SR 890 Research Project Prospectus

Quinton Egson

Omega Graduate School

February 4, 2025

Professor

Dr. Andy McCullough

**Assignment 1: Introduction and Problem Statement**

• Draft the Introduction and Statement of the Problem sections.

• Introduce the topic, define the scope, and clearly articulate the issue.

**Action Research**

Although there may be many definitions and strategic approaches to conducting “action research,” according to Bradbury, action researchers nearly always start with questions like “How can we improve this situation?” (Bradbury, 2015, p. 12; Masters, 1995).  Based on Bradbury’s comment, I asked myself, “How can I develop a framework to help nonprofits increase the probability of sustaining and growing.”

It would be helpful to begin this paragraph with a summary sentence that introduces your study, ie The purpose of this study is to.

**Nonprofit Sustainability**

  As stated by Liu, “One essential role of nonprofits (NPOs) is to provide opportunities for people to participate in movements and resolve collective issues (Liu, K., 2024, p. 1). Furthermore, as with my organization, nonprofits usually impact communities by delivering services to those in need.  In my community of roughly 500,000 people, we have more than 1200 nonprofit organizations (NPOs). Most of them are doing good work that is not being done elsewhere; however, some small-sized and usually underfunded NPOs spring up and duplicate work already being done at a high level by another agency. This causes a strain on limited resources, and those usually well-intentioned mom-and-pop-sized organizations often fade away within five to ten years.

Good information. You begin most of your paragraphs with introductory phrases. “As stated by…”; “According to…”; “As a consultant…” This sentence construction should be used sparsely and generally for transition. A simple declarative sentence (subject, verb, object) is most effective in most instances.

According to data from the National Center on Charitable Statistics, the average lifespan of a nonprofit is around 10 years, with roughly 30% of nonprofits ceasing to exist after that period.  The million-dollar question is, “Should those NPOs have started to begin with?”

According to the National Association of Nonprofit Organizations & Executives (which I am a member of), ultimately, nonprofits fail because they should not have existed in the first place (Ebarb, 2019).  That is a somewhat harsh but true statement; more often than not, small NPOs come to bear with a lot of passion but are void of a sustainability business plan.

My organization has been an NPO leader in the community for about sixty years, and I have been an employee for over 40 years. Over that time, I have witnessed hundreds of NPOs enter the saturated market just to be dissolved within a few years.

As a consultant and national training associate (NTA) for Boys & Girls Clubs of America, I have assessed many organizations and, in doing so, learned that many factors can contribute to an NPO's demise, including the nonprofit starvation cycle.    The nonprofit starvation cycle suggests that “the cycle starts with donors’ long-held unrealistic expectation that lower overhead is better. The desirability of leaner organizations in the donor market puts pressure on nonprofits to reduce their overhead spending” (Hala & Liu, 2022, p.1325). In a for-profit business, overhead is expected, whereas, in a nonprofit company, overhead is “Frowned upon.” Too many nonprofit leaders are trapped in this never-ending, undefeatable cycle, usually leading to their demise.  My advice to them is always to remember they are a nonprofit organization working to make society better while at the same time realizing that they are a business and must employ business-like principles to become or sustain solvency (Altamimi & Lui, 2022, p. 1332).

**My goal is to utilize action research to develop a nonprofit sustainability tool.**

Action research, a theory Kurt Lewin coined in 1946, is rooted in the relationship between reality and theory. To improve society, action researchers often identify and conduct action research to address a social illness. That being said, I aim to utilize action research strategies and principles to develop a tool that can be used to build a framework to help NOPs become more sustainable. (Blaakide & Christensen, 2024; Cronemyr & Huge-Brodin, 2024).

References

Altamimi, H., & Liu, Q. (2022). The nonprofit starvation cycle: Does overhead spending really impact program outcomes? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *51*(6), 1324-1348.

Blaakilde, A. L., & Christensen, K. (2024). Narrative, nature-based participatory action research (PAR) among female turkish migrants in denmark: Reflections on methodological benefits and challenges.*Societies, 14*(1), 8. doi:https://doi.org/10.3390/soc14010008

Bradbury, H.(2015). *The Sage handbook of action research.* Sage

Cronemyr, P., & Huge-Brodin, M. (2024). Taking a mixed role – A pragmatic approach to action research.*International Journal of Qualitative.* 1-14

 doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069241307587

Ebarb, T. (2019). Nonprofits Fail – Here are the Seven Reasons Why*. National Association of Nonprofit Organizations & Executives (NANOE).*

https://nanoe.org/nonprofits-fail/

Liu, H. K. (2024). Exploring relationships between nonprofit participation and political participation in asian context.*Voluntas, 35*(1), 1-22.

              doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-022-00538-8

Masters, J. (1995). The History of Action Research. *Action Research Electronic Reader.*

The University of Sydney,

*online* http://www.behs.cchs.usyd.edu.au/arow/Reader/rmasters.htm