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A MULTI-CASE EXPLORATION OF NON-PROFIT BOARD MEMBER
DIVERSITY ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

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SIBONGINKOSI WENYIKA
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A MULTI-CASE EXPLORATION OF NON-PROFIT BOARD MEMBER
DIVERSITY ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
TULSA GRADUATE COLLEGE

BY

Dr. Lisa Bass, Chair

Dr. Brenda Lloyd-Jones, Committee Member

Dr. Libby Ethridge, Committee Member

Dr. Andrew Cherry, Committee Member

Dr. Jody Worley, Committee Member

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother, Sethi (Mangwenya) Chigaru, the woman who taught me the importance and value of education. There is no doubt that the nurturing, protection and wisdom she imparted in my life has played a role in my becoming the human being that I am. Thank you for being a strong example of what is possible when you rely on God and make a conscious choice to pursue your dreams. Thank you for who you are. You make me proud to call myself W-O-M-A-N.

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Abstract

Title of Study: A Multi-Case Exploration of Non-Profit Board Member Diversity
Attitude and Perceptions

Name: Sibonginkosi Wenyika

Date: May 2012

Introduction

Diversity is increasing exponentially in the United States. For example, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011) both the Latino and Asian populations have grown by 43% between 2000 and 2010. According to the available literature on diversity, the dramatic and dynamic shift in demographics has consequences on communities, organizations and the American workforce. This is of particular interest to human service non-profit organizations (NPOs) whose target constituencies reflect the increased diversity. Unfortunately, little is known about the level of readiness and effectiveness of such NPOs in dealing with increased diversity. Pitts' (2006) Comprehensive Model of Diversity was assumed as the theoretical framework for this study. The model suggested that organization-wide diversity initiatives should be driven by the board, that organizations that do not embrace and embed diversity imperatives throughout their organizational cultures do not maximize their potential or organizational performance.

Purpose and Method of Study

This qualitative multi-case study explored board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity using an online survey, one-on-one interviews, document analysis, non-participant observation, field notes and journal. Board members from three United Way accredited NPOs were surveyed on whether their attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity impact social and political organizational performance as measured by the participation of members from historically marginalized groups.

Results and Conclusions

Six themes emerged from the data analysis namely; diversity mentioned in organizational bylaws or strategic plan, but no plan of action; board members as recruiters; recruiting strategies and orientation; definitions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity; perceived benefits of diversity and challenges to board diversity. The findings of the study were that none of the NPOs had explicit organization-wide diversity imperatives. Though one of the NPOs had a cultural competency plan, however it did not have any impact on board member attitudes, perceptions and practices towards racial/ethnic diversity. NPOs had made strides with gender diversity; however their level of cultural competence regarding racial and ethnic diversity was inadequate. To address this, and as outcome of the study, the researcher makes recommendations and presents a model.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Racial and ethnic diversity in the United States of America has grown exponentially. A 2011 U.S. Census Bureau report entitled, “Overview of Race and Hispanic Growth: 2010,” describes this dramatic and dynamic demographic trend where both Latino and Asian populations have grown by 43% between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011, Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, & Cardy, 2010). The growth in the Latino population accounted for more than half of the total U.S. population growth during that period and was partly attributed to increase in immigration. Growth in Latino, Asian, and other minorities resulted in a 28.8% national average increase in minority population (U.S. Census Bureau). These demographic shifts had also been noted in the American workforce where, according to Gomez-Mejia et al.’s (2010), “approximately 34 percent of the U.S. workforce was from a minority group, including African Americans (12%), Asian Americans (4.7%), Latinos (15%), and other minorities (2%)” (p. 125). Given that the U.S. minority population is expected to increase by another 50% by 2050, and that minorities will comprise half of the entire population, a commensurate increase in cultural awareness and competence is imperative in the community and workforce. Gomez-Mejia et al. brought attention to this imperative by suggesting that as communities change and diversity increases, for-profit and non-profit organizations need to also change and adapt to these demographic shifts and embrace America’s diverse population.

Daley (2002) noted in an action guide for non-profits that this shift in demographic trends provides opportunities for leaders in organizations, including non-profit board members, to embrace diversity and engage active participation from

historically marginalized groups in their communities. Regrettably, Daley revealed that, “many non-profit boards reflect limited social diversity and board leaders are surprisingly passive and unreflective about diversity issues” (p. 33). Thus, given this status quo, organizations’ and their leaders, including non-profits, need to examine what diversity means for them and strategically work to involve women and minorities as board members (Daley, 2002).

Non-profit organizations, especially those classified as 501(c)(3) publicly supported charities under the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, play an integral role in providing an array of services (employment, health, educational, housing and many others) to communities across the United States. Of particular interest to this study were human service non-profit organizations (NPOs) whose leadership is comprised of a board of directors, typically unpaid volunteers, an executive director, and support staff (Ostrower, 2008).

Non-profit boards have both legal and moral responsibilities and, under United States law, are held responsible for the affairs of the organization (Herman & Heimovics, 1991; Herman & Renz, 2000, p. 147). Board members have a moral obligation to lead the organization, and this moral trust ensures human services are provided to the greater community (Herman & Renz, 2000).

Even though NPOs serve minorities in communities across the U.S., their boards of directors, executives and staff remains chiefly Caucasian (O’Neill, 2002). Ostrower (2008) stated, “on average 83 percent of boards members are white (non Hispanic), 9 percent are African American or black (non Hispanic), and 4 percent are Hispanic/

Latino, with the balance from other groups” (p. 8). The number of minority board members was conclusively linked to:

The percentage of minorities served by the organization, the degree of importance placed on diversity when recruiting new members, the percentage of the organization’s funding received from the government, and the percentage of the organization’s funding from foundations. (Ostrower, 2008, p. 9)

Nielsen and Huang (2009) concur that NPO board members are generally European American (not Latino), and predominantly male from upper-middle and upper class backgrounds. Community members from historically marginalized groups, women and minorities, are not widely included on NPO boards, and diversity is lacking (Daley, 2002).

Diversity

The literature in the area of board diversity in the non-profit sector is limited and fairly recent and empirical studies are scant. Gazley, Chang, and Bingham (2010) concur stating, “the research on board diversity is fairly shallow, and scholars face a limited taxonomy and conflicting findings” (p. 610). Research studies have focused on board composition and governance issues (Weisinger, 2005; Brown, 2002; Brown & Iverson, 2004; Siciliano, 1996; Widmer, 1987). Board of director literature has revealed that board composition impacts organizational performance (Siciliano, 1996; Herman & Renz, 2000). Presumably, profit margins are not a key indicator for NPOs.

Brown’s (2002) quantitative study, which explored board member diversity, attitudes, and recruitment practices on board performance, revealed that boards with “a higher percentage of racial minorities performed better on the political aspect of board

performance... and increased diversity awareness was associated to all aspects of board performance” (p. 2).

Additionally, Siciliano (1996) examined the relationship between board diversity and performance and results revealed “gender diversity compared favorably to the organization’s level of social performance but a negative association surfaced for level of funds raised” (p. 1313).

Blaser & McClusky (2005), Brown (2002)a, Light (2002), Miller (1999) as cited by Gazley, Chang, and Bingham (2010) concluded that research utilizing the social constructivist approach of the relationship between board diversity and performance has found that “organizations with more diverse boards of directors (based on various measures) are perceived by peers or community members to be to be most egalitarian, more responsive, and more creative in problem solving” (p.611).

Weisinger (2005) posited that few studies have investigated diversity issues beyond board representational demographics and composition. Little is known about diversity on boards beyond board composition and representation, which can be viewed as tokenism. Rutledge (1994) highlighted tokenism as a major concern of ethnic minority board members.

Since diversity is more than just composition and representation Thomas and Ely (2001) concluded that a holistic approach to NPO board diversity is one that includes the board member attitudes and perceptions and its significant value and process within the organization. Weisinger’s study affirmed that if NPO leaders do not have a comprehensive approach to diversity, efforts to achieve diversity and inclusion could be jeopardized (p. 18).

Thus, empirical research is needed to further understand board diversity beyond demographic representation, and this qualitative exploratory multi-case study added to existing literature by investigating board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity. This study explored whether board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity impact organizational performance as described by members from historically marginalized groups on NPO boards.

Interestingly, in pertinent literature, there is no universally accepted definition of diversity as evidenced by the multiplicity of meanings available. Daley (2002) defined social diversity as “human richness of the socially defined differences between and among people (individuals and population groupings)” (p. 35). He posited that diversity was multidimensional and included, “ethnicity or culture, gender, language, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, community of residence, ability level, client status, length of service, and so on” (p. 291). Daley (2002) argued that it was up to NPOs to decide which dimensions of diversity were important to them (p. 35).

Similarly, Lumby and Coleman (2007) defined diversity as “a range of characteristics which not only result in perceptions of difference between humans, but which can also meet a response in others which may advantage or disadvantage the individual in question” (p. 1). Gazley, Chang, and Bingham (2010) noted, “diversity is synonymous with variety or heterogeneity, or having different qualities or characteristics” (p. 610). Comparatively, Thomas (1990), a pioneer in the study of diversity, concluded that when organizations “manage diversity” they support interactions of diverse members in order to achieve organizational effectiveness and encourage workers “to maximize their potential and expect a heterogeneous workforce

to achieve the same productivity, commitment, quality and profit” initially achieved by a homogenous workforce (p. 7). Thomas’ findings are relevant to NPOs. For NPOs to achieve organizational effectiveness, their boards need to articulate organization-wide diversity imperatives, particularly those that relate to gender and racial/ethnic diversity.

Some definitions of diversity look beyond just race and gender and include differences in individuals based on ethnicity, religion, age, disability status, political party affiliation and other demographic characteristics (Herring, 2009 and Cox, 1999). Herring (2009) concluded that diversity constitutes policies and practices that include individuals considered different from traditional members of the group (p. 209). He argued that diversity should be inclusive and build a culture that capitalizes on the talents of diverse members and would-be members of a group.

Furthermore, in a study on racial diversity and performance of NPO board of directors, Brown (2002) found that “an inclusive board seeks information from multiple sources, demonstrates an awareness of the community and constituents that benefit from and contribute to the organization’s services, and establishes policies and structures for foster stakeholder contributions” (p. 369).

Therefore, given these and other definitions of diversity, for this study, diversity in NPOs referred to accepting and supporting the gender and racial/ethnic differences between individuals, seeking information from varied sources, and adopting inclusive policies and structures to enable members of historically marginalized groups to participate in the board leadership process. Even though there are varied dimensions of diversity, this study examined board member attitudes and perceptions regarding gender and racial/ethnic diversity.

Non-Profit Organizations

The Urban Institute and National Center for Charitable Statistics (2010) reported that “in 2008 over 1.5 million nonprofits were registered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the largest category - 501(c)(3) public charities - included over 950,000 organizations” (<http://nccsdataweb.urban.org>). Public charities accounted for three-fourths of nonprofit revenue and six-tenths of overall nonprofit assets. NPOs reported over \$1.9 trillion in revenue and \$4.3 trillion in total assets. The Urban Institute and National Center for Charitable Statistics disclosed that in 2009, due to the recession, charitable giving in the U.S. dropped by 3.6%.

This decrease in charitable giving has resulted in a plethora of challenges for NPOs, which include but are not limited to a shrinking donor-base; increasing competition for people’s discretionary funds; and decreases in public funding for programs. For this study, the term NPOs referred to human service organizations with 501 (c) (3) tax exempt statuses and categorized by the U.S. Internal Revenue status as being publicly funded. NPOs are led by a board of directors or advisors whose responsibilities range from leading the organization in developing and fulfilling long-term goals and ensuring organizational performance. NPO boards are vital in providing oversight and direction during tumultuous times (Bradshaw, Murray, & Wolpin, 1992; Green & Greisinger, 1996; Jackson & Holland, 1998).

NPO boards have commonly accepted roles and responsibilities. Abzug and Galaskiewicz (2001) noted that boards “often come to symbolize or represent the organization to the broader community... The composition of boards, then, is of central importance to nonprofits,” (Abzug & Galaskiewicz, 2001, p. 51).

Board members have both legal and fiduciary culpability and have to comply with “duty of care and duty of loyalty standards” (Stone & Strower, 2007, p. 417). Similarly, Provan (1980) and Siciliano (1996) reported that board composition plays a crucial role in securing resources and legitimacy. Therefore, diversity is important as it provides community members from diverse groups, women and minorities within the community an important opportunity to get involved. Organizations can benefit from social networks, new revenue sources, and access to communities and segments of the population that were previously not available.

Miller (1999) noted that NPOs face pressure to have members from under-represented communities on their boards for many reasons, some of which are:

Diversity is closely related to community perceptions of nonprofit organization’s egalitarianism and the ideals of fairness...Diversity may be related to organizational effectiveness...and many non profit organizations are under outside pressure to diversify their boards. (Miller, 1999, p. 4-5)

Increasingly, donors and grant funders are becoming more discriminatory and astute on matters of diversity. NPOs are progressively required to exhibit diverse practices.

Largely, NPO board members have not embraced diversity and boards do not reflect different races, genders, ethnicities, perspectives and policies in local communities (Daley 2002). In a qualitative study that explored the views of non-profit agency boards about status and issues, Daley and Marsiglia (2001) found that despite board members’ sensitivity to diversity issues, NPO “board narratives suggested the need for many boards to address more systematically and proactively the question of diversity” (p. 307). They concluded that board diversity issues focused on “involvement of groups that have not traditionally been involved, including low-income persons, clients, ethnic minorities and inexperienced board members” (p. 290).

Despite studies that argue board diversity is critical to “program effectiveness as well as an ethical commitment, “ non-profit boards are still lacking in diversity (Nielsen & Huang, 2009, p. 5). Furthermore, board members do not reflect both gender and racial diversity in leadership perspectives and policy. Board Source (2010), an formerly The National Center for Nonprofit Boards, an organization that supports, trains and educates more than 60,000 board leaders annually, stated that even though the philanthropic community increasingly advocates for board diversity and boards that represent diverse members of the community, board composition is primarily comprised of European American males from upper-middle and upper-class backgrounds.

For NPOs to maintain their programs, maximize effectiveness, achieve their objectives, and remain effective and relevant, board diversity needs to be an important focus (Fletcher, 1997; Brown, 2002; Rutledge, 1994). Although organizations recognize the shift in demographics and acknowledge the importance of including diverse members from the community, more needs to be done to increase both gender and racial diversity. Increasingly, funders are requiring non-profits to show that their boards are diverse.

Ostrower (2008) agreed that despite NPOs reporting challenges in finding board members, especially ethnic and racial minorities, additional research was needed to examine and analyze barriers and strategies that organizations can utilize to engage minority populations in board participation.

Research studies linking diversity to organizational effectiveness and performance are mixed, but Herring (2009) argued, “diversity yields superior outcomes over homogeneity because progress and innovation depend less on lone thinkers with

high intelligence, but on diverse groups working together and capitalizing on their individuality” (p. 210). Brown (2002) concurred and concluded that increasing awareness of diversity among board members positively impacted the board’s political and social performance.

The available literature in non-profit board diversity is limited in addressing whether board member perceptions and attitudes foster or hinder gender or racial/ethnic diversity. Thus, this study seeks to explore board member attitudes and perceptions on the role and importance that gender and racial/ethnic diversity play in organizational performance as measured by the level of participation of community members from historically marginalized groups.

Theoretical Framework:

Comprehensive Model of Diversity Management

The literature on NPO board governance theory is limited, and fairly recent and empirical studies are limited (Miller-Millesen, 2003; Ostrower & Stone, 2001). Despite growth in the body of knowledge on diversity, gaps in theoretical frameworks of the study of diversity in different contexts, including on NPO board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity, still exist (Pitts, 2006; Wise & Tschirhart, 2000; Miller-Millesen, 2003). Similarly, Pitts (2006) stated that the lack of theory “makes any work on this issue exploratory, and the generalizability of any findings would be suspect” (p. 251).

Therefore, to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of NPO board member diversity attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity, an adaptation of

one of the few existing theories of diversity management is warranted. David W. Pitts, American University assistant professor of public administration and policy, whose research interests include workforce diversity, proposed a model of diversity management consisting of eight components: organizational mission, recruitment and outreach, building cultural awareness, pragmatic management policy, integration/increased organizational heterogeneity, cultural synergy, job satisfaction and organizational performance. Pitts stated, “diversity management initiatives should find their root in the organizational mission, recruitment and outreach, building cultural awareness and pragmatic management” (p. 255).

For this study, the model was adapted to include non-profit functions pertinent to the study. The seven components were organizational mission and values, board recruitment and outreach, governance, training/cultural awareness/competence and synergy, inclusion and gender and racial/ethnic diversity and organizational political and social performance.

To explore the role and importance of NPO board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity, NPOs should evaluate whether their organization’s mission and values, board recruitment and outreach, governance, training, cultural awareness, competence and synergy, and inclusion practices impact organizational performance (Brown, 2002).



Figure 1. Comprehensive Model of Diversity Management (Adapted from Pitts, 2006, p. 254). Used with Permission.

Rationale for Study

This exploratory qualitative multi-case study was important and needed for several reasons. First, even though the non-profit sector has embraced the notion that diversity is important, a gap exists between current board member composition and the practice of increasing diversity and adopting inclusive practices. Little was known about the diversity attitudes and perceptions of board members, and the majority of the available scholarship has been quantitative. The second goal of this study was to

concentrate on qualitative analysis of board member attitudes and perceptions on the role and importance that gender and racial/ethnic diversity. The study examined how these attitudes and perceptions impact social and political organizational performance as measured by the level of participation of community members from historically marginalized groups. Third, diversity is a growing phenomenon in NPOs. Fourth, this study sought to add new knowledge to NPO stakeholders and represent a step towards better understanding for gender and racial/ethnic diversity on non-profit boards. This study was conducted in a Midwestern city where non-profits play an active, vibrant role in providing needy communities with human services. Finally, this multi-case study provides information for future researchers who wish to study non-profit diversity in other settings.

Rational for Qualitative Methods

The overarching purpose of this study was to uncover the dynamics of diversity within the context of non-profit boards and to understand what diversity means to those participating as leaders on non-profit boards (Oakes & Wells, 1995). Qualitative multiple case study methodology was chosen because this method investigated board member perceptions and attitudes on the importance that gender and racial/ethnic diversity plays in organizational performance (Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton, & Oakes, 1995, p. 18). This method permitted the researcher to examine the phenomenon of diversity in a social context (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1984). The exploratory multi-case study approach allowed the researcher to explore “a bounded, integrated system” in

detail, over time, using multiple sources of data within a “rich context (Stake, 1995, p. 45).

The epistemological approach to this study was identified as social constructivism, which assumes that the environment that humans interact in is different from the “natural, physical” environment, and as a result, it should be studied in a different way (Guba & Lincoln, 1990). Guba and Lincoln (1989) argued that “the social world cannot be described without investigating how people use language, symbols, and meaning to construct social practice” (p. 44-45). Guba and Lincoln (1989) identified the primary assumptions of constructivism as follows:

“Truth” is a matter of consensus among informed and sophisticated constructors, not of correspondence with objective reality. “Facts” have no meaning except within some value framework; hence there cannot be an “objective” assessment of any proposition. “Causes” and effects do not exist by imputation. Phenomena can only be understood within the context within which they are studied; findings from one context cannot be generalized to another; neither problems nor solutions can be generalized from one setting to another. Data derived from constructivist inquiry have neither special status nor legitimation; they simply represent another construction to be taken into account in the move toward consensus. (p. 44-45)

Stake (1995) stated that constructivist qualitative research emphasizes a holistic analysis of the phenomena.

Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning – that is, how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and personal world structures (Creswell, 2007).

Qualitative methods, such as interviewing, observation, document examination, allow insights into an individual’s concept of meaning in the context of his or her daily life (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Inquiries about board member attitudes and perceptions on the importance that gender and racial/ethnic diversity plays in social and political organizational performance will help NPOs better understand how to attain and sustain

diversity on their boards. Ultimately, this study attempted to understand whether board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity impacted the organizations' social and political performance.

Statement of the Problem

Research findings on the benefits of group diversity in organizations are extensive, and have elucidated “two consistent and contradictory” conclusions (Brown, 2002, p. 3). For-profit business organizations have created a business case for diversity and highlighted that diversity positively impacts organizations through varied employee perspectives, stronger teams, and the availability of increased assets for solving problems (Cox, 2001; Herring, 2009; Brown, 2002). Diversity in the workplace, in contrast to a homogeneous workforce, fosters business success, “including, but not limited to corporate profits and earnings” (Herring, 2009, p. 208). Brown (2002) concurred, “diversity encourages innovation and creativity because as more diverse individuals participate in a group they bring different ideas and perspectives and if managed effectively can come up with better solutions to complex problems” (p. 3).

Austin (1997) and Jackson (1991) as cited by Brown (2002) challenged the positive link between diversity and organizational performance stating that diverse groups can exhibit conflict whereas homogenous work groups are more skilled “at solving task-oriented problems” (p. 3). Brown conceded that listening to diverse viewpoints can be time consuming, and “task-oriented individuals and groups can become frustrated when too much time is spent on process instead of task accomplishment” (p. 4).

In the non-profit sector, however, diversity studies are not as exhaustive as workforce studies. Hence, it is necessary to conduct a study that explores the phenomenon of board member attitudes and perceptions on the role and importance that gender and racial/ethnic diversity plays in organizational performance as measured by the level of participation of community members from historically marginalized groups. It is important to investigate whether gender and racial/ethnic diversity in NPO boards results in broader perspectives, stronger teams and increased resources for the organization (Cox, 2001).

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms were defined for clarification in understanding this study: *Diversity*. Literature on diversity does not have a universal definition of what diversity means. Thomas (1990) concluded that when organizations manage diversity they support interactions of diverse members in order to achieve organizational effectiveness, encourage workers “to maximize their potential and expect a heterogeneous workforce to achieve the same productivity, commitment, quality and profit” initially achieved by a homogenous workforce (p. 7).

Daley (2002) defined social diversity as “human richness of the socially defined differences between and among people (individuals and population groupings)” (p. 35). He posited that diversity dimensions include “ethnicity or culture, gender, language, socio-economic status, age, community of residence, ability level, client status, length of service, and so on” (p. 35; p. 291). For this study diversity refers to elements incorporating Thomas (1990) and Daley’s (2002) definitions. This study defines

diversity as the acceptance and support of interactions of “socially defined differences” of race and gender between and among individuals in order to achieve organizational effectiveness. This study examined the importance that gender and racial/ethnic diversity plays in organizational social and political performance.

Inclusion. Nielsen and Huang (2009) defined inclusion as “an intentional act on the part of diverse members of an organization to make this difference a part of the group’s status quo of effectiveness” (p. 4). They stated that when organizations transition from diversity to inclusion, the inclusive culture “encourages ongoing intellectual and stylistic disruptions of the status quo in service of an underlying organizational mission” (p. 5).

Non-Profit Human Service Organizations (NPOs). NPOs are human service organizations with 501 (c) (3) tax exempt status and categorized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Status as being publicly funded.

Non-Profit Boards. Herman, Renz, and Heimovics (1997) stated that board members (or trustees) legally have certain roles and responsibilities:

In the United States, the law holds that the board of a non-profit organization is ultimately responsible for the affairs and conduct of the organization. The moral assumption (at least for public benefit charities) is that the board will conduct the affairs of the organization as a public steward, ensuring that the organization serves the interests of the larger community. (p. 373-374)

Strategic Plan. Goodstein, Nolan and Pfeiffer (1993) defined strategic planning as “the process by which the guiding members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future” (p. 3).

Bylaws. Bylaws are rules followed by the board when conducting business.

Historically Marginalized Groups. For this study, historically marginalized groups referred to women and racial/ethnic minorities.

Research Questions

The central research question that this study aimed to answer was whether board members' perceptions and attitudes of gender and racial/ethnic diversity impacted social and political organizational performance. This study will address the following research sub-questions:

1. What are board members' views of gender and racial/ethnic diversity?
2. Do board member attitudes and perceptions actively seek to promote gender and racial/ethnic diversity on their boards?
3. How does gender and racial/ethnic diversity positively or negatively impact organizational social and political performance as described by the level of participation of members from marginalized groups?
4. Do actions of diverse boards demonstrate that they actively pursue gender and racial/ethnic diversity?

Outline of Dissertation

This dissertation was divided into six chapters and an appendix section. Chapter I provided a brief introduction about the area of gender and racial/ethnic diversity, the rationale for the study, the rationale for using qualitative research methods, statement of the problem, and the research questions. Chapter II presented a comprehensive review of the literature. Chapter III described the research methods, including how cases were

selected, forms of data collection, how data was analyzed, the validation strategies used, the reliability of the study, and the role and background of the researcher. Chapter IV presented the results on a case-by-case basis. Chapter V presented results, summary, conclusion, discussion, implications, strengths, recommendations and limitations of the study. The appendices section included copies of The University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board, informed consent forms, interview protocols, the demographic questionnaire, the observation protocol and the documents NPOs provided for analysis.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter includes a review of pertinent literature, a discussion on the historical developments of diversity, diversity management and a survey of research on the meaning of diversity in non-profit boards. A brief overview of diversity research in for-profit boards and its linkage to diversity in non-profit boards is discussed. Additionally, studies are presented that examine the relationship between board member diversity and organizational performance and a review of non-profit governance practices. This study is intended to develop an understanding of gender and racial/ethnic diversity on non-profit boards through the attitudes and perceptions of board members.

The dramatic increase of diverse individuals in the American workforce has led managers and organizations to explore and execute various efforts to expertly understand and deal with diversity (Ivanevich & Gilbert, 2000; Thomas, 1990; Morrison, 1992; Cox, 1993). Considering that since the 1990s the fastest growing race groups in the U.S. were Asian, Pacific Islanders and Latinos, these racial groups will, undoubtedly continue to be the largest growing racial groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Between 2010 and 2030, Latinos are projected to be 45 percent of the U.S. population.

Thus, the need for organizations to embrace diversity is not difficult to defend. Furthermore, although organizations have acknowledged the importance and value of diversity, rigorous research on diversity is still needed if organizations are to learn and understand how to manage a heterogeneous workforce (Milliken & Martins, 1996). Moreover, empirical research on diversity in NPOs is necessary to explore board

member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial diversity. This study examined whether board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity fostered or hindered the inclusion of individuals from minority populations. It is important to investigate whether diversity in NPO boards does result in broader perspectives, stronger teams, and increased resources and performance for the organization (Cox, 2001; Brown, 2002).

Historical Development of Affirmative Action (AA) & Diversity

To adequately understand diversity, a brief examination of diversity's predecessor, affirmative action, is warranted. The term *diversity*, conjures up different emotional reactions from people. The reactions vary from individuals' political views, attitudes and perceptions of affirmative action, and views on quotas that focus on women and minorities who are a protected group under affirmative action (Herring, 2009).

In the US, affirmative action is grounded in federal legislation, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (1972) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964). These laws made it illegal to discriminate against employees based on race, color, religion, or national origin. Employees are required to give equal employment opportunities to candidates with comparable qualifications. The now defunct Department of Labor's Federal Glass Ceiling Commission support center was established by the Civil Rights Act (1991) to "identify barriers that have blocked the advancement of minorities and women as well as the successful practices and policies

that had led to the advancement of minority men and all women into decision making positions in the private sector” (p. 3).

According to The United States Department of Labor (2010), federal contractors and subcontractors are required to recruit, train and promote minority candidates, women, individuals with disabilities and veterans. In fulfillment of the government’s AA policy, companies are required to have these accommodations specified in the organization’s policies and procedures (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010).

Thomas (1990), a pioneer in the field of diverse management in the workplace, disputed the five rationales that resulted in AA policies and suggested they need to be revised because first, the U.S. workforce had evolved and included minorities, women and immigrants. Although Caucasian Americans were still dominant on the workforce they had become a minority. Second, Thomas observed that American companies were strategically working to adapt to changes in the workforce in attempts to remain competitive. Third, he implied that it was imperative for organizations to integrate women into leadership roles and responsibilities in the workforce. He argued that organizations needed to provide opportunities for “upward mobility” for women if businesses are to survive the changes in the workforce. Fourth, he said that part of the reason that organizations were not hiring women and minorities was their lack of on-the-job training and management’s perceptions that women lacked education. Fifth, he posited that the careers of women and minorities plateau when they reach management levels because of the inability of the organization’s management to manage a diverse workforce. As a result, Thomas concluded these five rationale’s adversely affected organizations as most of these workers either resigned their positions or were fired.

Diversity studies developed in the 1990s following Thomas' (1990) book, *Beyond Race and Gender*. Thomas suggested that if organizations had a broad understanding of diversity this would result in positive change and opportunities for all workers within the organization. He suggested even though affirmative action yielded positive results in addressing inequalities in gender and race in the workplace, affirmative action programs would eventually decline. He also suggested that despite the positive contributions of affirmative action, organizations still needed to address inequality and prejudice because workers lacked avenues for "upward mobility". Thomas recommended that organizations should instead "manage diversity" by supporting interactions of diverse members in order to achieve organizational effectiveness.

Similarly, Gilbert, Stead, and Ivancevich (1999) and Miller and Triana (2009) concluded that diversity management in the workforce was critical for organizational survival. They suggested that diverse groups that are effectively managed could lead to a reduction in frustration and employee turnover for women and minorities. Gilbert et al. (1999) surmised that empirical research revealed a relationship between diversity management and a positive work environment. They concurred that organizations should create a culture that values and appreciates differences in employees, and to achieve this, companies needed "major, systematic, planned change efforts" (p. 63).

Gender and Racial Diversity in Organizations

Diversity research studies in NPOs are fairly recent, even though as early as the 1970s, scholars began reporting on organizational discrimination based on gender and

race (Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010). Researchers studied what practices resulted in workplace discrimination against women (Cavendish, 1982; Cockburn, 1983; 1985; Kanter, 1977; Ong, 1987). Kanter's (1977) ethnographic research revealed how gender specific roles and compensation systems kept women in insignificant positions in the workplace resulting in isolation and stereotyping, while Cavendish (1982) analyzed how gender, class and imperialism created gendered work roles on industrial factory lines. Cockburn (1983; 1985) evaluated how technological innovations were developed to exclude females while promoting male involvement, and Ong (1987) examined how modernization influenced the lives of Malay women and their resistance to the oppressive new economy.

Shore et al. (2009) posited that research studies of racial and ethnic diversity are grounded in social and cognitive psychology theory and “stem from our cognitive and social need to categorize ourselves and others based on surface-level or readily perceivable characteristics such as race” (p. 118). They argued these theories assumed that

...humans judge each other on surface-level characteristics, such as race or gender, in the absence of additional information, group membership based on these characteristics implies true similarities or differences between people which then creates the formation of in-group and out group distinctions and these judgments ultimately result in outcomes that may have negative effects for minority or out-group members (e.g. lack of mentors, stalled careers, lower performance evaluations) or group productivity. (p. 118)

Shore et al. stated researchers have investigated the effects of gender diversity in groups, and prior to the 1990's, studies had mainly focused on discrimination and bias against women by the majority.

In a study that examined absenteeism, turnover and performance, Cummings, Zhou, and Oldman's (1993) concluded that women workers were more likely to miss work and eventually lose their jobs. Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) concurred that workers who reported to a superior from a different gender were more likely to experience increased conflict and less clearly defined responsibilities than those with same-sex bosses.

Preceding research on race in organizations highlighted the lack of acknowledgement on the role race played in organizations (Alderfer, Alderfer, Tucker, & Tucker, 1980; Nkomo, 1982; Omi & Winant, 1986). Alderfer et al. (1980) investigated race in organizations by studying power and diversity in organizations and societies, while Omi and Winant (1986) examined how ethnicity-based criterion impacted race theory in organizations. Their study focused on the lack of assimilation of minorities in the workplace (Zanoni et al., 2010).

Miliken and Martins (1996) observed that research on racial diversity in organizations revealed individuals who are racially different from their work groups "tended to be less psychologically committed to their organizations, less inclined to stay with the organization, and more likely to be absent" (p. 405).

Shore et al. (2009) posited that most antecedent studies of diversity were framed using negative criterion and highlighted discrimination, and they argued studies exploring diversity from a positive viewpoint were warranted.

Diversity in Non-Profit Boards

An examination and understanding of diversity in work groups within organizations is important and sheds light on how board member perceptions and attitudes of diversity impact board members who function in similar ways as work teams. Similar to work groups, board members work together to fulfill the organization's mission, generate ideas, solve problems, and implement policies that are conducive to the boards' and organizations' performance.

Empirical research studies examining diversity on NPO boards were conducted in the 1980s and 1990s. Board Source may be the most well known organization that helps NPOs build strong, effective boards. In the first nationwide study examining diversity in NPOs, Rutledge and *Board Source* (1994) revealed that NPO boards were predominantly Caucasian (non-Hispanic) and male. Rutledge (1994) concluded that even though individuals become board members because of "serendipity, inertia, and happenstance," board effectiveness and diversity can only be achieved through "careful planning...and are not accidental developments" (p. 3).

Widmer's (1987) paper that examined the characteristics, recruitment, retention, and participation of minority members on NPO boards suggested that if and when human service organizations decide "to work successfully towards diversity, they must believe that diversity is important" (p. 42). The author cautioned that even though NPO board members spoke of the benefits of diversity, when they are "asked why diversity is good, many are not sure or cannot say" (p. 42).

Daley (2002) concurred and stated that even though NPO boards have opportunities to engage individuals from historically marginalized groups, board

members and leaders in NPOs were “passive and unreflective about diversity issues” (p. 33). He speculated that diversity on boards is advantageous because it provides organizations with expert skills; for example, policy analysis and development, strategic planning, understanding the community, public relations, personnel administration and fundraising.

Daley and Marsiglia’s (2000) quantitative study that investigated “board members’ views about how organizational trends and issues relate to board diversity” revealed three trends:

- High levels of organizational growth, complexity and environmental turbulence influence board operations,
- Board composition issues relate to the participation of groups that historically have been stigmatized (low income, ethnic minorities, clients) and how these group members contribute to policy setting and resource development,
- Although most board members appear to view diversity board composition (demographics), many board members are concerned about the integration of new members, new perspectives and new interests into board deliberations. (Daley & Marsiglia, 2000, p. 294)

Duca (1996) explained that organizations that adopt inclusive policies need to build diverse boards. The author cautioned that implementing diversity initiatives can be a challenge as workers and administrators in the organization might be resistant to change.

Nelson (1991) affirmed the benefits of diversity by suggesting that when organizations embrace new participants on the board, it leads to an effective organization. Carver (1997) suggested “that diversity increases board awareness and decreases smallness... because diverse boards focus on large and significant directions in its policy-making, avoiding the small issues that consume small boards” (p. 190).

Miller (1999) highlighted that a diverse board “will be one whose members effectively represent the organization’s constituency. Its members will be chosen for their commitment and ability to further the organization’s mission, not solely for their demographic characteristics” (p. 4).

Abzug (2003), a management and research consultant, conducted a study that examined gender diversity on NPO boards and reported that from 1931 to 1961 “women had made small advances in the world of nonprofit governance” (p. 28). The study which utilized data gathered from public record sources of 15 NPOs in six U.S. metropolitan areas revealed that women board members were “more likely than their male counterparts to be single, persons of color, Democrats, and volunteers, and they are likely to be less educated than male trustees” (p. 28). The study found that “women who served on all-female or female-dominated boards, those of the YWCA and the Junior League, tend to differ from each other in both social class and approach to trusteeship” (p. 28).

Inclusive Board Practices

Researchers of NPO board diversity have postulated that organizations can embrace diversity and engage participation from historically marginalized populations by implementing board governance practices that encourage diversity and retain board members (Brown, 2002; 2005; 2007; Siciliano, 1996; Weisinger, 2005). Brown’s (2002; 2005; 2007) studies that explored inclusive governance practices in NPOs revealed that inclusive boards are sensitive to diversity issues and “the existence of a task force or committee on diversity was also significantly associated with a more

inclusive board” (p. 369). In addition, Brown (2005) conceded that “board development practices lead to more capable board members, and the presence of these board members tends to explain board performance” (p. 301). Brown’s (2007) study informed that board contributions were “more robust in organizations with higher financial performance and organizations that are judged to be higher performing also reported high-performing boards” (p. 317).

Siciliano (1996) suggested board composition plays a crucial role in securing resources and legitimacy for non-profits. Her study of 240 YMCA organizations revealed “higher levels of social performance and fundraising when board members had greater occupational diversity” (p.1313). The study concluded that gender diversity had a positive impact on organizational performance.

Weisinger (2005) used a field case study of 33 staff members of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. to examine their understanding of diversity and the challenges they faced when reaching out to underserved groups in their communities. She surmised NPOs faced challenges when recruiting and retaining diverse members. The study revealed that when staff members have varied views of what diversity means, this resulted in problems in executing diversity goals. Essentially, Weisinger implied that if leaders and staff within an organization have a different understanding and meaning of diversity “effective diversity and pluralism efforts could potentially be compromised” (p. 18). She suggested that if NPOs dealt with pluralism and diversity simultaneously, this would result in inclusive practices that would “attract diverse members, while having a critical mass of diversity allowing inclusion processes to be undertaken” (p. 18).

In an article on building an inclusive diversity culture, Pless and Maak (2004) prescribed a conceptual framework founded on the idea that when organizations build an inclusive culture, they should engage principles “of reciprocal understanding, standpoint plurality and mutual enabling, trust and integrity” (p. 129). First, organizations should raise awareness about the importance of inclusion; second, organizations should formulate and implement “a vision of inclusion” and adapt their internal management systems to align with inclusion policies (p. 129). Last, Pless and Maak (2004) concluded organizations should “foster the development, reinforcement and recognition of inclusive behavior” (p. 129).

Ostrower’s (2008) discussion of the Urban Institute National Survey of Non-Profit Governance, the first representational national survey of non-profit governance, concluded that larger NPO boards generally had greater diversity. He argued that organizations needed to examine the criteria used to recruit board members. The board should create a culture where members can play a role in formulating the board’s agenda, and that strong boards should not only recruit committed members, but keep them engaged (Ostrower, 2008).

Diversity on For-Profit Boards

In the 1960s, following the Civil Rights Movement, women and racial minorities began serving on corporate boards. Organizations viewed their involvement as a push towards racial equality (Fairfax, 2005). The Korn/Ferry International Institute’s 34th Annual Board of Director’s Study (2008) revealed that 85% of the 891 Fortune 1000 companies surveyed had at least one woman on their board. The study

revealed that even though this was a dramatic change from 1973 when just 10% of U.S. companies had women on their boards, in 2008, 15% of companies still had all-male boards.

In the 1980s and 1990s Fortune 1000 companies showed an increase in ethnic minorities on boards, but The Korn/Ferry study concluded that the gains had reached a plateau. The study noted that between 2004 and 2008, the number of companies with at least one director from an ethnic minority group had risen from 75% to 78%.

In a study that compared and contrasted the experiences of women and people of color as directors on corporate boards, Fairfax (2005) concurred that women and people of color (African Americans, Asian Americans and Latinos) had increased representation on corporate boards, but warned that both groups faced barriers to success. Fairfax explained board members of color generally experienced more obstacles than women, “while women of color appear to be experiencing the most formidable of such barriers” (p. 1105).

Catalyst (2008), a women’s business advocacy group, affirmed these findings in a census of women board directors of Fortune 500 companies. Catalyst reported that 15.2% of board members in Fortune 500 companies were women of color and 275 companies had two or three women on the board.

Diversity and Organizational Performance

Corporations have made a business case for diversity and have linked diversity to financial performance (Cox, 1993). Empirical research studies have investigated the effects of a diverse workforce on a company's performance "as opposed to diversity within boards of directors" (Erhardt, Werbel, & Shrader, 2003).

In a study that examined the relationship between demographic diversity and the financial performance of board of directors from 127 large U.S. companies, Erhardt, et al. (2003) found that board diversity had a positive impact on company performance. Results revealed "executive board of director diversity was positively associated with both return on investment and return on assets (p. 107).

In a study that examined the relationship between board diversity percentage of women, African Americans, Asians and Latinos, and firm value, Carter, Simkins, and Simpson (2002) found that there was "a positive relationship between the fraction of women or minorities on the board and firm value" (p.1). The study revealed the percentage of women and minorities on the board grew in relation to the company and the board, but "decreased as the number of insiders increases" (p. 22).

Pitts (2006) argued that when organizations transitioned from implementing affirmative action policies to Equal Employment Opportunity programs, and introduced "managing diversity" initiatives, employees in organizations would "learn more about each other and value their differences, so that the differences can be used to the organization's advantage" and positively impact organizational performance (p. 252).

Adler (1980; 1983; 2002) concurred that organizations can achieve cultural synergy when individuals from different cultural groups work together and their

heterogeneous group produces superior products compared to work performed by individual employees. Shore et al., (2009) in a review of literature on diversity, highlighted that theories focusing on the positive effects of diversity on organizational performance assumed:

...That an increase in racial/ethnic diversity means that a work group will experience possible positive outcomes such as: increased information, enhanced problem solving ability, constructive conflict and debate, increased creativity, higher quality decisions, and increased understanding of different ethnicities/cultures. (p. 118)

They concluded that studies examining the positive effects of diversity (Sawyer, Strauss, & Yan, 2005), diversity climate (McKay, Avery, Tonidandle, Morris, Hernandez, & Hebl, 2007), and inclusion (Janssens & Zanoni, 2007; Roberson, 2006) should be replicated in hopes the findings can contribute to the organization's understanding "of diverse people, to promote individual, group, and organizational success" (p. 127).

This notion contrasts that of scholars who argued that diversity did not have positive outcomes for organizations but resulted in conflict among employees, diminished group cohesiveness, and worker absenteeism and turnover (Skerry, 2002; Tsui, 1992; Pelled, 1996; Xin, 1991). Research on the impact of diversity on organizational performance remains mixed because of the different measures of performance in NPOs. In a review of literature on the relationship of workforce diversity to inequality and the structural relationships among groups, DiTomaso, Post, and Parks-Yancy (2007) found that "heterogeneity contributed to conflict, lack of communication and reduced workforce performance, while at the same time resulting in increased contacts, information, creativity and innovation" (p. 488).

In a review of literature exploring the relationship between racial and gender workforce diversity and indicators for business performance, Herring (2009) noted that both gender and racial diversity were beneficial to business and resulted in growth in revenue, customer base, market share and profitability.

Miller and Triana's (2009) research examining the relationship between board diversity and firm performance of Fortune 500 companies revealed "a positive relationship between board racial diversity and the organization's reputation and innovation" (p.755).

Pitts (2006) concurred that organizations develop strategies to manage diversity only if they understood its impact on performance. He pointed out that if diversity resulted in heightened performance, organizations would implement policies that encourage diversity and "make it desirable for women and people of color to remain in the organization" (p. 250). Pitts concluded that if diversity resulted in reduced performance, the organization needed to examine the policies and practices that needed to be implemented to "manage the diversity present and make it productive" (p. 250).

Comprehensive Model of Diversity Management

Pitts' (2006) comprehensive model of diversity management was developed "based on three functions of diversity management: recruiting and outreach, building cultural awareness, and promoting pragmatic management policy" (p. 245). Although the model was developed recently and has not been utilized in empirical research, research studies support its eight components: organizational mission, recruitment and outreach, building cultural awareness, pragmatic management policy,

integration/increased organizational heterogeneity, cultural synergy, job satisfaction and organizational performance (p. 254).

Pitts proposed that diversity management programs should be grounded in an organization's mission, recruitment and outreach, building cultural awareness and pragmatic management (p. 254). The model has eight components and its basic assumption is that when organizations implement diversity management programs certain targeted initiatives are warranted.

Organizational Mission: An organization's mission and diversity program should be aligned and "rooted in the idea that effectiveness stems from the clear articulation of agency goals" (Pitts, 2005, p. 255). Miller (1999) concurred that an organization's diversity goals should be clearly articulated in the mission, goals and strategic plan (Miller, 1999). Pitts (2006) suggested that it was vital for organizations to understand the impact of diversity management programs on performance. He concluded that in general, affirmative action programs from the 1980s resulted in negative attitudes since they were viewed as "reverse discrimination" (p. 256). Soni (2000) and Pitts (2006) concluded that to achieve success, organizations implementing diversity programs needed to gain "buy in" and ownership of the diversity initiatives from members within the organization and clearly outline the benefits of diversity.

Recruitment and Outreach Function: The comprehensive model of diversity management suggested organizations should formulate and implement recruitment strategies to achieve heterogeneous work groups. Ostrower (2008) concurred with the model and stated that organizations should examine the criteria used to recruit new

members and ensure the organization also had a clearly defined retention plan. Pitts (2006) had stated that recruitment was “linked directly with heterogeneity” (p. 257).

Building Cultural Awareness: The model emphasized that diversity initiatives focusing on “tolerance and cultural awareness may be the most important type of diversity initiative in organizations” (Pitts, 2006, p. 258). Schein (1992) defined culture as “the set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments” (p. 236). With this understanding, organizations need to embrace diversity initiatives that encourage cross-cultural interactions. Denhardt, Denhardt, and Aristigueta (2009) stated that managers within organizations have embraced the notion that a diverse workforce will “increase their organization’s effectiveness” (p. 267). Pitts (2006) concluded that recruitment “indirectly” impacts cultural synergy and “awareness is a more direct influence” (p. 258).

Pragmatic Management Policy: The model equates pragmatic management function to what Thomas (1990) and other diversity scholars have termed managing diversity. Thomas argued that if organizations had a broad understanding of diversity, this would result in positive change and opportunities for all workers in the organization. He recommended that organizations should instead “manage diversity” by supporting interactions of diverse members in order to achieve organizational effectiveness.

Similarly, Gilbert, Stead, and Ivancevich (1999) and Miller and Triana (2009) concluded that diversity management was critical for organizational survival. They

suggested that when diverse groups are effectively managed, this can lead to a reduction in frustration and employee turnover.

Theoretical Explanations for Homogenous Groups

To understand what led to the emergence of homogenous groups in organizations, an examination of theoretical frameworks is needed. Tajfel and Turner (1986) and Turner (1987) suggested that social identity theories explained that discrimination happened when humans classified themselves and others into groups, in efforts to minimize differences in societal groupings. Zanon et al. (2010) suggested these classifications are often based on skin color and sex (p. 11). They highlighted that psychological theories like homophile and the similarity-attraction model concluded that discriminatory behavior occurs because individuals mostly interact with and like people that are like them (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954; Byrne, 1971).

Operario and Fiske (1998) made the observation that when groups view themselves positively in comparison to other groups, prejudice and bias occurs. Fiske (2010) suggested that diversity was “loaded with attributed meanings...constructed by societal agents by drawing demarcation lines between classifications with social meanings and sometimes defining certain classifications as the dominant ones” (p. 300). He argued that despite the positive benefits of diversity, the varied definitions and interpretations of what diversity means “gives ample room for divergent interpretations” (p. 300).

Shore et al. (2009) concluded that studies exploring the positive benefits of diversity were needed. They concluded that research studies should focus on person-

organization fit (Kristof, 1996), social cognition theory (Bandura, 1977; Lee & Farh, 2004) and value framework (Schwartz, 1992).

NPO Board Governance

Non-profit literature defines governance “as the operation of board of directors” (Stone & Ostrower, 2007, p. 416). Board members have numerous roles and responsibilities ranging from:

Overseeing financial management and ensuring adequate resources are in place, assuring basic legal and ethical responsibilities, ensuring that the activities of the organization align with it’s mission, making long-range plans and establishing major organizational policies, hiring and overseeing the chief executive officer and representing the organization to the environment in general as well as to key constituencies. (Stone & Ostrower, 2007, p. 417)

Compared to for-profit boards that are generally small and board members are paid for their service, NPO board members are volunteers and the size of the NPO board generally averages 17 members (O’Neill & Young, 1988; Brudney, 2001; Beinstein, 1997).

The Revised Model Nonprofit Corporation Act (2008) is a set of statutes developed by the American Bar Association to help modernize and harmonize state laws governing the formation and operation of non-profits. The Act regards for-profit and non-profit directors equally “in requiring care and diligence in decision making” (Stone & Ostrower, 2007, p. 207; Clark, 2011).

Chapter 3: Research Methods

This chapter represents the methodology for the study and includes an explanation of the research design, a description of the cases, selection process and study instrumentation, an explanation of the data collection methods, and a discussion of the process of data analysis.

This study utilized a qualitative exploratory multiple case study design. Merriam (2009) explained that “qualitative case studies share with other forms of qualitative research, the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and the end product being richly descriptive” (p. 39). Creswell (2007) affirmed that case study researchers “explore a bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and report a case description and case themes” (p. 73.) Stake (1995) postulated that case studies are investigated because

We are interested in them for both their uniqueness and commonality. We would like to hear their stories. We may have reservations about some things the people tell us, just as they will question some of the things we will tell about them. But we enter the scene with a sincere interest in learning how they function in their ordinary pursuits and milieus and with a willingness to put aside many presumptions while we learn. (p.1)

Multiple case study research designs examine several cases to better understand a phenomenon (Stake, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003). Yin (2008) underscored, “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 40).

Case Selection

An important component of the methodology is the selection of the study participants. In this exploratory multiple case study, the maximum variation sampling technique was used in order to achieve multiple perspectives on diversity from three different organizations (Creswell, 2007). This sampling technique allowed the researcher to select the sample based on which organization could “best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination” (p. 118). Miles and Huberman (1994) posited that the maximum variation sampling technique provides “diverse variations and identifies important common patterns” (p. 28).

Three NPO boards of human service organizations, accredited by the United Way, were recruited to participate. Three independent organizations were purposely selected based on three characteristics. The first case was a board that was viewed as diverse (representative diversity of race/ethnicity and gender) and will be referred to as Agency I. The second case was viewed as an “emerging” board (the organization was working towards achieving gender and racial/ethnic diversity, for example, had this clearly articulated to board members) and will be referred to as Agency II. The third case was composed of a board that is not gender or racially/ethnically diverse and will be referred to as Agency III. Each of the cases selected were agencies partly funded by Tulsa Area United Way (TAUW) and affiliated with Leadership Tulsa.

Klenke (2008) stated that multiple case study research offers an opportunity to “produce results that are less likely to be deemed idiosyncratic or unscientific,” but results can be more meaningful and conclusions “more robust” (p. 65). Merriam (2009) assented that including more than one case in a study, “the more compelling an

interpretation is likely to be” (p. 49). Researchers use multi-case studies as a strategy to “enhance external validity and generalizability of the findings” (Merriam, 2009, p. 50).

For this study, the selection of three cases was appropriate because as Pettigrew (1988) stated, “since there are limited cases which can be investigated, it is sensible to choose cases that exhibit extreme situations and different perspectives, in which the phenomenon under study is transparently observable” (p. 278).

Data Collection

The cases were identified with the assistance of TAUW and Leadership Tulsa (see Appendix L). These organizations supplied the researcher with the email list of TAUW agencies and the researcher contacted the organizations informing them about the study and inviting them to participate. Following one-on-one conversations with gatekeepers, the Executive Directors, the researcher was introduced to the board chairperson who informed the board about the study. The gatekeeper facilitated a meeting between the researcher and the board chair or board executive committee. Following the organization’s interest, the researcher attended a board meeting where the purpose of the study was explained. The first three organizations that agreed to participate in the study and met the criteria were recruited.

Throughout the study the researcher was in contact with the gatekeepers via electronic email.

Qualitative researchers use gatekeepers to attain initial access to participants and they help the researcher gain the participants’ trust (Creswell, 2007). Data was

collected from an online survey, non-participant observation of board meetings, one-on-one interviews and document analysis.

Informed consent was obtained from all study participants. Statements of confidentiality, right to withdraw, lack of risk, and all other ethical issues or concerns were conveyed to the participants in a consent form (see Appendix A) as well as in a discussion at the beginning of each data gathering process. These practices are aligned to Creswell's (2007) recommendations on informed consent.

Survey

The online survey included items on diversity as well as demographic questions. The online survey was adapted from the 32-item Kearney Cultural Diversity Survey (see Appendix C). Board members that agreed to participate in the study were emailed the link to the survey and 32 completed the survey. Respondents were predominantly white/Caucasian (25 participants), Native American (3 participants) and Latino (one participant) and African American (2 participants). Seventeen survey respondents were female and 15 were male. The respondents also varied in age with 10 being 30-45 years, nine were 45-55 years, eight were 55-65 years, three were over 65, one was 25-29 years and one was 22-25 years old.

Interviews

Board members who participated in the online survey were randomly selected for one-on-one interviews. Fifteen board members, five from each organization, were either interviewed face-to-face or through telephone interviews. The researcher developed a specific interview guide for one-on-one interviewing. This guide comprised of semi-structured, open-ended questions that were formulated according to a case study

format (Creswell, 2007). The format represented designing questions asking participants to describe experiences and enumerate their attitudes and perceptions of diversity.

The first question on the interview protocol (appendix 4) asked board members their views on diversity. The guide had 10 questions and the interviews lasted approximately between 45 minutes to one hour and were audio recorded to “ensure that everything said was preserved for analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p. 109). During the interviews the researcher asked follow up questions to clarify interviewee comments or probe for additional information (Merriam, 2009).

In addition, detailed notes were written down during the interview highlighting the researcher’s reactions to what was said during the interviews (Merriam, 2009). The interviews were transcribed verbatim. Merriam (2009) stated that verbatim transcripts of interviews are a great source of information during data analysis (p. 110).

Following is Pitts’ (2006) Comprehensive Model of Diversity Management model that was utilized to frame the interview questions for the study:

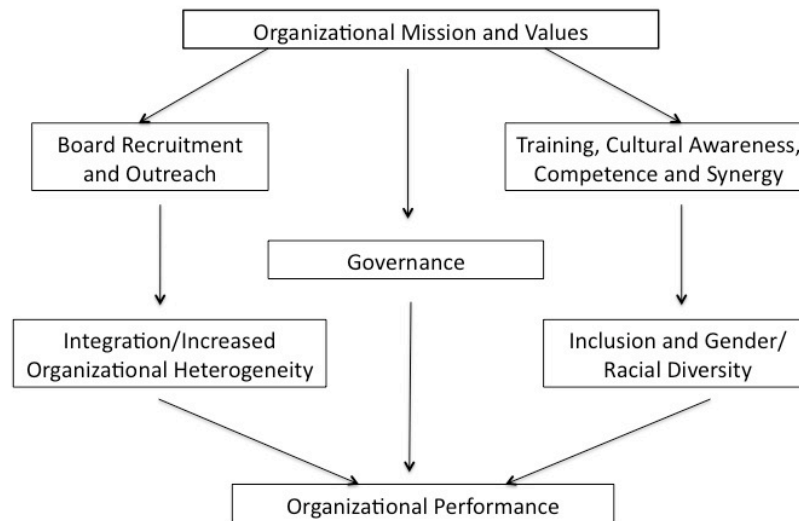


Figure 2: Comprehensive Model of Diversity Management (adapted from Pitts)

Organizational mission and values.

- What did you know about the organization’s mission and values prior to being a board member?
- How would you describe the organization’s mission and values?

Board governance practices.

- Can you describe your experience on the board?
- From your perspective, what are your board’s governance practices?
- How involved are you in board activities?

Cultural awareness, competence and synergy.

- From your perspective does the organization promote cultural awareness?
- Can you describe how the board build’s cultural awareness?

Diversity and inclusion.

- Can you describe your understanding of diversity?

- From your perspective, what does gender and racial/ethnic diversity mean?
- Describe how your organization demonstrates the importance of diversity?
- What has your organization done to increase racial/ethnic and gender diversity?

Organizational performance.

- To what extent do you think gender and racial/ethnic diversity impacts your organization's board.

Increased organizational heterogeneity.

- Do you think racial/ethnic and gender diversity are important to your organization?
- Is your board diverse? If so, why and if not why?
- If you think the board is diverse, how do you think diversity was achieved?

Board recruitment and training.

- Describe how your organization recruited you to be a board member?
- How do you encourage diverse participation from the community?
- What activities does your organization participate in the community?
- Would you support your board recruiting gender and racially/ethnic diverse board members?

Non-Participant Observation

The purpose of observation was to gain an in depth understanding of the board's functioning and interaction. Observation was conducted by a non-participant observer, the researcher, and took place after the online survey was administered to the three boards. The researcher attended three board meetings and followed Merriam's (2009)

detailed, structured checklist which included describing “the physical setting, the participants, activities and interactions, conversation, subtle factors and [the researcher’s] behavior” (p. 120-121). Unlike interviews, observations provided the researcher with the opportunity to observe study participants “in the setting where the phenomenon of interest naturally occurs instead of a location designated for the purpose of interviewing (Merriam, 2009, p. 177). To avoid disrupting the board meeting, the board knew ahead of time the researcher would attend the meeting.

During and following the observation, the researcher took detailed descriptive field notes. The notes detailed the setting for the board meeting and the exercises performed by behaviors of participants (Merriam, 2009). Stake (1995) highlighted the importance of the researcher to keep an accurate record of events and clear descriptions and analysis of the research process. Creswell (2007) noted that the researcher should accurately record quotations and avoid getting overwhelmed during the observation process.

Documents

Documents used in qualitative research are varied and can include many materials and types of documents in existence “prior to the research at hand” (Merriam, 2009, p. 140). For this study the documents examined were documents on agency websites, the strategic plan, board meeting minutes, *bylaws*, annual report and board handbooks. When the researcher received the documents, authenticity had to be established. McCullough (2004) argued that the researcher should examine the authenticity of the document’s “author, the place and the date of writing all need to be

established and verified” (p. 42). Documents used in this study were primary sources and were directly linked to the boards participating in the study.

Journal

Field notes and a journal were kept by the researcher and allowed the researcher to describe the experience of conducting the research. Spaulding and Wilson (2002) argued that although some researchers question the value of reflective journaling, it was a record of the researcher’s thoughts and experience, and provided a safe venue to vent frustrations, concerns and help document the researcher’s internal dialogue.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with the researcher delineating each case and its setting (Creswell, 2007; Klenke, 2008). The interviews, observations, documents, field notes and journal entries were transcribed verbatim. The researcher reviewed the transcripts and the data was managed and stored on a laptop in password protected Microsoft Word files.

This study utilized the multiple case study data analysis process that looks at the data case-by-case while looking for within case similarities and cross-case analysis (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The researcher used “categorical aggregation” to organize the themes that emerged from the interviews, observations, documents, field notes and journal entries (Stake, 1995). Themes were compared and formulated into meanings. Data with related and similar content and meaning was sorted into major clusters of themes. The major clusters of themes from the case-by-case analysis were used to

examine cross-case analysis. The researcher also included “codes for assertions and generalizations across and about cases” (Creswell, 2007).

A thematic analysis approach using Miles and Huberman’s (1994) six-step analysis was used. Miles and Huberman’s methodology was selected because of its well-delineated analytical and sequential steps; hence it lent itself to a manageable and complete exploration of the phenomenon. Miles and Huberman’s (1994) thematic analysis steps included:

1. Affixing codes to a set of field notes drawn from observations or interviews
2. Noting reflections or other remarks in the margins
3. Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences
4. Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities and differences, and taking them out of the field in the next wave of data collection
5. Gradually elaborating a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the database
6. Confronting those generalizations with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories. (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 9)

Validation Strategies

According to Creswell and Miller (2000), qualitative researchers use different validation strategies to ensure their studies are rigorous and credible. For this study, methodological rigor was attained through triangulation, peer review or debriefing, member checking, and rich, thick descriptions (Creswell, 2007).

The data was triangulated using five methods of data collection, including interviews, observations, documents, field notes and journal entries. The researcher utilized the Dissertation Chair for peer debriefing sessions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) reported that the role of the peer debriefer is to keep the researcher honest and ask difficult questions about all aspects of the research. Member checking achieved

credibility for the study when several interviewees revised transcriptions of their interviews for accuracy. Stake (1995) suggested that using this validation strategy allows participants to assess “rough drafts of the researcher’s work and to provide alternative language, critical observations or interpretations for accuracy and credibility” (p. 115). Thick rich descriptions were achieved by describing in detail the participants’ responses and the setting for each of the three cases.

The researcher utilized Stake (1995)’s extensive case study checklist to assess the quality of the study. Stake’s 20 criteria are:

1. Is the report easy to read?
2. Does it fit together, each sentence contributing to the whole?
3. Does the report have a conceptual structure (i.e. themes or issues)?
4. Are its issues developed in a serious and scholarly way?
5. Is the case adequately defined?
6. Is there a sense of story to the presentation?
7. Is the reader provided some vicarious experience?
8. Have quotations been used effectively?
9. Are headings, figures, artifacts, appendixes, and indexes used effectively?
10. Was it edited well, then again with last minute polish?
11. Has the writer made sound assertions, neither over-nor under-interpreting?
12. Has adequate attention been paid to various contexts?
13. Were sufficient raw data presented?
14. Were data sources well chosen and in sufficient number?
15. Do observations and interpretations appear to have been triangulated?
16. Is the role and point of view of the researcher nicely apparent?
17. Is the nature of the intended audience apparent?
18. Is empathy shown for all sides?
19. Are personal intentions examined?
20. Does it appear that individuals were put at risk? (Stake, 1995, p. 131)

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative researchers face many ethical issues during data collection, analysis and the distribution of qualitative reports. Participants in this study were treated in accordance with ethical codes of the University of Oklahoma Institutional Review

Board (IRB) and the American Psychological Association (APA). Even though there were no risks to participating in this study, Creswell (2007) stated that case study researchers should “develop cases that represent a composite picture rather an individual picture” (p. 141). The researcher accurately and truthfully informed participants about the purpose of the study prior to their decision to participate. Given that this study examined the gender and racial/ethnic attitudes and perceptions of board members and the researcher is a woman of color, participants might feel compelled to positively view diversity in response to the questions for the one-on-one interview. Precautions were taken to ensure that risks were minimized for participants and they had the option to withdraw from the study if they wanted to.

The Role and Background of the Researcher

The researcher is an immigrant from Zimbabwe. She and her husband and daughter immigrated to the United States in 2000. In Zimbabwe, the researcher worked as a journalist for a non-profit organization whose mission was to partly help individuals in rural areas become self-reliant and productive. As the only woman reporter, the researcher’s focus and assignments were predominantly to inform and educate women on how to protect themselves and their families from HIV/AIDS. Through this work, the researcher developed an interest in and belief that NPOs are vital to communities and they provide needed resources for individuals that might otherwise go without. For these organizations to meet the numerous demands in communities, their leadership needs to be robust, engaged and ready to fulfill the organization’s mission.

The researcher has an established interest in research involving NPOs and in 2008, in partial fulfillment of a Masters degree in Human Relations, conducted a qualitative phenomenological study exploring the experiences of long-term and short-term volunteers in a faith-based organization.

This current study grew out of the researcher's interest in NPO leadership, specifically diversity, on NPO boards. Between 2006 and 2010, the researcher was employed by a non-profit organization whose board did not have gender or racial diversity. This observation and the board's apparent oblivion to the need for gender and racial diversity peaked the researcher's interest in the study of diversity.

In 2010, the researcher graduated from Class I of the New Voices Board Internship Program. The New Voices Board Internship Program is a partnership between Leadership Tulsa and the Tulsa Area United Way that seeks to recruit, train, and mobilize a network of talented new board members from under represented Tulsa populations to serve in board leadership roles. During this program, the researcher became interested in how organizations, including nonprofits, embrace diversity and encourage active participation from traditionally under-represented racial and ethnic groups.

The researcher's participation in the New Voices Board Internship Program led to the decision to conduct research on the understudied phenomenon of diversity in NPOs. As a doctoral student, the researcher worked for one academic year as a graduate research assistant at the OU Tulsa Center of Applied Research for Non Profit Organizations, where she was involved in several research projects. The researcher has also interned with Oklahoma Center for Non Profits, a statewide organization that

supports NPOs. While at the Center, the researcher worked on training and consulting project and participated in the flagship Standards of Excellence training. These opportunities provided the researcher an opportunity to critically think about the varied dimensions of diversity and how board member attitudes and perceptions might influence the inclusion of individuals from under-represented groups.

The researcher's graduate school experience has provided impetus to study diversity in NPOs. It is important to continue scholarship of NPOs and examine the other dimensions of diversity leadership that is not addressed in this study.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the findings and data analysis of this study. This multi-case study sought to investigate nonprofit board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity by exploring whether their perceptions and attitudes of gender and racial/ethnic diversity impacted organizational performance.

Table 1

Summary Descriptions of NPO Agencies

Organizational Statements	Agency I	Agency II	Agency III
Mission	“To provide support and facilities for a multi-disciplinary team approach to determine abuse and to protect children in crisis.”	“To fulfill the needs of the American people for the safest, most reliable and cost effective blood services through voluntary donations.	“To build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.”
Vision	“To be an international model for effective community response to reported child abuse.”	None stated, instead NPO has fundamental principles, which are, humanity, impartiality, and neutrality.	None stated, rather their motto is to, “help young people reach their full potential.”
Description	A nationally recognized agency that provides various services to reduce trauma from child abuse investigations by coordinating and collaborating with multiple agencies.	An agency that is a division of an international NPO, and whose primary function is to support it’s organization’s humanitarian principle by providing lifesaving products to hospitals to prevent and alleviate human suffering.	The organization serves more than 13,000 young people and strives to reach them with “an exciting, innovative program that positively influences – enabling them and empowering them to achieve their fullest potential.”
Diversity Imperative Specific to the Board	A Cultural Competency Plan stated in <i>bylaws</i> . No diversity imperatives.	No explicit statements	No explicit statements

Board members were selected from three human service NPOs that were accredited by the United Way. A summary of the description of the agencies is given above in Table 1.

Verbatim transcripts of interviews, observations and field notes, surveys and documents were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) six-step thematic analysis methodological interpretation. Miles and Huberman's methodology was selected because it has been widely affirmed in several studies and in literature, for its well-delineated analytical and sequential steps; lending itself to a manageable and complete exploration of the phenomenon.

The researcher listened to each of the interviews multiple times before transcribing two of the 15 interviews and the field notes. An independent third party transcriber, an administrative professional with years of experience, transcribed the remaining 13 individual interviews. The process generated 150 pages of single-spaced transcription. The researcher reviewed the transcripts line-by-line several times, and the data was managed using laptops to cut and paste and sort similar content. Diagrams were employed to help categorize themes and significant statements and formulate meanings. Data with related and similar content were matched and meanings were then sorted into major clusters of themes. This methodology, of which the steps are outlined below, was followed with interviews, field notes, and documents such as agency websites, the strategic plan, board meeting minutes, bylaws, annual report, and board handbooks.

Miles and Huberman's (1994) steps include:

1. Read each typed transcript for a feel of thoughts expressed and global themes. Transcripts were read several times for a clear understanding of

- board members' perceptions and attitudes. Codes were affixed to sets of field notes and interviews.
2. Throughout the data gathering and analysis, the researcher noted reflections or other remarks in the margins.
 3. Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences and common sequences between boards and the board members.
 4. Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities and differences, and organizing board member statements and phrases, and formulating meanings.
 5. Gradually elaborating a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the database. Organizing formulated meanings into clustered themes.
 6. Confronting those generalizations with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories. Clustered themes were written into an exhaustive description of board member attitudes and perceptions. The descriptions of the board member attitudes and perceptions were validated when transcripts of individual's interviews were emailed to several board members in an attempt to provide an opportunity to validate their descriptions of their experiences as board members. (p. 9)

Four research questions guided this study. The first research question asked board members their views on gender and racial/ethnic diversity. Board members from the three agencies described gender and racial/ethnic diversity as important to the effectiveness of their agencies. All board members across the three agencies were certain in their understanding of gender diversity; however, none of them had acknowledged or subscribed to an agency-wide operational definition of racial/ethnic diversity. In fact, when asked this question, some board members contended that if their organizations began to insist on racial/ethnic diversity, an explanation and rationale was warranted.

None of the agencies had clearly spelled-out board diversity imperatives. Although Agency I had a Cultural Competency Plan, the plan did not explicitly define diversity in general, or racial/ethnic diversity in particular. When asked to explain the board's recruiting strategies, five board members from Agency I described how their

organization had in recent years focused its recruiting strategies on other types of diversity, which had not included racial/ethnic diversity. Some of the board members perceived gender and racial/ethnic diversity as being representative of the constituents their organizations serve, while other board members' perceptions were strictly related to their organization's need for attaining community credibility.

The second research question was, "Do board members' attitudes reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity on their boards?" All three agencies' boards were self-perpetuating, and the study participants acknowledged and described themselves as the primary recruiters of new gender and racial/ethnic diverse board members. In interviews, board members from the three agencies acknowledged that they were expected to identify potential members and work in concert with nominating committees to recruit gender and racial/ethnic diverse members; even though there were no written or stated expectations or common principles they were to follow in their recruiting efforts. Agencies III and I had board membership nominating committees. Agency II did not. Board members from all three agencies acknowledged that discussions on gender and racial/ethnic diversity at the board level had taken place, but they could not explain why this would be beneficial to the organization or how they could personally contribute to achieve it. Asked whether they had ever played any role in recruiting board members in general and those of racial/ethnic diversity in particular, only one Caucasian, female participant from Agency II responded affirmatively,

Currently, I am playing that role. It's not something I have done in my whole history on the board. As we speak, I've set up a meeting and invited a gentleman to attend our next meeting, which is next Friday, as a potential board member. I selected him based on the board's desire to get hardworking board members but also trying to be aware of the lack of diversity that we currently have.

The participant went on to describe this prospective board member, as African American, and that this was the only time in recruitment efforts that involved a racially/ethnically diverse prospective board member in her duration as a board member.

The third research question was, “How does gender and racial/ethnic diversity positively or negatively impact political and social organizational performance as measured by the level of participation of members from historically marginalized groups?” Participants from the three agencies highlighted the perceived benefits of gender and racial/ethnic diversity, namely, different perspectives, access and appeal to diverse communities, and help in understanding other cultures and races. Board members described inclusion of board members from gender and racial/ethnic diverse backgrounds as impacting social organizational performance by including individuals with different talents and perspectives from the community.

The perception of one board member from Agency I was that diversity was “exciting, when new people come on the board and bring new ideas, excitement and new energy.” A consensus emerged from other board members that diversity impacted political organizational performance by providing opportunities for outreach into the community while introducing the organization’s programs and expanding and implementing them in the community. Despite board members’ descriptions of their perceptions on the benefits of diversity, they did not personally have plans or action steps to achieve board diversity success.

The fourth research question asked, “Do actions of boards demonstrate that they actively pursue gender and racial/ethnic diversity?” Responses to this question by

board members varied. However, all perceived that there were challenges to achieving racial/ethnic board diversity. While organizations in the past made efforts to recruit gender diverse members, a common sentiment was that the lack of racial/ethnic diversity, and their perception of it were due to individuals from racial/ethnic diverse backgrounds that “did not want to serve on a board.”

Responses from board members from the three NPOs revealed that gender and racial/ethnic diversity was not clearly articulated in their bylaws or strategic plan. Even though their common perception was that their boards had achieved gender diversity, they concluded that their organizations’ expectations for them to recruit new racial/ethnic diverse members were still somewhat nebulous. As a result, board members responded based purely on their personal thoughts on the importance of diversity from which they attempted to identify reasons why their organizations had not achieved racial/ethnic diversity.

Major Themes Emerging from Data Analysis

After rereading the transcripts several times and reflecting on the meaning of board member assertions, significant statements were extracted. Appendix E includes examples of significant statements with their formulated meanings. After arranging the formulated meanings into clusters, six themes emerged: (1) diversity mentioned in organization bylaws or strategic plan, but no plan of action; (2) board members as recruiters; (3) recruiting strategies and orientation; (4) definitions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity; (5) perceived benefits of diversity; and (6) the challenges to

achieving board diversity. These themes are presented with excerpts from some of the board member transcripts, analyzed documents analyzed and observation notes.

Theme 1: Diversity Mentioned in Organization Bylaws or Strategic Plan, but No Plan of Action

In human service NPOs *bylaws* are rules adhered to by the board when conducting business. While a strategic plan is a management tool the board uses to formulate goals that help the organization achieve its mission and serve its citizens and constituents.

A study of the documents supplied by the agencies revealed several issues. Agency I was in the process of working on their strategic plan. Its 2010 Cultural Competency Plan and bylaws explicitly stated the value of diversity as part of its policies, procedures and practices. In 2010, the agency's plan read; "[Agency I] embraces and recognizes the values of cultural competency and diversity as essential components of the agency's policies, procedures and practices."

Agency I's plan included a goal of comparing its board composition to the demographic profile of Tulsa County. The document stated:

The Board Development Committee will make this comparison by January 2011, as it appears to make its recommendations to the Nominating committee. There is a record of the Board's Development Committee providing the Nominating Committee with the demographic comparison report with notation of the representation that is needed on the Board.

A female, Caucasian board member from Agency I noted the steps the board had developed to include diversity in the strategic plan under development. In that same interview, in a conference room at her place of employment, she acknowledged that the steps had not been actualized:

I think our goals, to be honest, have been more operational. [A board member] has rejoined our board and she is actually working on strategic goals and she is trying to get us on to the bigger picture. Right now, it is very procedural, ... but I do not believe right now that we have anything like that [diversity] spelled out. It was the number one thing, though, when we were nominating – we have to have diversity and explaining why it's so important...

Agency II's bylaws did not mention diversity; while in Agency III's diversity was mentioned in the strategic plan. The diversity related to membership in their programs but did not apply to the composition of the board. In interviews board members from both Agencies II and III were aware that their organizations did not include board diversity in the bylaws or strategic plan. The board members acknowledged that their boards' leadership has repeatedly asked to recruit new members from diverse backgrounds. In a telephone interview, a male Caucasian board member currently serving his first term with Agency II said:

...at least from what I've heard, there is an initiative to try to make sure that we have representation of all different areas including the Hispanic culture and different cultures throughout the communities. It's really just basically talking about what are we doing in different communities; what are we doing in the Hispanic community, what are we doing in the African American community; what kind of representation do we have there.

The board member interpreted the diversity initiative as taking the NPOs services to communities that represent diverse gender and racial/ethnic groups. Without specific definitions and action steps around the concept and practice of diversity, board members are left to their own interpretations.

Board members considered the board leadership's requests to recruit new members from diverse backgrounds as adequate. For example, a male, Caucasian, veteran board member who has served numerous terms with Agency II, stated:

They have always asked if anybody [we knew] would like to be on this board, [for us] to bring them forward and they will do the interview with them. We are

constantly asked if we know anyone who would be interested in serving on the board.

Additionally, in interviews, board members from Agency III asserted that their board requested them to recruit diverse board members, but a comprehensive plan on how diversity would be achieved was nonexistent. A board member with Agency III, who has been involved with the organization for more than 20 years casually stated, “We talk about it [diversity], but I don’t know that there’s a plan.”

For these board members, the mention of the importance of including individuals from diverse backgrounds on their boards was tantamount to rhetoric. All three agencies, lacked explicit organizational diversity imperatives in the mission, strategic plan and bylaws, this was tantamount to rhetoric.

Theme 2: Board Members as Recruiters

Participants from the three agencies asserted that board members were expected to recruit new diverse board members. An examination of Agency II’s board minutes revealed an action item assigned to the entire board stated, “All members are encouraged to identify and recommend potential board candidates that can assist with the recruitment of demographic donors that are a priority for our services.” Notes taken during a board meeting observation of Agency II confirmed this. Board members were encouraged more than once, during the meeting, to identify potential board members from diverse groups in the community and forward their names to leaders.

During the interviews, five participants from Agency II described board-wide responsibility for recruiting new diverse members:

What they have done, since I have been there, is that they’ve made it a board-wide responsibility. As a ... board member, your responsibility is to actively seek out and recruit new board members. I think it was when we had our end-

of-year board meeting this year that they brought up that initiative and said it was everyone's responsibility to actively recruit new board members, and ...stressed the importance of diversity. Not only do we need some younger folks, but we want to appeal to the younger demographic for donation reasons, also to bring some fresh ideas onto the board. And then as well, we knew that we had our Hispanic representation that was rolling off the board and the ethnic diversity was real important.

Statements from a Caucasian, female member of the Executive Committee in Agency I revealed skepticism about the sincerity of diversity and that the board's request for board members to recruit new members from diverse backgrounds. The board member pointed out that there was no guarantee that such efforts would yield success. She explained,

People are always recruiting people they know that might not even be their friend but someone they met through another organization, and unless we find a way to expand our network and just quit doing one or two people out from me, I don't know that you get exactly where you need to be. I don't know that people feel motivated enough to really try to get outside their box. I think maybe people are still thinking, well, I have a friend. I think we are going to have to think bigger than that. We are going to have to find ways to form new relationships that lead us to what we want the board to look like. There probably are people out there who would love to be involved that we just aren't able to connect with because we haven't made the right effort yet.

For board members to succeed as recruiters, they must understand why diversity is important and have the organization's end-goal clearly communicated. Research suggests people are more comfortable with those who look like them and tend to socialize, work with and volunteer with people who are racially and ethnically similar, which impacts the pool of people from which they can select to consider serving on an NPO board (Lazarsfeld & Menton, 1954; Bryne, 1971). Generally, race is a difficult and complex subject which people have difficulty discussing and selecting people based on race, for many is taboo.

Theme 3: Recruiting Strategies and Orientation

Board members from the three agencies delineated the recruiting strategies of new members and the orientation activities. A survey of notes compiled during observations of Agency I and III board meetings revealed that board member selection of new members was done through nominating committees. During the board meetings, members of the committee were asked to update the board with names of potential board members.

During the interviews, Agency I board members explained that their board's nominating committee was established by their bylaws. The nominating committee met annually for the formal nominating process. A Caucasian, female board member who has played a role in communicating the importance of diversity to the board outlined the functions of the committee. She explained:

Every year, though, they [the nominating committee] are underneath the governance committee. So the person in charge of governance basically helps gets that kicked off. I don't think they've formed yet for this year, formally, and they will start going through the whole process. In the meantime, we are always looking for people and that's probably more what I'm talking about that isn't working, which is, if you know someone, bring them to board meetings.

Even though Agency III had an established nominating committee, during an interview a Caucasian, female board member stated the committee was not fully functional. She said:

Their deal is that they do not have a fully active nominating committee in my opinion... For instance, there are only five members on the nominating committee and they don't start to work until a month or two before nominating had to be finished. My feeling is that there is no input from board members; there is no list task? There is no timeline for electing board members or for what information you have to get in. There is none of that. I believe I see apathy in board members, some of them may speak up at board meetings, but they don't do anything. It's a very different board. I can see that it needs a number of changes.

A Caucasian, male board member disagreed and described the board as a working board that recruits new board members:

We really try to recruit board members for different functions. I'll give you an example. We've got a couple board members that are very knowledgeable about real estate property and so we have a number of properties which we use for camping as well as we are exploring looking for a new service center so we have board members that are very involved in analyzing those properties. We use external people as well but we have board members that are knowledgeable in those areas.

Board members explained that instead of the nominating committee, leadership on the board held them individually responsible for recruiting.

The participants also described their organizations' board orientation process. Two agencies described formal orientation that included meetings with the executive director, observing a board meeting, touring facilities and attending several different committee meetings. Board members perceived that the orientation was important because it provided new board members with opportunities to learn about the organization and identify potential areas to get involved in. A Caucasian, female board member from Agency I reflected on her experience when she joined the board and the importance of making new members of the board comfortable:

[The executive director] is very welcoming ... and I noticed that every time someone new shows up, she is very quick at singling them out, making them feel comfortable. [When I joined] I was able to introduce myself to the treasurer and made a connection there. I think in any situation, it's somewhat on the person when a new person is joining a group to make the connection. As a board's job too, it is our job to get people plugged into the right areas so when we see people coming on the board, we try to look at what talents they have or what they are interested in and say, "You might be interested in XYZ or you might be interested in talking with this person." We've done a lot of that in the past year or two – we'll take them out to lunch, get to know them one on one, give them a personal connection to another board member, then when you show

up to the first board meeting, it is so much easier, and they have more of an idea what the board is like.

She noted that generally individuals do not make unsolicited calls to organizations and offer to become a board member, but rather:

...You need someone to help you get on a board...I think friends and networking and everything else is a good way to do that. How do we get connected to groups that might be interested in us that just don't know about us yet?

In contrast to board members from Agency I and II who described formal orientation, board members from Agency III did not. A retired, Caucasian, female board member and past member of the executive committee, who recently rejoined the board after a couple of years off, underscored her dissatisfaction with the nonexistence of orientation. In a phone interview, she said:

I wasn't given any information when I came on the board this time. My name wasn't even included in the board members because I happen to get a copy and take a look at some things I felt needed to be changed for new members.

She described her current experience on the board with frustration and stressed her current experience was different from before:

I would say my previous experience, as a board member was very good. I believe there were more board members – the board was interested in seeing [the organization] become successful so there was a lot of communication. It was an entirely different board than I am seeing today. It was people on the board who could raise money, bring the young people into the forefront. Today they don't have that. I felt there was a lot more discussion of any issues or changes, communication was better between the president and the board and just saw a lot of different things. ... I came on in April, and I never received any packages or anything on the board. I asked for them twice and was never sent them.

Board members noted that recruiting strategies and orientation processes had to be clearly delineated and communicated to the entire board, if the board intended to recruit gender and racially/ethnically diverse board members. Additionally, none of the

three agencies' recruiting strategies and orientation included diversity training and socialization.

Theme 4: Definitions of Gender and Racial/Ethnic Diversity

It is noted that while all the three boards that participated in the study stated that gender and racial/ethnic diversity was important, none of them had a universal definition of diversity. Participants in the study consistently defined gender diversity as "having men and women represented on the board." When board members defined racial/ethnic diversity the definition included different backgrounds, ethnicity, race, color, age, socio-economic, and different characteristics and skills.

Even though Agency I had a Cultural Competency Plan, an examination of the document revealed that it did not define diversity. Interviews with board members revealed that the organization had in the past focused its recruiting strategies on different types of diversity, excluding racial/ethnic diversity. A Caucasian, female board member, who joined the board because of her employer's years of involvement with the agency said:

I've seen over the last years that we have been getting more females on the board than males. It's not intentional, not anything we have sought out. It's actually that we have been thinking that we need to intentionally seek some more males out to rebalance where it can be back to a 50/50 split. In the past couple of years when we were recruiting, we focused a lot on certain functional areas where we haven't maybe had a community relation's person that is really strong, and we needed that; something we were recruiting for. With the building project, we need someone with some construction background and that sort of thing.

In interviews, board members perceived gender and racial/ethnic diversity as representative of their organizations' citizens and constituents. A Caucasian, male, board member with Agency II agreed:

People that come from different races, different cultures, different communities. You know, we find that [in the Midwest] for different races, we find communities. People tend to surround themselves with people that they are like or that they have things in common with. So I take it not only as race and culture but also to communities, that concentration of people that have interests and color in common. And it's real important that we ...can identify those communities and have penetration there; that we are telling our story to those communities.

In contrast, board members from Agency III defined gender and racial/ethnic diversity as it related to the organization's mission of serving young people. A Caucasian, male board member who has served on the board for more than 15 years stated:

Diversity to me is the different races, different religions, different beliefs, and diversity to me is making sure you are meeting all the needs and considering the cultural, racial, religious differences that may exist, from our case, from the young people that we serve.

He added, "...helping young people in their development in becoming leaders of tomorrow, ...really training them on being proud adults, but also being tolerant and having the ability to work."

Theme 5: Perceived Benefits of Diversity

Participants from all three organizations highlighted the importance and benefits of diversity for their organizations. During interviews, board members from Agency I detailed the benefits of gender and racial/ethnic diversity; namely different perspectives, access and appeal to diverse communities and help in understanding other cultures and races. In a telephone interview, a Caucasian woman, serving a second term for Agency I said:

...the more diverse I think we can be, the more appealing we are to the community in terms of supporting and even understanding what we are trying to accomplish. If we were not as diverse, I think we would be missing out not only

with the talents of different people's experience, but also with their perspective in making decisions for that organization.

The value participants placed on diversity was demonstrated in another Caucasian, female board member's description:

I think we know with the expansion coming up and where we are going, we have to think bigger. Doing what you have always done isn't going to get you there. Bringing in more people with different ideas is, I think, what everyone knows right now is important. People get excited too, when new people come on board. They bring new ideas and excitement. I think it is energizing.

Board members from Agency II concurred describing a link between donations and diversity. A Caucasian, male board member serving his first term stated:

I think if you have diversity, you are going to have a more well rounded approach to reaching out to the donors in the community, because what is working in one area of town may not work in another area. If you have someone with good representation of all areas of town as well as the different cultural backgrounds, I think you are not only going to attract them ... you are also making sure that you are representing the organization appropriately in terms of the community.

Several board members posited that a diverse board with, for example Latino and African American members, would be beneficial because the organization would have opportunities to expand services into those communities. Board members described the importance and need for diverse board members to serve the diverse client base of their organizations.

In interviews, all five board members from Agency III described diversity as an opportunity to understand community leadership. They outlined it as a tool to introduce the organization's programs into diverse communities and potentially implement them. A Caucasian, male board member who has been with Agency III for more than 15 years explained:

I think again about serving young people and our service area to the best of our ability, and if we are going to do that, we need to serve all [young people]. That includes all young people of different races and different ethnic backgrounds. In order to properly do that, those young people if you will have to have somebody that understands what those racial and ethnic differences are and so therefore, we have to have somebody on the board that understands that and is able to articulate that to the other board members who are sensitive to that but aren't aware of the specific issues.

He asserted that the inclusion of board members from diverse backgrounds would help his organization determine how to serve young people that community. He added:

When we are trying develop a program for example in Eastern part of the city, there may be a Hispanic population. In terms of what are the best times, are we dealing with a lot of families that have both a father and a mother in the home or is it primarily single mother we are dealing with? Is the best time to have a program after school, in the evening, in the morning, during the school day— what would be the best times to serve those young people if there are some fears? If we are bringing in a leader, are there language issues, are there other cultural issues that we need to be aware of in developing and enhancing and operating any programs in that specific area of the city?

Another board member described the perceived benefits of diversity as providing an inclusive environment that provides boards with diverse skills, and opportunities to build a good team.

Theme 6: Challenges to Board Diversity

Board members from the three agencies described the reasons why their boards were not racially/ethnically diverse. A Caucasian, female board member contended that even though Agency I had made strides in gender diversity, the board was not racially/ethnically diverse. She stated, “I know that there is an effort to be sure that we have Latino and Black. There were few people from diverse backgrounds willing to serve on the board.” A male board member who has served more than 15 years concurred:

I just don't think they have had enough people to volunteer to be on the board. I know that there have been efforts to diversify racially quite a bit, but apparently there just haven't been able to secure people willing to serve.

Board members from Agency II agreed that their board lacked racial/ethnic diversity, but had achieved gender diversity. A Caucasian, male board member who has volunteered for more than 15 years stated:

We have failed there. I can't think of any. There may be one or two of different diversity groups – maybe three. I have sat on the board of directors of United Way and I have sat on panels, and when I sit there and look at them, I ask about the diversity of their board. Then I look at our board. I believe we are trying. We are reaching out to different diversity groups. I just don't know why they haven't come forward. I can't tell you that. We do need more diversity on our board.

Another board member agreed and highlighted that the board had been trying to recruit an African American to join the board. He said, "One of the things that is hard for us is to find a good solid person of African American descent who can serve on the board. Now, we had some great in the past." He concluded with a description of a former board member who was a community resource in the African American community:

There is a lady who was here for several years before she moved away from [a Midwestern state] and she was head of the Sickle Cell Association here in town. So she was a wonderful representative in the African American community because she was someone that everyone knew and recognized because of her work at Sickle Cell. Ideally, that's the person I'm trying to replace, someone who is just very well connected in that particular community. We have Asian representation. We have Latino male and female, different ages. We are actively looking for our African American.

Some board members from Agency III perceived their board was diverse while others described it as lacking in diversity. A Caucasian, retired female member described the organization's need to reach out to the Latino community:

I would hope that having greater diversity on the board that they would be able to go out into their communities and recruit young people and leaders into the program. We especially have problems in the Hispanic community which most of the time, they [Hispanics] are still church based – all of their programs are based around the church... If we had some really strong Hispanic board members, I think we could recruit more Hispanic leaders and young people. For every few young people we have, we have to have a leader also. It's really hard – a big commitment.

During an interview another board member with Agency III highlighted the importance of recruiting board members in the Asian community.

Summary

This chapter described the findings of the study. None of the NPOs had explicit organization-wide diversity imperatives. Though one of the NPOs had a cultural competency plan, however it did not have any impact on board member attitudes, perceptions and practices towards racial/ethnic diversity. NPOs had made strides with gender diversity; however their level of cultural competence regarding racial and ethnic diversity was inadequate.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of the study, conclusions and discussion of the results of the data analysis and offers recommendations for addressing the issues associated with board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity in human service NPOs of similar context. The chapter also includes implications for further research and ends with concluding observations.

Summary

This study sought to investigate whether board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity impact organizational performance as described by the participation of members from historically marginalized groups on human service NPO boards. The focus was on the gender and racial/ ethnic attitudes and perceptions of board members in three human service NPOs in a Mid-western state.

The following research questions guided this investigation:

1. What are board members' views of gender and racial/ethnic diversity?
2. Do the attitudes and perceptions of board members reflect gender and racial/ethnic diversity on their boards?
3. How does gender and racial/ethnic diversity positively or negatively impact organizational performance as described by the level of participation of members from marginalized groups?
4. Do actions of diverse boards demonstrate that they actively pursue gender and racial/ethnic diversity?

A review of the literature revealed that the theory on NPO board governance was limited and fairly recent. Additionally, empirical studies were limited (Miller-Millerssen, 2003; Ostrower & Stone, 2001). Weisinger (2005) added that few studies had investigated diversity issues beyond board representational demographics and composition. Little is known about diversity on boards beyond board composition and representation, which can be viewed as tokenism. Rutledge (1994) described tokenism as a major concern of ethnic minority board members. Since diversity is more than just composition and representation according to Thomas and Ely (2001), a holistic approach to NPO board diversity is one that includes the board member attitudes and perceptions of board members and its significant value and process within the organization. Weisinger's study affirmed that if NPO leaders do not have a comprehensive approach to diversity, efforts to achieve diversity and inclusion could be jeopardized. Thus, empirical research was needed to further understand board diversity beyond demographic representation.

This study adapted Pitts' (2006) Comprehensive Model of Diversity, one of a few existing theories of diversity management. The model was adapted to include seven non-profit functions pertinent to the study. These were organizational mission and values, board governance practices, organizational performance, cultural awareness, competence and synergy, inclusion, board recruitment and training, and increased organizational heterogeneity.

Recommendations and Implications

The findings of this study, in concert with past research, have useful implications for human service NPOs. Recommendations are arranged according to the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

Challenges to Board Diversity

An inherent disconnect between board member attitudes and expectations of diversity was revealed by the study. With the increasing importance of diversity to both boards and human service NPOs, such disconnects can easily be interpreted as insincerity, disingenuous, or as suggested by Rutledge (1994), tokenism. If board members are not careful in their selection, introduction and orientation of new board members in matters of diversity, such disconnects will persist, and the uninitiated board members' attitudes and overt actions may yield various interpretations, such as, hypocrisy, paying lip-service, tokenism, detachment and political expediency.

Such notions as that "individuals from racial/ethnic diverse backgrounds" did not want to serve on a board, are potentially problematic. Ironically, insistence on such notions reveals the inherent multicultural incompetence of the agency. Multicultural competent and effective agencies will have no difficulties in recruiting board members who are racially/ethnically diverse. The researcher notes that some agencies may have encountered individuals who did not want to serve on the board. A further study is warranted to explore the reasons why some qualified individuals are reluctant to volunteer. Though beyond the scope of this study, such further research would provide

useful data to the type of agencies utilized by this study and possibly address the challenges to board diversity reported as Theme 6 in Chapter IV of this study.

Furthermore, for a board member to claim that it was “hard to find a good solid person of African American descent who can serve on the board” is language that exposes insensitivity or the reluctance of a board to participate in a mandated non-beneficial requirement to fulfill a racial/ethnic quota rather than genuine diversity. Further, board members attitudes towards diversity did not seem sincere as they described numerous reasons how they could not fulfill their board’s expectations to recruit new gender and racial/ethnic diverse members.

The researcher’s assessment, conclusion and recommendation is supported by Daley and Marsiglia’s (2001) conclusions that boards need “to address more systematically and proactively the question of diversity” (p. 307). Systematic and systemic changes would eliminate from the organization’s verbiage notions that ironically reveal insensitivity while trying to address the need for diversity. Careful potential board member recruiting, selection and socialization would also help with dealing with the skepticism revealed in the comments of the executive committee board member from Agency I, that diversity efforts would not guarantee or yield success. Additionally, this presents a credibility gap between the organization and targeted community constituents. This presents such organizations with a number of challenges, namely fundraising and constituent buy-in. Donors and grant funders are increasingly becoming more discriminatory and astute in matters of diversity. If organizational constituents perceive board member attitudes towards diversity as disingenuous, these

organizations will face challenges in achieving traction in the same communities they intend to serve.

Recommendations:

1. Boards need to enhance recruiting strategies, clearly define the selection process and expand their social networks if they intend to play a role in increasing gender and racial/ethnic diversity on their boards.
2. Boards should engage in on-going training to increase multicultural effectiveness and sensitivity.
3. Board member attitudes and overt actions need to demonstrate to constituents beyond any doubt that they embody the organization's principles on diversity.

Diversity in Organization Bylaws, but No Plan of Action

Findings from the study revealed an incoherent organizational culture of diversity, especially in two of the agencies. In Pitts' (2006) Comprehensive Model of Diversity, three major factors determined organizational performance, namely, increased organizational heterogeneity, board governance and inclusion (Chapter I, p.14). The foundation of these three factors is the organization's mission and values.

If human service NPOs are serious about achieving gender and racial/ethnic diversity, organizational diversity imperatives need to be explicitly stated in the mission documents, bylaws and strategic plan. Of the three agencies studied, only one, Agency I, did. A female board member for Agency I described the steps the board developed to include diversity in the strategic plan that was being developed stated:

I think our goals, to be honest, have been more operational. [A board member] has rejoined our board and she is actually working on strategic goals and she trying to get us on to the bigger picture. Right now, it is very procedural, ... but I do not believe right now that we have anything like that [diversity] spelled out. It was the number one thing, though, when we were nominating – we have to have diversity and explaining why it's so important...

In the absence of the stated imperatives, it is virtually impossible for an organization to foster its diversity values, disseminate and insert them throughout the culture of organization. In Pitts' model, organizations that fail to do so diminish their capacity for increasing organizational heterogeneity, inclusion, and culturally competent board governance practices, resulting in limited efforts to fulfill their mission to their target community or constituency.

Recommendation:

Human service NPOs should explicitly state their actionable diversity imperatives in their organizational documents, such as the *bylaws*, vision and mission documents, and strategic plan. The findings of his study support this recommendation. Investigating the relationship between perceptions of diversity and the organization's fiscal, social and political capacity was beyond the scope of this study. Pitts' model implies a direct link, however further research is warranted.

Recruiting Strategies and Orientation

Board members from the three agencies described the recruiting strategies and orientation activities their organization utilized. Two of the three agencies had a formal orientation process. As revealed in the findings reported in Chapter IV, none of the orientation included diversity training and socialization. Despite the existence of nominating committees in Agency I and III, board members acknowledged that the

committees needed to improve their recruiting strategies in general, and specifically in matters of diversity.

All the boards that participated in the study described diversity as important, even though none of them had universal or operational definitions of the types of diversity they were lacking. Even though participants accurately described gender diversity, their definitions of racial/ethnic diversity were varied and included “different backgrounds, ethnicity, race, color, age, socio-economic, and different characteristics and skills.” For boards to be successful in their efforts to recruit new gender and racial/ethnic diverse board members they need to formulate clear definitions of the types of diversity that is important for their organizations.

Recommendation:

NPOs seeking to increase their “cultural awareness and synergy” need to develop a universal or operational definition of diversity to guide their recruitment, selection and socialization strategies. Human service NPO boards must include training on diversity and socialization to ensure the board’s attitude and perceptions of diversity are positive. Boards can utilize programs like the United Way New Voices Board Internship program to recruit new gender and racial/ethnic diverse board members. These programs would provide interns who can potentially be an unending supply of qualified, professional, diverse individuals willing to serve on boards.

Perceived Benefits of Diversity

Participants from all three agencies highlighted the perceived importance and benefits of diversity for their organizations. In interviews, board members from Agency

III described that including individuals from the Latino community would be beneficial to their organization. The board could, for example, develop a relationship with the Latino Chamber of Commerce or the United Way New Voices Board Internship Program, which has African American representation, and Native American and Asian community organizations.

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to explore board member attitudes and perceptions on the role and importance that gender and racial/ethnic diversity play in organizational social and political performance. The study revealed that NPOs had made considerable strides in achieving gender diversity. This was evident not only the responses of the board members but also in the gender constitution of boards. Board members' responses revealed a degree of comfort and understanding of gender diversity matters. However, the study revealed that this was not the case with racial/ethnic diversity.

In summary, NPO boards had not made comparable strides in achieving racial/ethnic diversity, and in demonstrating an understanding the vital role that it plays in organizational social and political performance. The researcher adopted and adapted Pitts' Comprehensive Model of Diversity Management. The model predicts that organizations that do not achieve diversity are impeded in their organizational performance.

This study adds to the body of literature on diversity in human service NPOs. The significance and implications of the findings are that it offers the following caveats to NPOs:

1. In board member recruitment and selection, NPOs must realize that racial/ethnic representation alone does not achieve much. Representations without understanding and organization-wide buy-in into diversity, does not entirely solve the problems that lack of diversity presents.
2. Minority representation on the board does not relieve the rest of the board of their responsibility to learn cross-cultural effectiveness practices, regardless of their gender, race/ethnicity. Just because a particular minority is represented on the board, does not mean that the other board members should abandon their pursuit to understand differences in cultures.
3. Organizations should abandon the following notions: (a) that minorities do not want to serve on boards, (b) that there are no/or few qualified minorities to serve on the board.

Since the overt and non-overt actions of board members and leadership are primarily responsible for driving the organizational culture, their attitudes will be manifested in their actions thus diminishing the NPO's capacity and effectiveness to operate and fulfill its mission in increasingly diverse communities or constituencies. According to Pitts (2006) this impedes organizational performance.

This study has shown that challenges with racial/ethnic diversity are still inherent even in NPOs that are overseen by boards that may have the best of intentions toward diversity. The study has also shown that even with good intentions, NPOs still do not have systems in place to encourage growth in diversity capacity, understanding and appreciation of the benefits that diversity brings to the overall NPOs' organizational performance. Most participants in the study acknowledged that lack of diversity did in

some ways compromise or lessen the broader appeal of the NPO’s mission. Agency I had begun to address this problem. It had in recent years implemented a Cultural Competency Plan. However, the plan was too general and lacked specific actionable steps. NPOs are best served to have explicit organization-wide actionable diversity imperatives or statements in their mission documents or strategic plan. This was not the case. One of the outcomes of this study is a proposal by the researcher of a model that can be used to assist NPOs achieve gender and racial/ethnic diversity (see Figure 3). The model represents recommendations on how boards can achieve diversity.

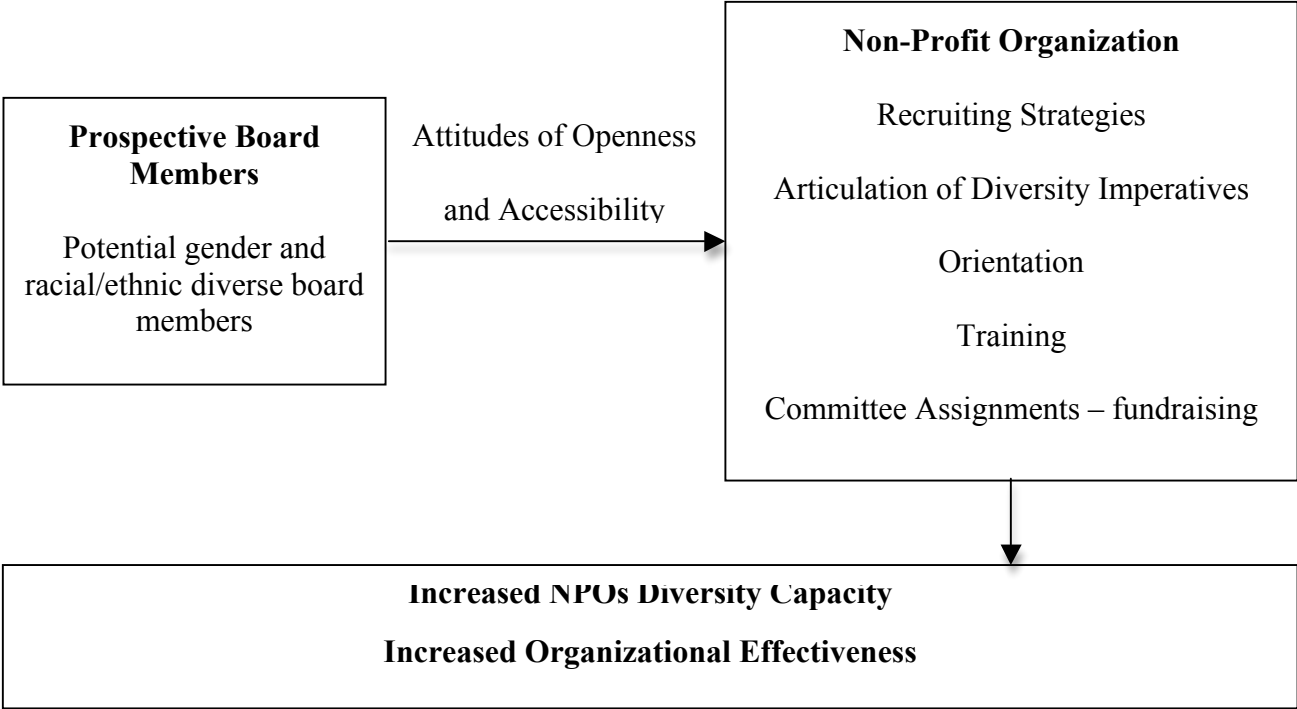


Figure 3. A model for use by NPOs to assist in achieving diversity. The key is that the NPO boards or nominating committees must be open to diversity, and perceived as accessible by prospective board members from diverse backgrounds. NPOs’ responsibilities need to include robust recruitment strategies, explicit diversity imperatives orientation and training, and appropriate committee assignments. This results in the organizational culture increasing its diversity awareness and capacity, and ultimately its effectiveness.

Limitations

The results presented in this study are limited to NPOs of similar contexts as the three human service NPOs used. The information provided in this study is important, but the researcher realizes that the main source of data was the board member's attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity. The contributions of this study to the body of literature on diversity in NPOs can be further developed. Triangulating or thickening the data with responses from other organizational citizens and constituents can do this.

The scope and nature of this study was exploratory. The results and findings provide the basis for continued enquiry using quantitative methods to test Pitts' (2006) Model and its implied hypotheses by investigating the relationship of two variables such as, extent of diversity and cultural competence as the independent variable, and organizational performance as the dependent variable. This was beyond the scope of this study. Additionally, the study was undertaken using three NPOs from a city in a Midwestern state and region where the minority population as a percentage of county population is, according to U.S. Census Bureau (2011), reportedly below 25%. A replication of this study could be conducted in a more racially and ethnically diverse state, region or city whose minority populations are above 36.3%.

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Appendix A: Information Sheet For Consent To Participate In A Research Study

My name is Sibonginkosi Wenyika, and I am an Inter-disciplinary PhD Student in the Tulsa Graduate School at the University of the Oklahoma. I am requesting that you volunteer to participate in a research study titled A multi-case exploration of non-profit board member diversity attitudes and perceptions. You were selected as a possible participant because. Please read this information sheet and contact me to ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study: The purpose of this study is this study seeks to explore board member attitudes and perceptions on the role and importance that gender and racial diversity play in organizational performance as measured by the level of participation of community members from historically marginalized “target community sectors.”

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: To complete a 20-30 minute online survey. After the online survey you might be randomly to participate in a one-o-one interview, which will be audio recorded.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study: The study does not have any potential risks. The information obtained from this study may help us understand the perceptions and attitudes of non-profit board members who play an important role in organizations that meet the needs of thousands of people annually.

Compensation: You will not be compensated for your time and participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Length of Participation: Your participation will include 2-30 minutes for an online survey, and participants could be randomly selected to participate in a one-one interview for one hour.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private and your supervisor will not have access to your responses. In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you as a research participant. Research records will be stored securely. Data for this study, including digital audio files will be kept in password protected computer files for up to five years after the study. After five years data files will be disposed and deleted. Only approved researchers will have access to the records.

Contacts and Questions: If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted at **405-509-0805**, **Sibonginkosi.Wenyika-1@ou.edu** or **Dr. Lisa Bass**, at **918-660-3892**, **dr.bass@ou.edu**.

In the event of a research-related injury, contact the researcher(s). You are encouraged to contact the researcher(s) if you have any questions. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research or about your rights and wish to talk to someone other than the individuals on the research team, or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Please keep this information sheet for your records. By completing and returning this questionnaire, I am agreeing to participate in this study.

Appendix B: University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board Documents



The University of Oklahoma[®]

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION - IRB

IRB Number: 13517
Approval Date: August 04, 2011

August 18, 2011

Sibonginkosi Wenyika
Dept of Human Relations OU-TUL
4502 E. 41st Street
Tulsa, OK 74135

RE: A Multi-Case Exploration Of Non-Profit Board Member Diversity Attitudes and Perceptions

Dear Ms. Wenyika:

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above-referenced research study. This study meets the criteria for expedited approval category 6 & 7. It is my judgment as Chairperson of the IRB that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected; that the proposed research, including the process of obtaining informed consent, will be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46 as amended; and that the research involves no more than minimal risk to participants.

This letter documents approval to conduct the research as described:

Consent form - Subject Dated: July 28, 2011
Other Dated: July 15, 2011 Recruitment email
Survey Instrument Dated: July 15, 2011 Interview protocol
Survey Instrument Dated: July 15, 2011 Gender and Racial Diversity survey
Protocol Dated: July 15, 2011
IRB Application Dated: July 15, 2011
Letter Dated: June 13, 2011 Letter of support: CAN
Letter Dated: June 10, 2011 Letter of support: Girl Scouts
Letter Dated: June 02, 2011 Letter of support: Red Cross

As principal investigator of this protocol, it is your responsibility to make sure that this study is conducted as approved. Any modifications to the protocol or consent form, initiated by you or by the sponsor, will require prior approval, which you may request by completing a protocol modification form. All study records, including copies of signed consent forms, must be retained for three (3) years after termination of the study.

The approval granted expires on August 03, 2012. Should you wish to maintain this protocol in an active status beyond that date, you will need to provide the IRB with an IRB Application for Continuing Review (Progress Report) summarizing study results to date. The IRB will request an IRB Application for Continuing Review from you approximately two months before the anniversary date of your current approval.

If you have questions about these procedures, or need any additional assistance from the IRB, please call the IRB office at (405) 325-8110 or send an email to irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Donald Baker, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

1816 West Lindsey, Suite 150 Norman, Oklahoma 73069 PHONE: (405) 325-8110

Ltr_Prot_Fappv_Exp



Appendix 2
University of Oklahoma
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study
STUDY BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF OKLAHOMA-NORMAN CAMPUS

Project Title: A multi-case exploration of non-profit board member diversity attitudes and perceptions.

Principal Investigator: Sibonginkosi Wenyika

Department: OU Tulsa Graduate School

You are being asked to volunteer for this research study, which is being conducted at the non-profit organization where you volunteer as a board member. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is to explore board member attitudes and perceptions of gender and racial/ethnic diversity.

Number of Participants

Approximately 30 people will take part in this study.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following: to complete a 15-20-minute online survey, and could be randomly selected to participate in a one-o-one interview, which will be audio recorded and take 45 minutes to one hour.

Length of Participation

Your participation will include 15-20 minutes for an online survey, and participants could be randomly selected to participate in a one-one interview for 45 minutes to one hour.

This study has the following risks: The study presents no more than minimal risk of harm to participants.

Benefits of being in the study are:

There are no direct benefits to participants.

Confidentiality

In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify any participants. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers will have access to the records. The OU Institutional Review Board may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis.

Compensation

APPROVED

APPROVAL

AUG 04 2011

AUG 03 2012

OU NC IRB

EXPIRES

You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you withdraw or decline participation, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the study. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question and may choose to withdraw at any time.

Audio Recording of Study Activities

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews will be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

I consent to audio recording. ___ Yes ___ No.

Contacts and Questions

If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted at 405-509-0805, Sibonginkosi.Wenyika-1@ou.edu or Dr. Lisa Bass, at 918-660-3892, dr.bass@ou.edu.

Contact the researcher(s) if you have questions or if you have experienced a research-related injury.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than individuals on the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____

Date _____

APPROVED

AUG 04 2011

OU NC IRB

APPROVAL

AUG 03 2012

EXPIRES

Appendix C: Kearney Cultural Diversity Survey

We would like your help in gaining a better understanding of gender and racial diversity in non-profit human service boards. This is an anonymous survey. No respondents will be linked to individual respondents.

1. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

2. What is your age?

- 22-25
- 25-29
- 30-45
- 45-55
- 55-65
- Over 65

3. What is your race/ethnicity

- African American Black
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Biracial/ Multicultural
- Latino/Latino
- Native American
- White/Caucasian
- Other

4. I would describe my hometown as racially/ gender diverse:

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

**Please use this scale to respond to the following questions:
1=almost never, 2= seldom, 3= sometimes, 4= frequently**

**How often do you interact with (talk to) people who are different from yourself
in terms of:**

5. Gender?
1 2 3 4 5
Almost never Frequently

6. Language?
1 2 3 4 5
Almost never Frequently

7. Attend groups or events that deal with diversity?
1 2 3 4 5
Almost never Frequently

8. Nationality?
1 2 3 4 5
Almost never Frequently

9. Race/ethnicity?
1 2 3 4 5
Almost never Frequently

HOW OFTEN DO YOU:

21. Discuss issues related to diversity with friends?
1 2 3 4 5
Almost never Frequently

22. Challenge others who make racial/ethnic/sexually derogatory comments
1 2 3 4 5
Almost never Frequently

23. Avoid language that reinforces negative stereotypes?
1 2 3 4 5
Almost never Frequently

24. Get to know people from different cultures and groups as individuals?
1 2 3 4 5
Almost never Frequently

25. Make extra efforts to educate yourself about other cultures?
 1 2 3 4 5
 Almost never Frequently
26. Make extra efforts to get to know individuals from diverse backgrounds?
 1 2 3 4 5
 Almost never Frequently
27. I think that feminist perspectives should be an integral part of discourse.
 1 2 3 4 5
 Almost never Frequently
28. I think that the education system would promote values representative of diverse cultures.
 1 2 3 4 5
 Almost never Frequently
29. I have developed an awareness of people and values outside the United States.
 1 2 3 4 5
 Almost never Frequently
30. My own background (gender, race) often influences how I view others and myself.
 1 2 3 4 5
 Almost never Frequently
31. I communicate effectively with others from backgrounds different from my own.
 1 2 3 4 5
 Almost never Frequently
32. I would enjoy living in a neighborhood consisting of a racially diverse population (e.g. African American, Asian American, Latino, White).
 1 2 3 4 5
 Almost never Frequently

Reference:

This survey was adapted from The University of Nebraska – Kearney Cultural Diversity Survey. Retrieved on August 30, 2010 from http://www.unk.edu/uploadedFiles/academicaffairs/Assessment/Department_Assessment/Reports/WICD/CD%20Survey%20analyses%20for%20website.pdf

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Date:

Introduction:

- Introduce Yourself
- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Provide informed consent
- Provide structure of the interview
- Ask if participant has any questions
- Test audio recording equipment

Interview Questions

1. What did you know about the organization prior to being a board member?
2. How did you become a board member?
3. Can you describe your experience on the board?
4. From your perspective what does gender diversity mean?
5. From your perspective what does racial diversity mean?
6. Do you think diversity is important in your organization?
7. How would you describe gender diversity?
8. How would you describe racial diversity?
9. Do you believe your board is gender/ racially diverse? If not/why not?
10. If you think the board is diverse, how do you think this was achieved?
11. To what extent do you think diversity on a board positively impacts your organization's performance?
12. Describe if you think diversity is important in your organization?
13. What does being a board member mean to you?
14. Would you support your board recruiting gender/ racially diverse board members?

Appendix E: Table of Selected Examples of Significant Statements of Board Members and Related Formulated Meanings.

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning
<p><u>Agency 3 Retired Female Board Member:</u> I would hope that having a greater diversity on the board that they would be able to go out into their communities and recruitinto the program. We especially have problems in the Hispanic community which, most of the time, they are still church based – all of their programs are based around the church and the father figures so if we had some really strong Hispanic board members, I think we could recruit more Hispanic leaders and girls. For every few girls we have, we have to have a leader also. It’s really hard – a big commitment.</p>	<p>Board members perceive individuals from diverse groups do not want to be board members.</p>
<p><u>Agency Three First-term Male Board Member:</u> ...at least from what I’ve heard, there is an initiative to try to make sure that we have representation of all different areas including the Hispanic culture and different cultures throughout the communities. It’s really just basically talking about what are we doing in different communities; what are we doing in the Hispanic community, what are we doing in the African American community; what kind of representation do we have there.</p>	<p>Recruiting strategies are important if board members are going to adopt inclusive practices</p>
<p><u>Agency One Female Board Member:</u> People that come from different races, different cultures, different communities. You know, we find at Tulsa that for different races we find communities. People tend to surround themselves with people that they are like or that they have things in common with. So I take it not only as race and culture but also to communities, that concentration of people that have interests and color in common. And it’s real important that we ...can identify those communities and have penetration there; that we are telling our story to those communities.</p>	<p>Boards need to define what gender and racial/ethnic diversity means for their organization</p>

Appendix F: Letter of Approval from the Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Joan Singleton
Chair of the Board

Julie Smith
1st Vice Chair

Brad Stoots
2nd Vice Chair

Rebecca Speight
Treasurer

Barbara L. Monto
Secretary

Roberta Preston
Chief Executive Officer

CJ Johnson
Chief Financial Officer

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

G. Diane Anderson
Keri Bostwick
Patty Cappy
Miriam E. Costilow
Paula R. Etter
Nancy G. Feldman
Shawna Gehres
Bill Graif
Jodi Jayne
Rebecca Lucht
Suzanne McFarlane
Michelle R. McGill
Dr. Richard F. Palazzo
D.D. Porter
Page Provence
Jackie Roten
Carol Sanders
Louis Smitherman
Sue Tolbert
Susie Wellendorf
Daniel Zaloudek

Bartlesville Office
511 East 11th Street
Bartlesville, OK 74003
Phone 918-336-3378
Fax 918-336-3377
Toll Free Ph. 800-457-4475

McAlester Service Center
PO Box 495
McAlester, OK 74502
Phone 918-423-0826
Fax 918-423-0869
Toll Free Ph. 888-691-5765

Muskogee Office
2411 West Okmulgee
Muskogee, OK 74401-5268
Phone 918-683-7738
Fax 918-687-3788
Toll Free Ph. 877-855-7738

Stillwater Lodge
315 West 12th Street
Stillwater, OK 74074-4418
Phone 405-372-6016
Fax 405-372-0056
Toll Free Ph. 877-549-0555



Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma
2432 East 51st Street
Tulsa, OK 74105-6002
Phone 918-749-2551 or 800-707-9914
Fax 918-749-2556 or 866-749-2556
www.GirlScoutsEastOK.org

Courage. Confidence. Character.

Sibonginkosi Wenyika, MHR
OU Tulsa Ph. D Candidate

June 10, 2011

Dear Bongji,

We are delighted to be selected to participate in your research project. As agreed, our Board members have consented to take part in this study. We anticipate completing our strategic plan by year end. We thank you for your interest, and look forward to contributing toward your efforts.

Sincerely,

Roberta Preston
Chief Executive Officer

Joan Singleton
Chair of the Board

Have You Remembered Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma In Your Estate Planning?

Appendix G: Letter of Approval from the American Red Cross



American Red Cross

June 2, 2011

To the OU Institutional Review Board:

On behalf of the American Red Cross, Southwest Region Blood Services, we offer this letter of support for the multi-case exploration of non-profit board member diversity attitudes and perceptions dissertation study being proposed by Sibonginkosi Wenyika, a PhD candidate at OU-Tulsa.

It is our understanding that Sibonginkosi will analyze the qualitative data collected from board members, by utilizing the multiple case study data analysis process that looks at the data case-by-case while looking for within case similarities and cross-case analysis. This study will assess gender and racial/ethnic diversity. Results from this study will provide valuable information for our organization.

Again, we offer our support for this study.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Nagle
Chief Executive Officer
Southwest Blood Services Region

John Points
Volunteer Board
Chairman

Appendix H: Letter of Approval from the Child Abuse Network

c a n

child abuse network

Stop the hurt. Begin the healing.

June 13, 2011

Bongi Wenyika, MHR
OU Tulsa Ph.D Candidate
OU-Tulsa Schusterman Campus
4502 East 41st Street
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135-2512

Dear Ms. Wenyika,

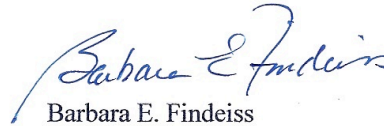
This letter is to formally inform you that the Child Abuse Network's Board of Directors has agreed to participate in your study, "A multi-case exploration of non-profit board member diversity attitudes and perceptions".

Thank you for including us in this opportunity. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Chris Woosley
President



Barbara E. Findeiss
Executive Director

Partner Agency



2829 South Sheridan
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74129
phone (918) 624-0200 fax (918) 624-0222
www.childabusenetwork.org



Appendix I: Recruitment Announcement

Sibonginkosi Wenyika

17313 Bronze Lane

Edmond, OK

73012

Sibonginkosi.Wenyika-1@ou.edu

405-509-0805

This email is to introduce myself. My name is Sibonginkosi (Bongi) Wenyika, a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Oklahoma, Tulsa, Oklahoma. I am requesting permission and consent to undertake a study designed to explore non-profit board member attitudes and perceptions regarding diversity. As the primary investigator, I am seeking to use your organization as one of the case studies.

The study will require surveying your organization's board members with an online survey, as well as one-on-one interviews using open-ended questions. I am available to meet with you to discuss the study and share additional information with you. Also, please feel free to call me at: 405-509-0805.

Additional information regarding the study can be found in the accompanying letter of introduction from Wendy Thomas, the Executive Director of Leadership Tulsa, and Sharon Gallagher, the Executive Director of Tulsa Area United Way.

I am willing to meet with you and any other members of your board to explain my study and address any concerns and questions. My dissertation chairperson is Dr. Lisa Bass. Her email address is dr.bass@ou.edu and contact number is: 918-660-3988.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sibonginkosi Wenyika

Appendix J: The University of Oklahoma Human Research Curriculum Completion Report

CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Human Research Curriculum Completion Report Printed on 1/30/2011

Learner: Sibonginkosi Wenyika (username: Sibongi)

Institution: University of Oklahoma

Contact Information 17313 Bronze Lane

Edmond, OK 73012 USA

Department: Center for Applied Research

Phone: 918-660-3484

Email: Sibonginkosi.Wenyika-1@ou.edu

Social Behavioral Modules:

Stage 3. Refresher Course 3 Passed on 01/30/11 (Ref # 4381112)

Required Modules	Date Completed	Score
SBR 201 Introduction	01/11/11	no quiz
Undue Influence	01/11/11	1/1 (100%)
Research Activities Eligible for Exemption	01/11/11	1/1 (100%)
Privacy vs Confidentiality in Social & Behavioral Research	01/11/11	1/1 (100%)
Assessing Risk in Social & Behavioral Research	01/30/11	1/1 (100%)
Social and Behavioral Research With Prisoners	01/30/11	1/1 (100%)
Completing the SBR 201 Refresher Course	01/30/11	no quiz
Defining Research with Human Subjects	01/30/11	0/1 (0%)

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI participating institution. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI course site is unethical, and may be considered scientific misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Course Coordinator

[Return](#)

Appendix K: Email From Dr. Pitts Granting Permission to Adapt Diversity Management Model

David Pitts [david.w.pitts@gmail.com]

Wenyika, Sibonginkosi Inbox Monday, March 28, 2011 8:27 PM

You replied on 3/29/2011 12:53 PM.

Hi Bongi,

Thanks for getting in touch with me about this. I am very happy for you to use the model in whatever way works for your study! I am glad that someone is getting use out of it. :-) Good luck with your dissertation, and best wishes in your research moving forward.

Best,
David

David Pitts
Assistant Professor & Ph.D. Program Coordinator
Department of Public Administration and Policy
American University
4400 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Ward Circle Building, Room 342
Washington, DC 20016
Phone: +1 202 885-3655
Web: <http://www.american.edu/spa/faculty/pitts.cfm>

On Mon, Mar 28, 2011 at 6:42 PM, Wenyika, Sibonginkosi <Sibonginkosi.Wenyika-1@ou.edu> wrote:

Dr. Pitts,

I am a PhD student at the University of Oklahoma and working on my dissertation: A multi-case study exploration of non-profit board member gender and racial diversity attitudes and perceptions. I have found your extensive work on diversity beneficial as I have crafted my dissertation proposal, and I am seeking your permission to adapt (tweak) your model of diversity management, for my study. The components of the adapted model are, organizational mission and vision, gender and racial board recruitment and outreach, board governance, training/awareness, gender and racial diversity synergy/cultural competence, integration/increased organizational heterogeneity, and organizational performance.

I am excited about the study, and look forward to hearing from you.

Bongi Wenyika, MHR
OU Tulsa PhD Student

**Appendix L: Letter of Introduction From the Leadership Tulsa and
Tulsa Area United Way**



Dear Friend,

We would like to introduce you to Bonggi Wenyika, a graduate of New Voices Board Internship Program Class 1 and a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma.

The New Voices Board Internship Program is a partnership between Leadership Tulsa and the Tulsa Area United Way that seeks to recruit, train, and mobilize a network of talented new board members from under represented Tulsa populations to serve in board leadership roles.

During this program, Bonggi became very interested in how organizations, including nonprofits, embrace diversity and encourage active participation from traditionally under-represented racial and ethnic groups. She has decided to make it the topic of her dissertation and do original research on the subject.

Bonggi has asked us for a letter of introduction to her project so you can be informed of the potential opportunity to participate in her research.

Her intentions are to contact those organizations willing to participate in the study, visit with them and if possible attend a board meeting this spring, before she conducts her research. During the summer, she will randomly select from those willing to participate in the study a few to be the focus of her research. She will be conducting a multi-case study of three organizations. Board members will complete on-line surveys; she will observe board meetings, conduct interviews and examine documents in order to get a better feel for how boards engage and accommodate diverse participation.

We hope you will consider helping her with her worthwhile research and encouraging her in her academic pursuits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendy Thomas".

Wendy Thomas

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Gallagher".

Sharon Gallagher

