

Partnerships and Perceived Organizational Effectiveness of Nonprofit Organizations

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, interorganizational collaboration has become a prominent aspect of organizational functioning for many different types of organizations. Central Florida nonprofit organizations are catching on to this trend as they find increasing value in the empowerment of partnership. This study aims to contribute to the advancement of the current literature by investigating factors affecting nonprofit collaboration. The study demonstrates that nonprofits tend to collaborate when management perceive that collaboration is needed to accomplish the mission of the organization.

Key Words: *Collaboration, perception of cooperation, nonprofit partnership, organizational effectiveness.*

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Introduction

There is growing cooperation among organizations in the form of collaborative partnerships, where nonprofits join their public and private counterparts in an effort to achieve outcomes that were once unattainable alone. Central Florida nonprofit organizations are catching on to this trend as they find increasing value in the empowerment of partnership. Yet, there are still organizations that fail to see the benefits accrued to partnerships; instead perceiving potential partners as competition.

Social capital has been applied in a variety of contexts to explain the ability of communities to solve the problems through collective action, ranging from the provision of public education to the maintenance of effective and smooth-functioning government institutions, as well as the exercise of informal control over criminal behavior. It is far easier to promote grassroots action in societies that are already close-knit than in places where widespread alienation exists. Communities differ in their endowments of social capital. In some, the social networks that give rise to social capital are dense and efficiently organized. In others, levels of 'associationalism' are low and social capital stock is meager. Recent theory suggests that communities possessing relatively high levels of social capital will experience higher levels of performance (Field 2003; Putnam 2000).

The current literature regarding collaborations primarily involves case studies accompanied by statistical analysis. This study aims to contribute to the advancement of the current literature by investigating factors affecting nonprofit collaboration. Further, by studying the perceptions of a representative group of these nonprofit organizations, the researcher shall determine if a relationship exists between a nonprofit organization's perception of cooperation and the variables of community relationship and assessment of self. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following: (1) How do perceptions of cooperation influence collaboration- (2) How does an organization's relationship with the community affect collaboration- (3) How does an organization's assessment of self affect collaboration- (4) How does an organization's complexity of operations in terms of number of projects involved affect collaboration- (5) How do budget cuts affect collaboration- (6) How does an organization's funding adequacy affect collaboration-

In the following section, literature regarding nonprofit collaboration will be presented. Following the literature, the methodology section will provide a detailed explanation of the methods used. Afterwards, the hypotheses and their analysis will be reviewed.. To conclude, findings and their implications will be discussed within the context of practical application for nonprofit practitioners.

Literature Review & Background Information

In today's complex and turbulent environment, organizations frequently develop formal or informal relationships in order to work together to pursue shared goals, address common concerns, and attain mutually beneficial ends. In recent years, such interorganizational collaboration has become a prominent aspect of organizational functioning for

many different types of organizations. The number and significance of collaborative forms of organizing- including interorganizational teams, partnerships, alliances, and networks- have increased tremendously. The value of effective collaborative relationships, as well as the complexities and challenges they present, have been recognized by many researchers and continue to be a frequent subject of scholarly and practitioner-oriented literature (Gray 1989; Gulati 1998; Kanter 1994; Powell 1990).

The framework of both network and social capital theory is obviously quite relevant to this analysis, even if they by no means constitute the whole story. These theories provide propositions that could be empirically tested within a public sector context to determine whether they help explain successful interorganizational collaboration. They suggest some practical advice that those interested in promoting such collaboration could use. Social capital enhances the benefits of investment in physical and human capital. Partnering is easier in a community or organization blessed with a substantial stock of social capital (Axelrod & Cohen 1999).

From the perspective of organizational policy, mandating collaboration and establishing formal collaborative structures could be advantageous for interorganizational partnerships, but factors such as external funding motives, complexity, and nature of the relationship must also be considered (Alexander, Comfort & Weiden, 1998). Collaboration between organizations is not a simple process, and merely mandating collaboration will not make it so. Because interorganizational collaborations require a high level of interpersonal interaction among organizational members at various levels of both organizations, "buy-in" must be achieved from all participating members. Snavley and Tracey (2000) illustrate that existing individual level social relations- otherwise known as individual social capital- contributes to the success of collaborative activities. Preexisting relationships allow partnerships to function more smoothly than those that have to start their collaboration process "from scratch". Simo and Bies (2007) also support this assertion through acknowledgment that strong existing social networks drive cross-sectoral and interorganizational collaborations.

Through their research, Goldman and Kahnweiler (2000: 435) have drawn up a profile comprising attributes of a successful collaborative manager. According to them, successful collaborators tend to be extroverts, male, have high role ambiguity and "low boundary occupational stress." Extroversion as a personality trait lends itself to collaboration and partnership, as these types of individuals tend to be more communicative and oriented externally, as contrasted to introverts. The manager's high role ambiguity could be a benefit, in that it would allow the manager flexibility with respect to one's roles and responsibilities within a partnership. Being able to "span" organizational boundaries is a critical factor at the individual level in partnerships; successful collaborative managers should lack the inhibitions towards working across organizational boundaries via interorganizational partnerships.

Managers of collaborating nonprofit organizations assume boundary spanning roles, therefore it is important for them to acquire and maintain the necessary social and com-

munication skills to successfully accomplish this role (Goldman & Kahnweiler, 2000). The continued devolution of government to the private and nonprofit sectors portends a future where the work of nonprofits will take place between, rather than within, organizations through interorganizational partnerships. Given this reality, boundary spanning capabilities will become an increasingly significant tool for nonprofit managers to have within their managerial repertoires.

A shared collective purpose and organizational parity- illustrated via an organization's mission, vision, and goals- are among key organizational aspects that facilitate successful collaboration (Rolnick et al., 2000). Case in point- empirical data demonstrate that faith- based organizations tend to collaborate with other faith-based nonprofits, who share organizational parity, rather than secular organizations (Ebaugh, Chafetz & Pipes, 2007). In addition to these assertions, Najam (2000) argues that not only organizational parity, but also similarities in organizational methods and strategies to achieve primary goals, are important factors influencing the success of collaborations.

Organizations tend to move toward higher levels of complexity, largely through partnerships. As the environment and transactions become more complex, organizations adapt by becoming more complex themselves (Scott 1998). This occurs with changes to either the institutional or technical environments. Organizations must balance differentiation and coordination in order to successfully adapt to rising environmental complexity. To this end, organizations seek out ties with partners who could help them cope with a dynamic environment through strategic interdependencies. Richardson (1972), in a theoretical economic account, also proposed that the necessity for complementary resources is a key driver of interorganizational cooperation.

Unlike hierarchies, in collaborative structures participation is voluntary; leadership roles and power are distributed between members, rather than concentrated among a minority of select individuals (Alexander, Comfort & Weiden Bogue, 2001). A balance of power and equality of members are distinct benefits of collaborations as compared to hierarchies; however, voluntary participation also has potential drawbacks. A potential drawback of the voluntary - vs. mandated- associations present in partnerships is the creation of non-uniform commitment levels among volunteer participants, which negatively impacts the overall effectiveness of the collaboration itself (Alexander, Comfort & Weiden, 1998). As an example, concern about funding uncertainty, nearly ubiquitous among nonprofits, may affect the level of organizational commitment in a partnership, because ensuring organizational existence trumps the voluntary role assumed in collaborative structures (Sanyal, 2006).

More than formal rules and legal mandates, trust is needed to build successful collaborative governance structures, acting as the linchpin between organizations (Alexander, Comfort & Weiden, 1998). Trust is developed over time, and conferred through high levels of social capital and the "mutual orientation" developed between the key personnel within the partnership (Powell, 1990, p. 303).

Theoretical practices used in different sectors dominate the current body of literature on interagency collaboration. Recently, researchers have begun to study the underlying

causes for a nonprofit organization's development of or participation in partnerships. To help establish the perceived benefits of collaboration, Snaveley and Tracy (2003) write that it "enables society to draw on the creative energies and human and financial resources of all sectors, bringing them together to benefit communities and the nation" (p. 146). Furthermore, collaboration may offer organizations "developmental opportunities for constructive growth, or sometimes, actual survival" (Goldman & Kahnweiler 2000, pg. 435).

Aside from theoretical merits, one must understand what collaboration entails, as that may have an effect on how an organization approaches and develops partnerships. Collaboration, as a practice, should be envisioned along a "continuum" ranging from informal to formal, including: cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and strategic restructuring (Shaw, 2003). The level of interagency activity, and their subsequent place on this continuum, depends on a number of internal and external factors. As an example of internal factors' influences on organizational collaboration, Guo and Acar (2005) examined the collaborative efforts of 95 urban charitable organizations and found that the level of cooperation increases if the organization is older, has a larger budget than other nonprofits, receives government funding, and maintains broad networks with other nonprofit organizations (NPO's). They suggest that the higher an organization's internal resources, the better its chance is of formal collaboration; however, since the nonprofit world is comprised of a myriad of functions, programs, and causes, internal influences certainly do not solely effect, or even explain, collaboration across the continuum.

Partnerships facilitate learning at both the individual and organizational levels (Lewis, 1998). Over time, individuals and organizations change in response to knowledge gained through learning. Previous studies have demonstrated that collaborations may lead alterations in individuals' perception of their roles within a given organization; concomitantly, at the organizational level collaborations may lead to shifts in an organization's strategies (Stone, 2000). Gazley and Brudney (2007) found that intersectoral partnerships- those between public, private, and nonprofit sectors- are perceived by partners as having both positive and negative outcomes. Significantly, the assessment of benefits and costs of partnerships vary by sector, with public and nonprofit organizations demonstrating a disparity between perceived benefits and costs on the same partnership issues.

Community types, and the ways in which an agency must serve its clients, also produce varying levels of participation. In a study of seven nonprofit service agencies in a low-income urban neighborhood, Mulroy (2003) finds that in order to maintain a positive working partnership agencies need to: develop strong ties amongst the executives, offer a commitment to the alliance, and acknowledge that the process can be long and difficult. Such a level of collaboration runs towards the more formal approach dictated by the area and the service the subjects of the study provide. In a different study, Snaveley and Tracy (2000) report in rural areas that collaboration is more informal, and lends itself towards practices such as information sharing, client referral, interagency problem solving. Snaveley and Tracy's (2000) findings are attributable to agency clients being dispersed over wider areas, with fewer resources.

Empirical studies illustrate that small nonprofits are less inclined to collaborate than larger ones. This finding is not surprising; smaller nonprofit organizations maintain a more introverted focus than their larger counterparts, consumed with the tasks of survival and serving immediate client needs. Smaller nonprofits may lack necessary staff time, political will, and resources necessary to develop the extroverted focus required for the creation and successful maintenance of collaborative relationships (Foster & Meinhard, 2002).

Nonprofits find themselves in more complex environments when they enter into collaborative relations (Stone, 2000). This could be due to the fact that the focus of nonprofits is broadened beyond their functional "silo"; the negotiation of interorganizational workloads through partnerships, with an increase in the number of actors and issues, invariably changes the operating environment. The vice versa is also true, according to some scholars. The need to negotiate dynamic external environments, and the complexities they foster, is a noted motivating force behind organizations entering into collaborations (Schindler-Rainman, 1981). For many nonprofit organizations, the realization that they can no longer "go it alone" brings with it a new organizational imperative- seeking out partnerships with others so as ensure survival and the continued provision of services to the community.

The motivations behind entry into a partnerships are varied, and contingent upon such factors as the type of nonprofits entering into the partnership, its current needs, and the current external environment. Organizations may enter into partnerships to protect their resources, with the belief that they can accomplish their goals and mission through the perceived "pooling" of resources that may come with collaboration. This is a perception constructed on the basis of the successful collaborations that these nonprofit- or others- have had in the past (Schindler-Rainman, 1981).

Guo and Acar (2005) found that the degree of formality within collaborations increased due to two factors: the passage of time, and increase in the size of organizational budgets. One may argue that dependence on government funding may foster a propensity for formalization. However, authors found that the degree of formality increases when collaborating organizations depend on less government funding streams.

Shaw (2003) argues that successful collaboration can also be explained by how an organization views itself and how it perceives a potential partner. Combined, these three studies show that social elements, whether they are born out of policy and selection to fit service needs, naturally occurring in a community, or as a feature of organizational culture, have an effect on the level of participation engaged in by agencies.

Furthermore, the aforementioned studies demonstrate that the characteristics of individual managers will have an effect on the perception-and thus participation- of a given agency in collaborative partnerships. Goldman and Kahnweiler (2000) state that directors who perceive collaborative efforts to be successful tend to maintain a predisposition of traits, including "flexibility, patience, understanding of others' viewpoints, sensitivity to diversity and cooperative spirit" (p. 446). The establishment of personal networks

amongst personnel and managers of NPO's also have influence on collaboration (Snively and Tracy, 2000; Shaw, 2003). In addition, since alliances "are often characterized by imbalances of power," Berger et al. (2004: 65) find that successful alliances dictate the need for partners that have complementary skills and resources.

Methodology

The population utilized in this study consists of nonprofits located in the Central Florida area. Stratified sampling was used to determine which nonprofits would be selected for this project. Several categories of community organizations were used to ensure that there was an accurate representation of the Central Florida community. These categories of organization are: educational, cultural, health services, faith-based, and economic development.

After the sample was narrowed down into categories, it was further developed by the following four criteria: organization must be at least 5 years old; organization must have 501 (c) (3) status; organization must have an organizational structure, staff, and permanent telephone number; and organization must provide a service for the community. All of the criterion must be met in order to ensure that the organization is an organized, established nonprofit agency that serves the Central Florida community. This screening process helped make the results more credible. Table 1 presents selected descriptive statistics about participating organizations (see Appendix A).

External validity is high in this study because the participants were randomly selected. This type of sampling focuses not only on the categories of nonprofits in the Central Florida area, but also on the criteria previously discussed. This improves the accuracy of the study and makes the results generalizable to the nonprofit communities locally and globally.

Research for this study was conducted by utilizing a survey instrument. The survey includes the following sections: organizational information, consumer information, staffing information, budget information, cooperation with other organizations, marketing information, relationship with community, and self assessment information. The sections that are evaluated within this research are those entitled: cooperation with other organizations, relationship with community, and self assessment information. The two sections entitled self assessment information and relationship with community measure the nonprofits' perceptions. Regarding internal validity, the survey questions are a valid method to gather data involving perceptions.

The design for this evaluation is a non-experimental design. There are possible threats to the internal validity of the survey. Testing can be a factor because the managers and Executive Directors being interviewed know that their organizations are being examined and evaluated. Therefore, they might skew the truth to make their organization seem better than it really is. Statistical regression is another factor; over time, people will go back to the mean. For example, the manager of an organization might forget exactly how many times they worked with other organizations over the year. The last factor concerns

the respondent, or who is completing the survey. After reviewing the data, it is believed that in some cases the manager or Executive Director did not complete the survey; therefore leaving another staff person (perhaps the administrative assistant) to complete the information. This staff person might not know as much about the organization as the manager or Executive Director does, therefore some of the information could be inaccurate.

A simple methodology is utilized in the design of the survey research by formulating a hypothesis, designing a survey, pre-testing and sampling, administering the survey, and analyzing the final results.

Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between perceptions of cooperation and collaboration.

Management's perception of cooperation is expected to affect collaborative activities within a nonprofit organization because organizations seek collaboration and spend their resources if they perceive collaboration is or will be valuable to their organization (Goldman & Kahnweiler, 2000; Snavely & Tracy, 2000). Also, the reverse direction could exist in the relationship between perception of cooperation and collaboration. Collaborative activities, depending on their success or failure, affect the perception of collaboration (Stone, 2000)

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between an organization's relationship with the community and collaboration.

The community that a nonprofit serves plays a significant environmental role that shapes the organization's strategies and methods used for organizational operations. Therefore, community needs and expectations may motivate or demotivate nonprofits to engage in collaborative activities (Alexander, Comfort, & Weiden, 1998; Snavely & Tracy, 2000)

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between an organization's assessment of self and collaboration.

Do organizations see themselves as a change agent in their community- How do they define their role in the surrounding community- These are questions informing how a nonprofit may assess itself within its environment (Snavely & Tracy, 2000). Through self assessment organizations define themselves, and literature demonstrates that nonprofits tend to collaborate with similar organizations in terms of mission, goals, strategy and organizational type (Ebaugh, Chafetz, & Pipes, 2007; Najam, 2000; Rolnick et al., 2000)

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between number of projects the organization is involved in and collaboration.

The number of projects that an organization is involved is an important indicator of organizational size, because it is an indicator of organizational capacity. Empirical findings

in the literature indicate that larger nonprofits tend to collaborate more (Foster, & Meinhard, 2002).

Hypothesis 5: Budget cuts did lead to greater collaboration between community organizations.

Hypothesis 6: There is a relationship between organization's funding adequacy for projects/services and collaboration.

Both hypothesis 5 and 6 are concerned with the financial strength of a nonprofit. Many studies in the literature argue that nonprofits use collaboration as a strategy to deal with funding problems, pooling critical resources to foster organizational sustainability and continuity of operations that would be otherwise difficult or impossible to achieve alone (Gazley and Brudney 2007; Mulroy, 2003; Schindler-Rainman, 1981; Guo, & Acar, 2005).

Findings & Discussions

Descriptive statistics were run on each of the variables, including mean, median, mode and frequencies to clean the data. Index variables were created for the dependent variable, collaboration, and the three independent variables, perceptions of cooperation, relationship with community, and self assessment. To test the reliability of these index variables, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each variable using SPSS. The Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable were as follows: collaboration was 0.922, indicating that this variable was sufficient; perceptions of cooperation was 0.181, indicating that this variable may not be as reliable; relationship with community was 0.718, indicating that this was a reliable index variable; and self assessment and number of projects involved had a value of 0.826 and 0.907, indicating that these variables were also reliable. Though perceptions of cooperation received a Cronbach's Alpha value of less than 0.7, this variable was still used. The weak reliability of this variable is noted as a possible threat to the validity of this analysis.

T-test and ANOVA were used to test the following hypothesis:

H₁ – There is a relationship between perceptions of cooperation and collaboration.

Since t-tests require that one variable be dichotomous, the index variable cooperation was not used in this case. Instead, two t-tests were run, one for each of the two survey questions comprising the variable collaboration. The first t-test compared the two groups of respondents for question 43, "Do you presently work with other community organizations-" The two groups are those that answered "yes" and those that answered "no." These two groups' mean scores for the index variable perceptions of cooperation were compared using a t-test. The t-test resulted in a *p* value of 0.018, which is less than our specified alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that there is a difference between the means of the two groups, and the null hypothesis can be rejected.

The second t-test compared the two groups of respondents' answers for question 44, "Have you worked with other community organizations in the past?" Again, the two groups were those that answered "yes" and those that answered "no." These two groups' mean scores for the index variable perceptions of cooperation were compared using a t-test. The t-test resulted in a p value of 0.023, which is less than our specified alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that there is a difference between the means of the two groups, which prompted a rejection of the null hypothesis.

To further test the relationship between perceptions of cooperation and collaboration, ANOVA was run using survey question 45, "How much contact does your organization have with cooperating organizations?" There were six possible answers to this question, and therefore, six groups of respondents, so this question was best suited to ANOVA rather than a t-test. The following were the possible answers: 1) More than once per day; 2) Once a day; 3) Weekly; 3) Monthly; 4) Yearly; 5) No contact; 6) Varies, i.e. special projects. Based on the possible answers to this question, a respondent could be identified as having a high level of contact with their cooperating organizations (More than once per day), or a low level of contact with cooperating organizations (No contact, or Varies). ANOVA testing resulted in an F statistic of 0.236, which is larger than 0.05. This indicates that there is no difference between the means of two or more of the groups, and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

The following is the second set of hypotheses for this research:

H₂ – There is a relationship between an organization's relationship with the community and collaboration.

T-tests and ANOVA were used to test these hypotheses as well. As before, two t-tests were run, one for each of the two survey questions composing the variable collaboration. The first t-test compared the two groups of respondents for question 43 "Do you presently work with other community organizations?" For this hypothesis, the two groups' mean scores for the index variable relationship with community were compared. The t-test resulted in a p value of 0.102, equal variances assumed based on a Levene's Test for Equality of Variances F statistic of 0.061. The p value is larger than 0.05, which indicates that there is no difference between the means of two or more of the groups. Therefore the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

The second t-test compared the two groups of respondents for question 44, "Have you worked with other community organizations in the past?" The two groups' mean scores for the index variable relationship with community were compared. The t-test resulted in a p value of 0.196, which is larger than our specified alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that there is no difference between the means of the two groups, and the research was not able to reject the null hypothesis.

ANOVA was used to further test the relationship between cooperation and relationship with community. Using survey question 45, "How much contact does your organiza-

tion have with cooperating organizations?" six groups of respondents were identified. The six groups of respondents' means were compared based on their scores for the index variable relationship with community. ANOVA testing resulted in an F statistic of 0.015, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that there is a difference between the means of two or more of the groups, and the null hypothesis can be rejected.

T-tests and ANOVA were also used to test the third hypothesis for this research:

H₃ – There is a relationship between an organization's assessment of self and collaboration.

As with the previous variables, two t-tests were run; the first using survey question 43, and the second using survey question 44. The first t-test, comparing the means of each group of respondents for the index variable self assessment, resulted in a p value of 0.809. This is larger than our specified alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that there is no difference between the means of the two groups, and the research was not able to reject the null hypothesis.

For the second t-test, the two groups of respondents were compared for survey question 44. The two groups' mean scores for the index variable self assessment were compared. The t-test resulted in a p value of 0.559, which is larger than our specified alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that there is no difference between the means of the two groups, and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

ANOVA was used to further test the relationship between cooperation and self assessment. Using survey question 45, "How much contact does your organization have with cooperating organizations," six groups of respondents were identified. The six groups of respondents' means were compared based on their scores for the index variable self assessment. ANOVA testing resulted in an F statistic of 0.044, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that there is a difference between the means of two or more of the groups, and the null hypothesis can be rejected.

H₄ – There is a relationship between number of projects organization involved and collaboration

Again two t-tests were run for surveys question 43 and 44. The first t-test, comparing the means of each group of respondents for the index variable number of projects involved, resulted in a p value of 0.082. Due to this result, we are unable to reject the null hypothesis, and thus cannot confirm that there is a difference between the means of the two groups.

For the second t-test, the two groups of respondents were compared for survey question 44. The two groups' mean scores for the index variable number of projects

involved were compared. T-test's p value was 0.117, indicating that no difference was found between means of the two groups.

ANOVA was used for survey question 45. As stated before, question 45 has six groups, and the six groups of respondents' means were compared based on their scores for the index variable number of projects involved. ANOVA resulted in an *F* statistic of 0.203, which is more than 0.05. This result shows that there is no difference between means of the six groups; therefore the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Descriptive statistics were used for the fifth hypothesis for this research:

H₅ – Budget cuts led to greater collaboration between community organizations.

(Please see Appendix A for detailed budget information statistics.)

In a world of scarce resources, the level of funding necessary to operate a community-based organization becomes increasingly important. For many nonprofit organizations, the number of services offered is typically tied to the level of funding. As funding decreases, it can naturally be assumed that the level of services provided may also decrease. One solution to this dilemma is for community organizations to collaborate with other organizations in order to maximize service while maintaining staff levels and service area. Therefore, the purpose of this inquiry is to determine: (1) if community organizations have faced budgetary decreases in the past year and (2) if budget cuts have led to greater cooperation between similar community organizations.

Contrary to previously held beliefs, only 19.3% of community organizations surveyed have experienced a budgetary decrease from the previous year. The remainder have either experienced an increase in their budget or had no change. Of the organizations which have experienced a decrease from last year's budget, only 11.1% sought to coordinate their services with other organizations.

According to the survey, community organizations were more likely to cooperate with other organizations based on that organization's mission (66.1%) or service program duplication (16.1%), rather than on their own financial short falls (0%). As the above indicates, other factors besides an organization's financial situation are the primary motivational force behind greater collaboration of services between organizations in the Central Florida region.

T-test was used to analyze sixth hypothesis of this study:

H₆ – There is a relationship between organization's funding adequacy for projects/services and collaboration.

The t-test compared the two groups of respondents for question 42, "Is the present level of funding adequate for the number of projects and services you offer?" The two groups are those that answered "yes" and those that answered "no." These two groups'

mean scores for the index variable Collaboration were compared using a t-test. The t-test resulted in a p value of 0.010, which is less than our specified alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that there is a difference between the means of the two groups, and the null hypothesis can be rejected.

Finally, hypotheses 1-4 are tested with multiple regression analysis. A model has been created as: $\text{Collaboration} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Perception of Cooperation}) + \beta_2 (\text{Relationship with Community}) + \beta_3 (\text{Self Assessment}) + \beta_4 (\text{Number of Projects Involved})$. However when the regression was run, the required level of significance was not reached. Therefore, the model has been changed to $\text{Collaboration} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Perception of Cooperation})$. This model is statistically significant and R^2 is .110. The model shows there is a positive weak relationship between collaboration and perception of cooperation.

Conclusion

Social sciences differ from natural science with its explanation power and precision. There is no "silver bullet" in social sciences that includes every possible cause to explain social phenomena perfectly. For example, in organizational there is no perfect system that fits every organization and leads to success. On an individual organizational basis, let alone for every organization, there is 100% guarantee that a certain type of partnership structure would work flawlessly for any particular organization. In spite of, or perhaps due to this, social science is an endeavor to discover causal relationships between social phenomena, even if it predicts that there will always be a certain level of error in its assertions. This study examines a social phenomenon, nonprofit collaborations, and several factors that might affect or be affected by this social phenomenon.

This study posits that the perception of cooperation that an organization's management possesses is associated with collaboration. The survey distributed to organizational managers of defines "perception of cooperation" as the point of views of managers toward issues related to cooperation such as: seeing other nonprofits as competitors, believing cooperation helps the organization, feeling cooperation is needed in delivering effective service.

Contrary to expected results, study findings revealed that collaboration is not the first solution nonprofits utilize to deal with budget cuts. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that nonprofits tend to collaborate with other organizations because they share a common mission. Based on these findings, one could reasonably conclude that nonprofits see collaboration as a mission-related requirement, rather than as a method to handle fiduciary scarcity. When findings were assessed together, study findings illustrate that a nonprofit tends to collaborate when the management perceives that collaboration is needed to accomplish the mission of the organization.

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Appendix A

Table 1: General Information about Agency Characteristics Responded to the Survey

<i>Number of staff working</i>		<i>Responding manager's work experience with the organization</i>		<i>Total budget of the organization in the current fiscal year</i>	
1-5	20.6%	less than 1 year	8.4%	\$0-100,000	24.3%
6-15	25.2%	1-3 years	24.3%	100,001-500,000	13.1%
16-25	14%	4-6 years	22.4%	500,001-1,000,000	15.9%
26-50	13.1%	7-10 years	7.5%	1,000,001-5,000,000	20.6%
over 50	22.4%	10+ years	17.8%	5000,001+	13.1%
				Not sure	9.3%
<i>Total budget of the organization in the current fiscal year</i>		<i>Is this budget increased or decreased when compared the last years ?</i>		<i>If you have budget cuts in the past, how has your organization dealt with budget cuts</i>	
\$0-100,000	24.3%	Increase	59.0%	Collaborate w/ other programs	11.1%
100,001-500,000	13.1%	Decrease	19.3%	Increase fund-raising efforts	24.4%
500,001-1,000,000	15.90%	No Change	21.7%	Reduce marketing efforts	2.2%
1,000,001-5,000,000	20.6%			Reduce services	11.1%
5000,001+	13.1%			Reduce staff	4.4%
Not sure	9.3%			Done nothing	2.2%
				Not applicable	40.0%
				Other	4.4%
<i>Total # of organizations participated in the survey: 107</i>					