completing the survey implies consent to participate in the research study.

Data collection began on the third screen/page of the online survey by asking research participants to provide demographic information. A total of 57 responses were received, indicating that (Table 2) 47.37% of participants were between the ages of 55 and 64 years old, followed by 28.07% of participants in the age range of 45 to 54, 12.28% between the agencies of 35 to 44, and 8.77% were between the ages of 65 to 74. The age ranges categories of 25 to 34 and 75 years or older each had one response, or 1.75% each. Zero respondents indicated their age as 24 years old or younger.

Research participants were asked their gender (Table 3). The majority, at 75.44% identified as female, while 24.56% identified as male. Only 54 respondents answered the question regarding ethnicity (Table 4), with a small percentage--3.70% (or two respondents)--identified as Hispanic or Latino, while the majority of respondents--52 (or

96.30%) identified as Non-Hispanic or Latino. Further, only 56 respondents answered the demographic question related to race (Table 5). The majority of research participants, at 94.64%, identified as white while the remaining participants--5.36%--identified as black or African-American.

Table 6 provides a breakdown of the highest completed educational level for research participants (N = 57). The majority of participants at, 56.14%, indicated obtaining a master's degree, followed by 28.07% with a bachelor's degree, 10.53% with a doctorate, 3.51% with a professional degree, and 1.75% with some college credit, but no degree. Zero respondents reported being only a high school graduate (or equivalent), having trade/technical/vocational training, or only having an associate degree.

Survey questions then shifted to learn more about research participants' years of experience in the nonprofit section, their administrator level, and the size of the nonprofit organization of which they were employed. Participants were asked to identify the total number of years worked in the nonprofit sector and these responses were categorized in ranges (Table 7). Of the 57 total responses, the majority of 33.33% responses reported working in the nonprofit section between 16 and 25 years. The ranges with the lowest responses were 7.02% in the ranges of less than five years and more than 36 years respectively. In addition to the number of years worked in the nonprofit sector, participants were asked the number of years employed as an administrator in the nonprofit sector with their responses categorized in ranges (Table 8). There was a total of 57 responses, with the majority-- 29.82%--reported being an administrator between five and 10 years, followed by 19.30% in the range of 16 to 25 years. The fewest respondents at 5.26% had the longest tenure at 36 or more years.

To ensure research participants understood the target group for participating in the research study, participants were asked to indicate their current level of administrator responsibility (Table 9). The respondents (N = 57) indicated that 64.91% held a position at the top level of responsibility as the chief executive, president, or executive director of their organization, followed by 35.09% having a degree of responsibility considered senior executive (such as departmental head, managing director, director, vice president). No respondents answered as "other." Further, Table 10 (N = 55) provides an overview of the number of years the survey participant has served as an administrator with their current employer, with responses categorized into ranges. 38.18% indicated serving as an administrator with the current employer for fewer than five years, followed by 23.64% at 5 to 10 years, 18.18% at 11 to 15 years, 16.36% at 16 to 25 years, and 3.64% serving between 26 and 35 years.

The final demographic research questions asked participants to identify the size of their current nonprofit organization regarding the organization's annual operating budget (Table 11). Research participants (N = 57) indicated that the majority--19.30%--worked for organizations with an annual operating budget of $10,000,000 to $25,000,000, followed by 17.54% working for organizations with budgets between $2,500,001 to $5,000,000. The smallest sample of participants, at 5.26% each, worked for organizations with annual operating budgets of $500,000 or less or $25,000,001 to $50,000,000 respectively. The largest annual operating budget range of $50,000,001 or more included 14.04% of research participants.

The questions developed for this research study asked:

1. What are the academic and professional credentials held by current (and

potentially recently retired) nonprofit administrators in Central Florida?

2. What results and/or trends emerge from exploring the self-reported quantitative data on the knowledge, skills, and credentials held by nonprofit administrators?

3. What are the perceptions of nonprofit administrators in Central Florida regarding the knowledge, skills, experiences required to lead a nonprofit organization successfully?

4. What results emerge from comparing exploratory qualitative data from nonprofit administrators about their perceptions of the nonprofit leadership knowledge, skills, and credentials requirements with the quantitative, self-reported quantitative data on the knowledge, skills, and credentials held by current nonprofit administrators? Except the first research question, the remaining questions were answered using qualitative data collected using open-ended questions and quantitative data in the form of the LPI self-assessment.

Interpretation of Results

The responses to several questions asked of research participants were compared as a means to answer the research questions for this study. Responses came from the quantitative and qualitative data collected from survey participants using the Survey Monkey online survey and data collection tool. As previously discussed, quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, each set of responses were analyzed and coded separately, and then the data sets were merged (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) in this section of the research study.

Research Question #1: What are the academic and professional credentials held by

current (and potentially recently retired) nonprofit administrators in Central

Florida?

As discussed by Carolina, Carman and Nesbit (2012), nonprofit leaders require a certain level of the education and training to successfully administrate in their respective organizations. This level of knowledge and skill can be learned from academics, as well as through work experiences. Further, nationally respected organizations such as the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance hold that leadership development programs that lead to a specific credential will complement undergraduate, graduate, or post-graduate degrees and better prepare current and future nonprofit leaders ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012). The research participant (N = 57) responses to the question regarding educational level indicates that both current nonprofit administrators (and to an extent the boards of directors and/or senior leadership who hired the administrators) value an advanced degree since the majority of research participants--56.14%--reported earning a master's degree. The research responses imply that experience alone is not enough to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to lead a nonprofit organization successfully. Nonprofit administrators can also benefit from the theories and foundations that come with a formal education.

Research Question #2: What results and/or trends emerge from exploring the self-reported quantitative data on the knowledge, skills, and credentials held by nonprofit administrators?

It must be noted that the respondent who indicated some college credit, but no degree, also reported serving at the administrator level for over 47 years during their career tenure, with 16 of the years in the nonprofit sector. Thus, the lowest educated

research participant regarding educational level is the research participant with the longest tenure at a level of vice president or equivalent position or higher. The research participants who indicated 39 and 37 years (respectively) of total nonprofit administrator experience each reported obtaining a master's degree. However, the respondent with the fourth longest total tenure at the administrative level--35 years--reported obtaining a bachelor's degree. Four respondents reported service at the administrator level between 30 and 35 years. Three of these research participants reported having a master's degree while the fourth reported obtaining a doctorate. According to Matías-Reche, Rubio-López, and Rueda-Manzanares (2009), nonprofit organizations that more closely operate similarly to for-profit organizations are most likely to have higher requirements for university education executives, especially at the chief executive officer level. All of the research participants reporting more than 30 years of total administrator level experience, only one indicated their organization's annual operating budget of at least $2,500,000. The remaining respondents with the most years of administrator tenure reported working for organizations with an annual budget of at least $5,000,000 up through $50,000,001 or more. These responses imply that for larger nonprofit organizations, the requirement for administrator level positions requires an extensive career at the administrator level and/or an advanced education.

The requirement for an advanced education also seems evident for those research participants reporting less than ten years at the administrator level in their nonprofit career. Twenty-five research participants fell into this category, and of these respondents, 76% (N = 19) reported obtaining a professional degree, master's degree, or doctorate. The advanced degrees are the only primary common denominator for this particular

group, as the age range varied from 35 years of age through 74 years of age and the total number of years in the nonprofit sector were reported from as few as three years all the way through 30 years. The administrator level of these respondents was a close split with 56% (N = 14) reporting as senior executive (such as department head, managing director, director, or vice president) and 44% (N= 11) reporting as top executive (such as chief executive, president, or executive director).

In reviewing the LPI self-assessment results for the research participants, results were analyzed based on each of leadership dimensions presented by Kouzes and Posner (2002). Reviewing the mean scores for all participants who completed the self-assessment (N = 51) revealed average ratings for the research participants as a whole (Table 18). Potentially more revealing, however, were the mean scores for each leadership dimension based on the questions research participants answered, resulting in the total score for the leadership dimension (Appendix I).

Model the way. Kouzes and Posner (2012) describe the first step in the leadership dimensions as a leader's ability to identify their personal beliefs and values and demonstrate those beliefs and values for others. In the LPI self-assessment, research participants are asked to answer six questions regarding their values and the frequency to which they demonstrate these values. The respondents answering these questions (N = 51) indicated that setting an example of expectations and follow through on commitments and promises were the most frequent ways these leaders exemplified the behaviors they expected from their teams, whereby 30.18% indicated "very frequently" and 15.42% indicated "almost always." However, respondents also indicated they spent less time ensuring others were following through with the examples set by the leader. Authenticity

is an important means for nonprofit leaders to create buy-in both to the mission and

vision of the organization they represent and themselves as a leader (Gilstrap, White, and

Spradlin, 2015). The implication is that if a leader truly values a certain set of beliefs and

expects internal and external constituencies buy into those beliefs and exhibit the same

behaviors, then the leader must be prepared to follow through on those expectations.

Exhibiting the behaviors is only part of the equation in modeling the way for employees.

Leaders must also be prepared to set clear expectations and hold their employees to these

expectations through deliberately dedicating the time necessary to ensure the principles

and standards are met.

Inspire a shared vision. A nonprofit's leadership is responsible for describing

the vision of the future for the organization, which includes the connection to the

organization's mission and the steps the organization will take to achieve the desired

vision (Cummings & Worley, 2013; Kotter, 2012). Kouzes and Posner (2012) further

explain that leaders need to be forward thinking and inspire others, especially those

employed by the organization, to commit to the vision. It is telling, then, that the majority

of research participants ($N = 51$) indicated that they "fairly often" or "usually" (27.45%

each) discuss future trends and the impacts on the organization with their staff members.

As opposed to those research participants who indicated they "very frequently" (21.57%)

or "almost always" (3.92%). It is also worth noting that 54.90% of respondents indicated

they "almost always" speak with genuine conviction regarding the purpose, mission, and

vision of their organization and the role it plays in the community. The implication is that

while nonprofit leaders were more likely to believe and demonstrate the purpose and

vision of their organization, these leaders do not always actively engage members of their

staff in planning for the future. While understanding the role the nonprofit organization

plays in the community is important, it is equally important for staff to understand the

significance of trends and issues affecting both the organization itself (and the nonprofit

sector as a whole) and how members of the staff can help sustain the organization in the

future.

Challenge the process. As with any sector, the nonprofit sector is subject to

change due to the impacts of technology, the needs of the community, staffing

requirements, and other internal and external factors (Robbins, DeCenzo & Wolter,

2013). Change management in an organization is not for the purpose of imposing change,

but to respond to trends and issues impacting the organization. Any impacts requiring

change also require an organization's staff and volunteers to meet the challenge head on

to ensure the organization reaches its goals. To help meet these challenges, a nonprofit's

senior administrators must be prepared to lead the organization through the necessary

changes and take risks when necessary (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Robbins et al., 2013).

Therefore, challenging the process as a leadership dimension focuses on how well a

leader engages challenges, pushes boundaries, and engages in risk for the purpose of

creating change (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The participants in this research study (N =

51) covered the gamut of possible responses regarding how they challenge the process

and encourage others to do so as well. In regards to testing their own skills and abilities, a

total of 33.33% indicated they challenged the process "once in a while", "occasionally",

or "sometimes" while the larger majority of 66.67% indicated "fairly often", "usually",

"very frequently", and "almost always". The responses were more spread out in regards

to encouraging others to use innovation to reach goals. However, the majority at 84.32%

responded "fairly often," "usually," "very frequently", and "almost always." Overall, while 37.58% of respondents indicated they challenged the process on an infrequent basis, the majority of research participants at 62.42% reported challenging the process at least "usually" and more commonly "very frequently." The results indicate that the nonprofit leaders participating in this study encourage the use of innovation in accomplishing tasks and responsibilities, but not so much when it comes to challenging the status quo or leadership within the organization. It must be noted that a majority of research participants indicated they were age 55 or older, which may imply differences attributed to the older generation may factor in when questioning or challenging authority.

Enable others to act. Manzoor (2012) identified several factors that impact an employee's job performance and thus an organization's effectiveness. These factors include access to true leadership, encouragement, and an atmosphere of trust within the organization (Manzoor, 20012). The concept of trust is discussed by Kouzes and Posner (2012) regarding a leader's ability to establish trust within the organization as a means of fostering collaboration. The discussion on trust and organizational leaders' responsibility for fostering trust also includes leadership demonstrating they trust their employers and thus empower them to perform agreed upon services. The implication is that employee who feel empowered and appreciated will make a more meaningful contribution to their employer (Manzoor, 20012). Thus, the LPI questions measuring the Kouzes and Posner (2012) leadership dimension of "enable others to act" asks to what extent the research participants develop cooperative relationships, treat others with respect, give employees the freedom to work, and provide opportunities for increased skills and development. In

responding to these questions (Table 18), collectively, the mean score for the survey

participants (N = 51) was higher at 50.43% than any of the other four categories which all

have a mean score that is below 48%. This response indicates that the research

participants indicated that of all the leadership dimensions, respondents indicated they

empowered their staff the most. Of the six questions used to collect data for this

leadership dimension, the question answered as "very frequently" by mean score 41.18%

(Appendix I), the highest rating for any one question for this dimension, indicates

research participants specified the development of cooperative relationships with the

people they work with (Kouzes & Posner, 2012) as being highly important.

Encourage the heart. The final Kouzes and Posner (2012) leadership dimension

focuses on the extent to which leaders set high expectations, but provide the means to

achieve these expectations, and recognize staff in meaningful and personal ways when

expectations are met and/or exceeded. As pointed out by Manzoor (2012), positive

employee recognition enhances motivation and fosters positive work behaviors. Further,

Mohrman (as cited in Barling, 2014), indicates that a key part of employee recognition

and retention occurs in organizations where goal attainment and/or the enhanced

knowledge, skills, or abilities of employees are recognized. The administrators of a

nonprofit organization are the employees with the greatest impact on the organization and

the work of others (Carson, 2011). It is encouraging, then, when the lowest response to

the LPI question regarding how frequently leaders informed staff of their confidence in

the, only 11.76% of respondents indicated "sometimes" while the remaining responses

fell into the categories of "fairly often" or more frequently as indicated by the responses

(Appendix I). However, the remaining five questions measuring to what extent leaders

"encourage the heart" (Kouzes & Posner, 2012), a small percentage of respondents

provided answers that indicated less frequent feedback than "occasionally". For example,

one respondent indicated they "rarely" reward their staff creatively for their successes,

while another answered the same question as "seldom". It must be noted, however, that

the highest percentage of respondents at 62.42% indicated they "usually", "very

frequently", or "almost always" work to actively recognize their staff for their

contributions (Appendix I).

In summary, it does not appear that one dimension of education or work

experience alone is an indicator of how well an individual may perform at the

administrator level of an organization. Instead, as indicated by the participants in this

research project, a combination of formal education, work experiences, and strategic

thought has helped each administrator build and maintain their leadership capacity. Also,

each leader must individually determine one's core strengths and how to use these

strengths combined with one's knowledge and skills to lead one's organization. As

discussed by Heyman (2011), nonprofit leadership is comprised of the strategy and vision

needed to lead the organization as well as the infrastructural supports needed within the

organization to ensure success. Leadership is multifaceted and requires a combination of

multiple theories, characteristics, and skills. Within nonprofit organizations, the

administrators' key roles are to paint the picture of the purpose of the organization and its

goals, and then step back and allow the organization's empowered staff to do perform

their role (Heyman, 2011).

Research Question #3: What are the perceptions of nonprofit administrators in

Central Florida regarding the knowledge, skills, and/or experiences required to

successfully lead a nonprofit organization?

As discussed by Clark (2012), engaging in strategic thought allows organizational leaders to collect and evaluate data that will help with identifying potential issues impacting the organization and strategies for addressing these issues. Strategic thinking allows leaders to have a better chance at ensuring the sustainability of the organization in the present and the future (Clark, 2012). Research participants were asked for how long they engaged in strategic thought per week in three areas--for themselves, for their team or department (if applicable), and for the organization as a whole (Table 14). In thinking of themselves (N = 53), the majority of respondents at 45.28% indicated they spent less than two hours per week engaging in strategic thought. A small group of respondents, 3.77%, were included in an "other" category as their responses included "continual and ongoing; all thought and decisions must be strategic" and "hard one…not much I'm afraid." While in total they were a smaller group of respondents (N = 42)--who are assumed to be leaders of specific departments of teams--26.19% indicated they spent between three and five hours per week engaging in strategic thought for their team. One particular response from this group was "not enough...too many deadlines/projects." In the final grouping, regarding the number of weekly hours spent in strategic thought for the organization, the majority of respondents (N = 53) indicated that 22.64% spent three to five hours engaged in thought, and 22.64% spent nine to eleven hours engaged in strategic thought. One particular respondent indicated that "countless" hours were spent engaged in strategic thought for the organization. The implication that leadership requires more than identifying oneself as strategic, though in general the research participants spent little time engaged in actual strategic thought. This finding is a sharp contrast to

"strategy/strategic" being identified as a top five leadership skill identified by research

participants (Table 13). Research participants understand the value of strategy and

strategizing, but do not indicate finding the time to actively practice thinking strategically

before putting strategy into action.

As previously discussed, research participants were asked open-ended questions

to learn more about their perceptions and gain insight into each administrator's viewpoint

on the issue (Roberts et al., 2014). Research participants were asked the importance of

having a clear vision as a measure of effective leadership. The majority of respondents

(Table 16) answered the question with a "yes" or "no" response and provided further

elaboration on the topic. The majority of respondents at 75.47% indicated that having a

vision is a key component to effective leadership for reasons including the ability to

"paint the picture for others", "developing plans for success", and "know[ing] where you

are going". For those respondents (24.53%) indicating visioning was not a key factor of

leadership, reasons included the need for flexibility, avoiding missed opportunities based

on the vision of others, and the need to combine the vision of the organization's staff and

its board of directors.

Next, research participants were asked about the trends and issues that will impact

future nonprofit leaders over the next five to ten years, another open-ended question. The

responses were compared to the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance's ten competencies for

their certified nonprofit professional credential ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012)

to determine if there was any congruency between the identified competencies and

thoughts of the issues impacting future nonprofit administrators by first identifying key

terms or themes amongst the responses then comparing to the Nonprofit Leadership

Alliance's competencies (Table 17). Responses indicated that the top five concerns based

on the frequency of responses were leaders' ability to identify sustainable financial

resources in an atmosphere of competition, keeping an eye on the trends impacting the

nonprofit sector (especially social trends and the role the society feels nonprofits play in

the community), ongoing recruitment and management of the organization's volunteers

and staff, the impacts of social media on an organization's marketing and

communications strategies, and staying abreast of nonprofit governance and advocacy

issues as a result of government regulations, government funding, and the impacts of

legislation.

In reviewing the responses to these questions, regarding the perceptions of

nonprofit administrators in Central Florida regarding the knowledge, skills, and/or

experiences required to lead a nonprofit organization successfully, it would appear that

vision and strategy are key skills and abilities required for leadership success. While

these skills and abilities are needed to create a vision for the future and keep the

organization on track to achieve its stated mission and goals, each crosses some facets of

the organization. Nonprofit leaders in Central Florida cannot lead the organization as a

whole without paying attention to the many external and internal influences on

organizational success. Ensuring organizational sustainability is about more than raising

the funds necessary for operations, but also about the perceived importance of the

organization in the local community and whether or not the organization is needed, and

the organization's ability to communicate why it is a needed component in society

through means that reaches the targeted audiences. Volunteer and staff management

includes identifying the right people, for the right positions, and offering the right

information and guidance that allows them to perform in their role. Integral to this facet is

the role of generational characteristics and the impacts on recruiting, rewarding, and

retaining talent.

Research Question #4: What results emerge from comparing exploratory qualitative

data from nonprofit administrators about their perceptions of the nonprofit

leadership knowledge, skills, and credentials requirements with the quantitative,

self-reported quantitative data on the knowledge, skills, and credentials held by

current nonprofit administrators?

Research participants were asked questions regarding their perceptions of

effective leadership and about their skills as leaders. First, research participants were

asked to discuss what it means to be an effective leader. Responses to this open-ended

question were analyzed or key themes and compared to the Nonprofit Leadership

Alliance's ten competencies for their certified nonprofit professional credential

("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012) to determine if there was any congruency

between the identified competencies and current nonprofit administrator thoughts. The

first set of terms and themes revealed in research participant responses (Table 12)

indicated that accountability and trust are key components of leadership, which aligns

with the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance's competency of governance, leadership and

advocacy. One respondent indicated, "…authority does not make you an effective leader.

Being a genuine, considerate, respectful and knowledgeable individual does." Clear

communications, metrics, and trust were also identified as components of leadership,

aligning with leadership competencies related to volunteer and human resource

management ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012). As noted by a respondent,

"…effective leadership has been accomplished through an overarching attitude of openness to new ideas, collegial and collaborative conversations, pursuing innovation and welcoming staff into the process." Third on the most identified themes is the ability of leaders to delegate (share responsibilities) and respect the knowledge and ability of others, which were demonstrated through the leadership competency of personal and professional development. "Directing the spotlight of achievement on others comes back in greater performance." The competency related to communication, marketing, and public relations aligns with respondents identifying clear communications as a theme of being an effective leader, summed up by "[the] effective leader must be an effective communicator/influencer." Finally, common goals, defined growth and outcomes based results (aligning with program development competencies), was identified as a key to effective leadership in that "the ability to create a common mission and goals through a team approach creating synergy between staff and volunteers." Also, research respondents were also asked to identify their core leadership skills. These responses were reviewed for common terms and/or themes, the top five of which were identified as communication skills, human resources management [of staff and volunteers], problem-solving, strategy [development]/strategic [planning], and [developing a] vision/[being a] visionary (Table 13). Finally, research participants were asked to identify the trends and issues will face future nonprofit organization leaders over the next five to ten years (Table 17). These responses were compared to the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance's ten competencies for their certified nonprofit professional credential ("Nonprofit Leadership Alliance", 2012) to determine if there was any congruency between the identified competencies and thoughts of the issues impacting future nonprofit administrators.

From reviewing responses to the related questions, it would appear that nonprofit leaders perceive visioning and strategic thought as key skills for nonprofit administrators, but do not frequently dedicate the time necessary to engage in active strategic vision. Further, the trends and issues identified as impacting current nonprofit leaders (resource development and sustainability, volunteer and staff management, marketing and communications, government / legislative impacts, and technology) have some correlation with the top core leadership skills research participants have identified for themselves (communication skills, human resources management, problem-solving, strategy/strategic, and vision/visionary). Knowledge gained from formal and informal education and years of work experience are only part of the leadership knowledge, skills, and credentials requirements needed by nonprofit administrators. These administrators must also have the ability to act on the required and knowledge and skills to be successful.

Implications of Findings

Jost (2013) describes the fascination with leadership amongst scholars as a wanting to understand how to motivate and encourage subordinates. Leaders' abilities to influence those around them through establishing and maintaining relationships is of key importance to the viability of any organization (Jost). The insinuation is that an organization can have the resources it needs to work toward its mission and goals, but without the support of the community and appropriate human resources, the organization's chances of success are slim. The key to Jost's research is the discussion that leadership models and theories are not one size fits all. The most appropriate leadership strategy or theory is situational and dependent upon the leader in question, the

environment and structure of the organization, and the factors affecting the organization at the moment (Jost).

In Rowe's (2014) essay on leadership, the author found that the skills and abilities needed to lead a nonprofit organization did not differ from the leadership skills needed to lead any other type of organization (including for-profit businesses) due to similarities related to the mission guiding operations, adhering to accounting principles, the need for talented human resources (and thus human resources management), and goal setting. Therefore, the leaders of nonprofit organizations must demonstrate the ability to manage organizational operations while being visionary and providing the guidance that will ensure organizational sustainability and its viability in the future (Rowe). The author also identified strategic leadership as a means that focuses on ethics, goal setting, developing strategies, and implementing those strategies to achieve goals (Rowe). The research findings of both Jost (2013) and Rowe (2014) were echoed in the perceptions and thoughts offered by the nonprofit administrators in Central Florida that participated in this research study.

While many of the nonprofit administrators who participated in this study identified similar issues and concerns for current and future leaders--to include resources development, organizational sustainability, human resources management, marketing, government relations, technological changes, and the overall future of the nonprofit sector (Table 15; Table 17)--results of the LPI self-assessment indicate that each of these administrators approach leadership in different ways that are indeed situational based on their skills and abilities and the impacts on their respective organizations. This indicates the adaptable nature of leadership and the need for nonprofit administrators to have an

understanding of the internal and external impacts on the organization, the administrator's own skills and abilities, and understanding the type of leadership strategy (or combination of strategies) needed to navigate the organization in the present and into the future.

Limitations

The findings in this research study were based on a very small sample of nonprofit administrators of organizations located in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties in Florida (identified in this study as Central Florida). Therefore, these findings do not represent Central Florida nonprofit sector as a whole. Review of research participants responses revealed the missed opportunity to ask more in-depth questions related to how each administrator viewed his/her leadership style, if the administrator identified more strongly with any specific leadership theory, and if the administrator has ever changed or adapted his/her leadership style in response to specific circumstances impacting the organization.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study provided the perceptions of the limited number of nonprofit administrators in the Central Florida region regarding their thoughts on leadership and leading a nonprofit organization successfully. Due to the variety of the types of nonprofit organizations in the Central Florida region, the current trends in philanthropy for this region, and impacts of the Florida Legislature, a broader study is needed with specifics focused on different sized organizations, different types of organizations based on nonprofit taxonomy classifications, and larger sample size of research participants. Also, further studies into Central Florida's nonprofit sector should include more detailed

questions regarding participants' chosen leadership style, how his/her chosen current leadership style developed, and if his/her leadership style has changed over time. Finally, while using an online survey was a sufficient means of collecting data from multiple research participants over a short period, richer qualitative data could be collected from the use of focus groups and/or one-on-one interviews, allowing for follow-up questions and clarifications of research participant responses.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to learn from Central Florida's nonprofit administrators about his/her experiences as a nonprofit leader and their perceptions of the knowledge and skills needed to lead a nonprofit organization successfully. A convergent parallel mixed methods research study allowed this researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, analyze the data separately and merge he results to answer the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Data collection and some analysis occurred using the SurveyMonkey.com web-based tool.

Results of this research indicated that despite available research theories on leadership and the possible approaches to developing leadership skills, how a leader thinks and acts is largely dependent on his/her educational background, experiences, personality, and prioritization in his/her role as a nonprofit administrator. Leadership theories and competencies offer guidelines, but cannot possibly provide step-by-step instructions for developing one's leadership skills. Further, the perceptions of a few--or possibly even all--nonprofit administrators cannot dictate the success of future nonprofit administrators due to the trends impacting the nonprofit sector, and the knowledge, skills, and experiences of future nonprofit leaders.

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Appendix A

Formative Committee Invitation

August 12, 2015

Dear :

For the past three years I have been working towards my Doctor of Education degree in Human Services Administration at Nova Southeastern University. I am approaching the end of my studies and am therefore engaged in a dissertation research project. The focus of this project will be to learn how senior executives understand their role in the administration of a nonprofit organization and to discover their opinions regarding the knowledge and skills required to successfully fulfill this role.

Therefore, the purpose of this email is to request your participation in the proposed research study. I would be honored to have your serve as a member of the Formative Committee that will work with me to refine the demographic and phenomenological questions that will be used to collect background information from research participants, as well as insight on their perceptions of nonprofit leadership's required knowledge, skills, and credentials in order to be an effective nonprofit administrator using qualitative questions have been adapted from Clawson's (2012) text.

Once the Formative Committee has helped me finalize the data collection questions, the product will then be sent to a Summative Committee for their opinions, feedback, and validation.

If you have the time and are interested in voluntarily participating in this research effort, after reading the consent form attached to this email, please submit to me:

1) Via email, a short (two-three sentences) bio that list your credentials, education, relevant experience, and number of years of experience. This information will be used to provide a brief, but anonymous, description of you as a participant of the Formative Committee.
2) Via U.S. mail, a signed and dated copy of the informed consent for participation form to be returned to my attention at 739 Floral Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (If you would like me to provide you with a hardcopy of the informed consent as well as a self-addressed, postage paid envelope, please let me know via email and I will send this to you ASAP.)

Upon receipt of the consent form, I will submit to you a synopsis of the study and the data collection questions, along with a Formative Committee feedback form. Your comments and suggestions for improvement would be greatly appreciated. I thank you in advance for considering participating as a member of my dissertation Formative Committee.

However, I completely understanding if you do not have the time to participate or cannot be involved and I thank you for your considering my request. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by email at jb2064@nova.edu or call me at 407-791-3328.

Please do not feel obligated in any way to participate. I have asked you to participate in my research study due to my understanding and respect of your expertise and the value I believe you can add to guiding my research.

At your earliest convenience, please respond to this email with your participation confirmation and brief bio or let me know that you will have to decline participation.

Again, thank you for considering my request.

Best regards,

JahKiya Bell
Candidate for Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Human Services Administration
Nova Southeastern University
jb2064@nova.edu
407-791-3328 (cell)

Appendix B

Summative Committee Invitation

August 12, 2015

Dear :

For the past three years I have been working towards my Doctor of Education degree in Human Services Administration at Nova Southeastern University. I am approaching the end of my studies and am therefore engaged in a dissertation research project. The focus of this project will be to learn how senior executives understand their role in the administration of a nonprofit organization and to discover their opinions regarding the knowledge and skills required to successfully fulfill this role.

Therefore, the purpose of this email is to request your participation in the proposed research study. I would be honored to have your serve as a member of the Summative Committee that will work with me to validate the demographic and phenomenological questions that will be used to collect background information from research participants, as well as insight on their perceptions of nonprofit leadership's required knowledge, skills, and credentials in order to be an effective nonprofit administrator using qualitative questions have been adapted from Clawson's (2012) text in conjunction with a Formative Committee.

If you have the time and are interested in voluntarily participating in this research effort, after reading the consent form attached to this email, please submit to me:

(1) Via email, a short (two-three sentences) bio that list your credentials, education, relevant experience, and number of years of experience. This information will be used to provide a brief, but anonymous, description of you as a participant of the Sum
 (2) Via U.S. mail, a signed and dated copy of the informed consent for participation form to be returned to my attention at 739 Floral Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (If you would like me to provide you with a hardcopy of the informed consent as well as a self-addressed, postage paid envelope, please let me know via email and I will send this to you ASAP.)

Upon receipt of the consent form, I will submit to you a synopsis of the study and the data collection questions, along with Summative Committee feedback forms. Your comments, suggestions for improvement, and/or validation would be greatly appreciated. I thank you in advance for agreeing to be a member of my dissertation Summative Committee.

However, I completely understanding if you do not have the time to participate or cannot be involved and I thank you for your considering my request. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by email at jb2064@nova.edu or call me at 407-791-3328.

Please do not feel obligated in any way to participate. I have asked you to participate in my research study due to my understanding and respect of your expertise and the value I believe you can add to guiding my research.

At your earliest convenience, please respond to this email with your participation confirmation and brief bio or let me know that you will have to decline participation.

Again, thank you for considering my request.

Best regards,

JahKiya Bell
Candidate for Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Human Services Administration
Nova Southeastern University
jb2064@nova.edu
407-791-3328 (cell)

Appendix C

Formative Committee Members

Formative Committee Members

The following individuals were selected for and accepted participation as a member of the Formative Committee convened to finalize demographic and phenomenological questions used as a part of this research study. The qualifications and credentials of the Formative Committee members are detailed below.

College Dean, Ph.D.

The Dean is the head of the College of Health and Public Affairs at a local university. The College of Health and Public Affairs consists of six departments, one school and seven centers and institutes, which includes the School of Public Administration. The Dean is a national expert in the area of social work and has held faculty positions at Eastern Washington University, Boston University, the University of Minnesota, and Florida State University. The Dean earned a Ph.D. from the Florence Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, a Master's degree from the University of Michigan, and a Bachelor's degree from New York University.

Director, Institute for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership

The Institute Director is the executive director of and Institute for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership at a local college. The Institute Director has full administrative responsibility for the college's multi-purpose institute dedicated to providing a broad range of executive education programs, workshops, and services for volunteer and staff leadership of nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. The Institute Director has presented at the national BoardSource Conference and continues to provide training in board governance, organizational assessment, and leadership. Prior to joining the Institute in 2004, the Institute Director served as the executive director of a large nonprofit organization for 18 years. The Institute Director has a Master of Business Administration from the Crummer Graduate School of Business at Rollins College, as well as a Bachelor of Arts degree from Rollins College.

Director of Nonprofit Management Programs, Ph.D.

The Director of Nonprofit Management Programs at a local university has taught public administration and nonprofit management courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels since 2003. The Director is the vice-chair of the Association of Nonprofit Educators and sits on the board of directors for the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance. The Director earned a Ph.D. in Public Affairs from the University of Central Florida, a Master's degree in Public Administration from Troy State University, and Bachelor's degree with an interdisciplinary in Public Service from Florida State University.   Prior to entering academia, the Director worked in the nonprofit sector for almost ten years.

Appendix D

Summative Committee Members

Summative Committee Members

The following individuals were selected for and accepted participation as a member of the Summative Committee convened to finalize demographic and phenomenological questions used as a part of this research study. The qualifications and credentials of the Summative Committee members are detailed below.

President and Chief Executive Officer, Philanthropic Foundation

The President/CEO's background includes more than a decade as a management consultant in the private and independent sectors, leading merger and acquisition strategies for cross-sector initiatives. In the current role, the President/CEO plays a leadership role in a number of national and community initiatives, with a focus on growing philanthropy, strategic grant-making, and public policy. The President/CEO holds a Bachelor's degree in Business, a Master's degree in Public Administration with a specialty in Nonprofit Management, is a Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy ®, and is a candidate for a Ph.D. in Public Administration with a specialty in Policy and Law from Walden University.

Professor of Management and Academic Director

The Professor is the Professor of Management and Academic Director of the Center for Leadership Development for the graduate school of business for a local college. The Professor teaches graduate-level courses in leadership, organizational behavior, research methods, and management strategy. The Professor was a recent recipient of a distinguished teaching award for outstanding teaching, research, and service to the college. The Professor's consulting experience includes leadership development, executive coaching, strategic planning, and board development. The Professor earned a Ph.D. in Management from the University of Florida, Master of Business Administration from Rollins College, and a Bachelor's of Science in Mathematics from Stetson University.

President and Chief Executive Officer, Health Foundation

The President/CEO is the leader of a private, not-for-profit organization supporting programs that improve the health of youth, older adults and the community-at-large. The President/CEO came to the organization after leaving the position of Executive Director of Medical School Alumni Affairs and Development at Duke University. The President/CEO is active in the health and health care community, serving on a number of boards and committees of local organizations. The President/CEO received Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Appendix E

Formative and Summative Committee Feedback Form

Formative and Summative Committee Feedback Form
for Demographic and Phenomenological Survey Questions

Name: _____   Date: _____

Please review the demographic and phenomenological survey questions provided with this feedback from. Based on your review of the questions, please indicate your feedback regarding the following:

1. Are the survey questions presented clearly and concisely?

    _____ Yes   _____ No

    Comments:

2. If applicable, please detail any recommendations/suggestions for editing the existing questions provided in the survey:

3. Please detail any recommendations/suggesting for adding any new questions to the survey:

Please return your completed form by email to JahKiya Bell at jb2064@nova.edu.
Thank you!

Appendix F

Validated Demographic and Phenomenological Survey Questions

Exploring the Career Experiences and Leadership Perceptions of Nonprofit Executives in Central Florida: A Mixed-Methods Study

Demographic & Phenomenological Research Questions

I.   DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

1. Please select your age range from the choices below:
   a. 18-24 years old
   b. 25-34 years old
   c. 35-44 years old
   d. 45-54 years old
   e. 55-64 years old
   f. 65-74 years old
   g. 75 years or older

2. Please select your gender:
   a. Female
   b. Male

3. Please indicate your ethnicity:
   a. Hispanic or Latino
   b. Non-Hispanic or Latino

4. Please indicate your race:
   a. American Indian and Alaska Native
   b. Asian
   c. Black or African American
   d. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
   e. White
   f. Two or more races

5. Please indicate your highest completed educational level:
   a. High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent
   b. Some college credit, no degree
   c. Trade/technical/vocational training
   d. Associate degree
   e. Bachelor's degree
   f. Master's degree
   g. Professional degree
   h. Doctorate degree

6. Please indicate the number of years you have worked in the nonprofit sector:

7. Please indicate the number of years you have served at the administrator level over the course of your career (vice president or equivalent position or higher):

8. Please indicate your current administrator level/degree of responsibility/position:
   a. Top (Chief Executive, President, Executive Director)
   b. Senior Executive (Departmental Head, Managing Director, Director, Vice

President)

9. Please indicate the number of years you have served at the administrator level with your current nonprofit employer:

10. Please indicate the size of your organization based on the organization's annual operating budget:
    a. $500,000 or less
    b. $500,001 to $1,000,000
    c. $1,000,001 to $2,500,000
    d. $2,500,001 to $5,000,000
    e. $5,000,000 to $10,000,000
    f. $10,000,000 to $25,000,000
    g. $25,000,001 to $50,000,000
    h. $50,000,001 or more

II.   PHENOMENOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

The next section of this survey is to explore your perceptions, thoughts, ideas, and/or experiences regarding the knowledge, skills, and leadership practices required to effectively lead a nonprofit organization.

Please answer the following questions regarding your self-perceptions and experiences:

1. What has your life taught you thus far about what it means to be an effective leader?

2. What are your core leadership skills?

3. On average, how many hours per week do you spend in strategic thought, creating a vision for:
    a. Yourself?
    b. Your team/department (if applicable)?
    c. Your organization?

4. What trends and issues will face <u>current</u> nonprofit organization leaders over the next five years?

Please answer the following questions regarding your perceptions for future nonprofit administrators:

7. Do you think it is important for a potential leader to have a clear vision or dream in order to become an effective leader? Why or why not?

8. What trends and issues will face the <u>future</u> nonprofit organization leaders over the next five to ten years?

Appendix G

Leadership Practices Inventory® Self

LPI®: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY® SELF

INSTRUCTIONS

Write your name in the space provided at the top of the next page. Below your name, you will find thirty statements describing various leadership behaviors. Please read each statement carefully, and using the rating scale below, ask yourself:

"How frequently do I engage in the behavior described?"

- Be realistic about the extent to which you actually engage in the behavior.

- Be as honest and accurate as you can be.

- DO NOT answer in terms of how you would like to behave or in terms of how you think you should behave.

- DO answer in terms of how you typically behave on most days, on most projects, and with most people.

- Be thoughtful about your responses. For example, giving yourself 10s on all items in most likely not an accurate description of your behavior. Similarly, giving yourself all 1s or all 5s is most likely not an accurate description either. Most people will do some things more or less often than they do other things.

- If you feel that a statement does not apply to you, it's probably because you don't frequently engage in the behavior. In that case, assign a rating of 3 or lower.

For each statement, decide on a response and then record the corresponding number in the box to the right of the statement. After you have responded to all thirty statements, go back through the LPI one more time to make sure you have responded to each statement. *Every* statement *must* have a rating.

The Rating Scale runs from 1 to 10. Choose the number that best applies to each statement.

RATING SCALE:
1-Almost Never
2-Rarely
3-Seldom
4-Once in a While

5-Occasionally
6-Sometimes
7-Failry Often
8-Usually
9-Very Frequently
10-Almost Always

When you have completed the LPI-Self, please return it to:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you.

To what extent do you engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of the statement.

1. I set a personal example of what I expect of others. ____

2. I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done. ____

3. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities. ____

4. I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with. ____

5. I praise people for a job well done. ____

6. I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on. ____

7. I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like. ____

8. I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work. ____

9. I actively listen to diverse points of view. ____

10. I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities. ____

11. I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make. ____

12. I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future. ____

13. I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do. ____

14. I treat others with dignity and respect. ____

15. I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects. ____

16. I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people's performance. ____

17. I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision. ____

18. I ask "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected. ____

20. I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values. ____

21. I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization. ____

22. I paint the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish. ____

23. I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on. ____

24. I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work. ____

25. I find ways to celebrate accomplishments. ____

26. I am clear about my philosophy of leadership. ____

27. I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work. ____

28. I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure. ____

29. I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves. ____

30. I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions. ____

Appendix H

Email Invitation to Research Participants

Greetings,

For more than three years I have been working towards my Doctor of Education degree in Human Services Administration at Nova Southeastern University. I am approaching the end of my studies and am therefore engaged in a dissertation research project. The focus of this project is to learn how senior executives understand their role in the administration of a nonprofit organization and to discover their opinions regarding the knowledge and skills required to successfully fulfill this role.

Therefore, the purpose of this email is to request your participation in the proposed research study. I would be honored to have your serve as an **anonymous research participant** by completing an online survey consisting of questions designed to collect your opinions and perceptions regarding the credentials and skills needed for effective nonprofit management. Please see the attached letter for additional details on this research project.

If you have the time and are interested in voluntarily participating in this research effort, please visit the following website: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LeaderPractices. Here you will find additional information about the research study, including an online consent for participation.

However, I completely understand if you do not have the time to participate or cannot be involved and I thank you for your considering my request. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by email at jb2064@nova.edu or call me at 407-791-3328. You may also pass on my contact information and/or the link to the survey to other nonprofit executives you feel may be interested in participating in this study.

Please do not feel obligated in any way to participate. I have asked you to participate in my research study due to my understanding and respect of your expertise and the value I believe you can add to guiding my research.

Again, thank you for considering my request.

Best regards,

JahKiya Bell
Candidate for Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Human Services Administration
Nova Southeastern University
jb2064@nova.edu
407-791-3328 (cell)

Appendix I

Cumulative Responses to Each Leadership Practices Inventory

Leadership Dimension Questions

Model the Way
$N = 51$

	Almost Never	Rarely	Seldom	Once in a While	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Usually	Very Frequently	Almost Always
I set a personal example of what I expect of others.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	13.73	25.49	27.45	33.33
I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on.	1.96	0.00	3.92	0.00	7.84	5.88	23.53	27.45	19.61	9.80
I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.88	5.88	17.65	47.06	23.53
I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people's performance.	1.96	1.96	9.80	5.88	11.76	17.65	17.65	17.65	15.69	0.00
I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.92	13.73	19.61	17.65	37.25	7.84
I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	6.00	8.00	12.00	18.00	34.00	18.00

Inspire a Shared Vision
$N = 51$

	Almost Never	Rarely	Seldom	Once in a While	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Usually	Very Frequently	Almost Always
I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.	0.00	0.00	3.92	3.92	3.92	7.84	27.45	27.45	21.57	3.92
I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.	0.00	3.92	3.92	3.92	5.88	17.65	15.69	23.53	17.65	7.84
I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	0.00	3.92	3.92	3.92	7.84	13.73	11.76	27.45	21.57	5.88
I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.	0.00	1.96	5.88	3.92	7.84	23.53	17.65	21.57	15.69	1.96
I paint the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.96	11.76	15.69	23.53	31.37	15.69
I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.	0.00	1.96	0.00	0.00	1.96	5.88	3.92	9.80	21.57	54.90

Challenge the Process
$N = 51$

	Almost Never	Rarely	Seldom	Once in a While	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Usually	Very Frequently	Almost Always
I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.88	11.76	15.69	15.69	19.61	25.49	5.88
I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.	0.00	0.00	1.96	3.92	5.88	9.80	19.61	23.53	25.49	9.80
I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.	0.00	1.96	0.00	3.92	3.92	5.88	15.69	17.65	37.25	13.73
I ask "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.	0.00	1.96	0.00	3.92	0.00	11.76	15.69	19.61	35.29	11.76
I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.96	3.92	9.80	25.49	15.69	31.37	11.76
I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.96	1.96	11.76	13.73	23.53	39.22	7.84

Enable Others to Act

N = 51

	Almost Never	Rarely	Seldom	Once in a While	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Usually	Very Frequently	Almost Always
I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.92	13.73	15.69	41.18	25.49
I actively listen to diverse points of view.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.84	17.65	25.49	37.25	11.76
I treat others with dignity and respect.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.96	3.92	15.69	25.49	52.94
I support the decisions that people make on their own.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.92	5.88	17.65	37.25	33.33	1.96
I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.88	7.84	7.84	25.49	29.41	23.53
I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.88	7.84	25.49	21.57	27.45	11.76

Encourage the Heart
N = 51

	Almost Never	Rarely	Seldom	Once in a While	Occasionally	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Usually	Very Frequently	Almost Always
I praise people for a job well done.	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.96	1.96	15.69	9.80	21.57	25.49	23.53
I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.76	23.53	29.41	25.49	9.80
I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.	0.00	1.96	1.96	3.92	13.73	17.65	13.73	23.53	19.61	3.92
I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.	0.00	0.00	1.96	0.00	0.00	7.84	17.65	25.49	35.29	11.76
I find ways to celebrate accomplishments.	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.80	11.76	11.76	13.73	19.61	27.45	5.88
I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.96	3.92	11.76	15.69	17.65	35.29	13.73