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The impact of Covid-19 on community based-organizations: a case study of Jewish organizations

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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON COMMUNITY BASED-ORGANIZATIONS:
A CASE STUDY OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Global Leadership

by

Orit Zigman Lador

May, 2023

Martine Jago, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Orit Zigman Lador

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Doctoral Committee:

Martine Jago, Ph.D., Chairperson

Danielle Espino, Ed.D., Committee member

Yağır Englander, Ph.D., Committee member

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my beloved father, Yehoram Zigman, a man of unwavering truth, who passed away in 2014. From my earliest recollections, my father believed in me and empowered me to pursue any goal I set my mind to. His constant support throughout my life instilled in me the confidence to chase my academic aspirations, even as a new immigrant overcoming language barriers. I stand here today, a testament to his unwavering belief in my potential, and I know that he would take great pride in my accomplishments.

May the memory of my father serve as a perpetual source of inspiration, bringing light and guidance to all whose lives he touched during his meaningful journey.

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To my cherished family and close friends, especially my dear mother, I want to convey my profound gratitude for your unwavering support and encouragement throughout this extensive process. Being your daughter is a genuine honor.

Lastly, I want to thank my beloved husband for his unwavering support and belief in me. Your love and assistance have been essential to my achievements. I am forever grateful for your presence in my life. And to my children, Naia and Leo, you are my greatest sources of joy and inspiration. May you always pursue your dreams with the same determination and courage that you have witnessed in me. I love you both beyond words.

VITA

Orit Zigman Lador

EDUCATION BACKGROUND

Ph.D. in Global Leadership and Change, Pepperdine University, 2023

West LA, CA, United States

MA in Philosophy, Tel Aviv University, 2013

Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel

BA in Behavioral Science, The Academic College of Tel Aviv–Yafo, 2009

Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder of the Leader Circle, a community leadership program for high school students (2022-present).

PUBLICATIONS

Espino, D.P. et al. (2022). Reflections of Health Care Workers on Their In-Hospital Experiences During the Onset of COVID-19. In: Wasson, B., Zörgő, S. (eds) *Advances in Quantitative Ethnography*. ICQE 2021. *Communications in Computer and Information Science*, vol 1522. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93859-8_17

ABSTRACT

When COVID-19 started to spread in March 2020, no one could anticipate the impact it would have on the world. Social behavior is one key aspect that has changed dramatically as a result of the pandemic. Through restrictions that imposed social distancing, masks, and quarantines, feelings of loneliness, depression, and isolation increased. At the same time, there was also evidence of prosocial behavior, with the emergence of people helping those in need. As the pandemic turns endemic with restrictions lifting, the longstanding impact of the pandemic on people's behavior is still unclear. One way to explore this phenomenon is through community-based organizations. As these kinds of organizations rely on people's involvement, it can shed light on the longstanding impact of COVID-19 on members' social behavior. This study focused on Jewish organizations in America as an exploratory case study to explore the ways in which community life has changed. The study provides insights into the pandemic's effect on these organizations and their communities' relations and practices. Through interviews with leaders of Jewish organizations across the U.S, the study identified seven themes related to the COVID-19 crisis, including changes in leadership perspective, community involvement, and organizational management. The study highlights the need for continued attention to the community challenges that emerged during the pandemic. Nonetheless, the strengthened connection between the community and Jewish organizations presents potential for collaboration and positive outcomes, offering a pathway to overcome these challenges. The study also emphasizes the importance of prioritizing employee engagement in a virtual work environment. Future studies should consider exploring the global impact of the pandemic on community engagement, as well as investigating its effects on other sub communities.

Keywords: COVID-19, community-based organization, Jewish organization, community, leadership, social behavior.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter Overview

As COVID-19 started spreading in March 2020, no one knew the depth of change that would occur worldwide. The pandemic affected the lives of people and organizations and served as an accelerator for digital transformation (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2021). It was a multifaceted crisis; it brought death and despair, financial turbulence, increased inequality, and mental health issues. It also connected people globally, advanced technology, and showcased humankind's capacity for resilience.

Because human beings are social creatures, the restrictions imposed during this time as well as fear spreading through the media brought emotional struggle and altered people's behavior and choices regarding their social interactions (Kotwal et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2020; Yousef, 2022). This impact on social lives had many implications, one of which is on community organizations. Because nonprofit organizations serve their community through in-person programs and activities, the effect of the COVID-19 crisis was tremendously significant on their operations and existence. Furthermore, their dependence on grants, volunteers, and philanthropy was tested, and leadership had to make tough decisions while trying to care for their communities (Hathaway, 2020; Kuenzi et al., 2021; Willems et al., 2022).

As the pandemic crisis slowed down, many restrictions were lifted, enabling society to return to normality after 2 years, but what exactly does this new normal entail for social behavior? This study explored the consequences of COVID-19 on social behavior and communities through the lens of community-based organizations' leadership.

The first chapter of this research study introduces the topic of the dissertation and critical pieces of information. These elements include the background of the research, the problem

statement, the purpose of this study, its significance and possible contributions, the definition of key terms, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, the research questions, the positionality of the researcher, and limitations and delimitations of the study. By presenting the overview of this study, the chapter aims to substantiate this study's empirical argument.

Background of the Study

People used to live in local communities for survival, mutual help, and support. However, modern developments, especially in Western countries, have pushed people away from their families and communities (Harari, 2015). This shift fostered the creation of civic associations (Zimmerman, 1941). In North America, community organizations were striving from the 19th century (except through the Great Depression) onward, exemplified by increased memberships, high attendance of club meetings, and in-person community engagement. However, during the 1960s, social, cultural, and economic changes dramatically decreased community life (Putnam, 2001). According to Putnam (2020), public crises happening in the 1960s such as the Vietnam war, the assassination of JFK, domestic terrorism, and the Civil Rights revolution had a synergy that created a perfect storm, contributing to the sharp cultural and political pivot.

Nevertheless, community-based organizations (CBOs) are still spread across the country, trying to serve their communities and bring people together through social interactions, programs, and activities. These efforts were challenged during the most significant crisis that happened in the 21st century; COVID-19.

The pandemic has changed lives as we know it by affecting all industries. During the first year of the pandemic, countries worldwide imposed restrictions limiting social interactions and mobility that affected social behavior (Al-Saleh et al., 2021). These restrictions had increased feelings of loneliness, depression, and isolation (Kotwal et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2020), as well

as distrust and prejudice between social groups (Passini & Speltini, 2022). At the same time, there was evidence of prosocial behavior, characterized by a large number of people and local communities helping others in need (Bowe et al., 2022; Tse et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). In addition, many have suffered from financial burdens and employment changes during this time (Bland, 2020; Ferry et al., 2021; Grelle & Popp, 2021)

As a result of vaccine distribution and new waves of less severe variants, the pandemic started to shift toward endemic status, with most countries lifting restrictions. Although the World Health Organization (WHO) has yet to announce the transfer to endemic, this notion received support from the president of the United States in September 2022, claiming that the pandemic is over in the U.S (Pelley, 2022).

It is challenging to grasp the depth of change and implications on social behavior caused by the first 2 years of the pandemic. However, previous historical pandemics show the powerful impact they can have (Lagerås, 2016; Loomis, 2018), including social, economic, and cultural changes.

Although social change takes time to surface, exploring community behavior in a post-crisis phase can shed light on new trends of social behavior and the consequences of prolonged social distancing. In order to explore this topic, the present study focused on CBOs in North America. These organizations, classified as nonprofits, were part of a sector that has reported operational fallout from the pandemic, involving decreased revenue streams and heightened pressure for services and aid (Kuenzi et al., 2021).

This study focused on leadership perceptions regarding the impact of the crises on their communities. Focusing on leaders to explore the effects of the crisis was hoped to reveal significant changes that affected the organizations during and after the crisis (Knowles et al.,

2019) and provide valuable input on how these organizations and their communities interact. Because Jewish organizations in North America are known for their strong community involvement and large variety of CBOs (Burstein, 2011; Sheskin & Kotler-Berkowitz, 2007), the author chose to focus on this subsector as a case study in this field.

Problem Statement

Currently, the shift of the COVID-19 pandemic toward endemic status has led the world to open again without restrictions, enabling people to socialize and return to their everyday life. Nevertheless, because the last 2 years of living in a crisis mode had dramatic implications on people's emotional states and social behavior, ranging from depression and isolation to prosocial behavior, it is unclear if and how these changes would modify community involvement. Therefore, by investigating CBOs, specifically Jewish nonprofits, this study sought to explore the longstanding impact of COVID-19 on community engagement and their needs and shed light on changes in social behavior.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study was to explore the longstanding impact of COVID-19 on community involvement through the lens of community-based organizational leadership.

Significance of the Study

This study explored the effect of COVID-19 on CBOs more than 2 years after the first wave in December 2019: a time frame associated with restrictions lifted in most countries and a feeling of normalcy in Western countries. This time frame corresponds to the post-crisis stage in crisis management, which involves stabilizing and restoring the disrupted routine in a business continuity environment (Mitroff, 1988). Because most literature on the effect of COVID-19 is focused on the crisis stage (Cullen & Murphy, 2021; Wu et al., 2021), this timing provides new

opportunities to explore the impact of COVID-19 from a reconstruction perspective, which can offer new insights into the long-standing effect of the pandemic. This information, in turn, can extend the current literature on COVID-19 and contribute to crisis studies.

Moreover, this study's collection of data about community engagement and needs can help shed light on the possible continuation of pandemic-associated social trends, such as the rise in seclusion, prosocial behavior, and prejudice (Bowe et al., 2022; Kotwal et al., 2021; Passini & Speltini, 2022). This information can advance social science literature on the pandemic. Furthermore, the study can benefit nonprofit leadership studies by providing leadership insights concerning the pandemic's impact on their operations and roles. Because nonprofit leaders need to constantly manage political, legal, financial, and social shifts, it is essential that they consistently review how they make sense of extreme organizational change (Bryson, 2011), emphasizing the demand for and possible use of this study in graduate-level textbooks.

This research could also contribute to ethnic studies because it focused on Jewish organizations, a minority group in the United States with distinctive characteristics, culture, and history. Because ethnic organizations are fundamental to the structure of American life, learning about Jewish organizations and their future direction could advance the study of other ethnic groups in the U.S. (Burstein, 2011). Considering all the various ways this study could contribute, the main beneficiaries would be future graduate students, teachers, and scholars.

Definitions of Terms

Various definitions were incorporated to give context to the study:

- Community based organizations (CBOs) - “non-profit, non-governmental, or charitable organizations that represent community needs and work to help them.

- CBOs may be associated with a particular area of concern or segment of the community” (Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement, n.d., para. 1).
- Crisis - “An extremely dangerous or difficult situation” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d., para. 1).
 - Post crisis stage - “the organization is returning to business as usual. The crisis is no longer the focal point of management’s attention but still requires some attention” (Goh, 2021, para. 7).
 - COVID-19 - “A respiratory disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, a coronavirus discovered in 2019. The virus spreads mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. Some people who are infected may not have symptoms” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021, para. 1).
 - Pandemic - “An epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people” (Last, 2001, as cited in Kelly, 2011, p. 540)
 - Endemic - “one that is always present throughout a region or group of people and remains fairly consistent” (Geng, 2022, para. 1).
 - Jewish nonprofits - CBOs that involve Jewish cultural characteristics and can encompass religious components.
 - Leadership - “A process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal“ (Kruse, 2013, para. 1).

- Community - “A group of people who share a sense of belonging based on commonalities such as residential area, culture, race, religion, profession or interests”. (O’Leary, 2007, p. 43).
- Sense of Belonging - “Involves the feeling, belief, and expectation that one fits in the group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by the group, and a willingness to sacrifice for the group” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 10).
- Social behavior - “An action that is influenced, directly or indirectly, by the actual, imagined, expected, or implied presence of others” (American Psychological Association [APA], n.d., para. 1).
- Social Change - “Changes in human interactions and relationships that transform cultural and social institutions. These changes occur over time and often have profound and long-term consequences for society” (Dunfey, 2019, para. 1).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is constructed from a worldview of social changes. Throughout history, global pandemics served as an engine for social, economic, and cultural transformation, and there is a great probability that COVID-19 will also have the same effect (Eisenberg & Mordechai, 2020). Social changes take a long time to surface, yet this researcher assumes that the post-crisis stage could display seeds of change.

Although the WHO has yet to announce COVID’s official transfer to endemic status, Western society has moved on from the crisis stage as a result of vaccine distribution, new waves of less severe variants, restriction lifting in most countries, and business continuity. Hence, this study is focused on a post-crisis stage, that is identified as a time for learning, revision, and reconstruction (Coombs & Hollady, 2012; Mitroff, 1988). This time frame can provide an

indication for the long-standing impact of COVID-19 on organizations and their communities. The main constructs for this study are the COVID-19 crisis, communities, and CBOs.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the correlated restrictions have had a dramatic impact on the lives of people and communities (Marzana et al., 2022). These impacts include working from home, increased online activities, family time, and global connections (Bland, 2020). These changes led to a variety of human behaviors, including an upsurge in social isolation and loneliness among different age groups (Ellis et al., 2020; Kotwal et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2020), as well as a growth in prosocial behavior, exemplified by organized and spontaneous aid groups and individuals helping people in need (Bowe et al., 2022; Trautwein et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). Common prosocial behaviors during the pandemic involved online and offline help (Aresi et al., 2022; O'Dwyer et al., 2021), such as grocery shopping and medication delivery, but also valuable emotional support and guidance to community members (O'Dwyer et al., 2021).

Community involvement and rise in help in the first months of the pandemic could be related to a common social behavior during a crisis (Calo-Blanco et al., 2017; Drury, 2018) and cannot serve as an indication of a future direction. Furthermore, the pandemic also increased suspicion and reduced interpersonal connections (Lalot et al., 2022). Therefore, more research is needed to evaluate the direction of community involvement following the crisis.

Other changes have also influenced communities, such as the financial burden and employment changes during the crisis, that can also influence the community's needs following the crisis. Hence, this research study obtained new knowledge by exploring the impact of the pandemic on CBOs and their respective communities following the crisis focusing on community needs and trends.

Literature on nonprofits tends to view them as serving communities, a general definition that includes the work of CBOs. Nonprofits are formally classified into different types, such as location-based, membership-based, policy-based, or issue-focused organizations (S. J. Gill, 2010), with some organizations fitting into more than one category (Wells & Anasti, 2020). As CBOs can fit into most of these categories, for the purposes of this study, general research on nonprofits would signify CBOs.

During the first 2 years of the pandemic, nonprofit organizations were affected dramatically (Willems et al., 2022). These profound organizational changes have ranged from implementing new safety protocols in the daily workflow to starting new programs in response to the pandemic (Kuenzi, 2021). However, not all nonprofits have been affected the same way. Nonprofits that provided critical responses to the pandemic, such as social services and health care organizations, experienced dramatic rise in service demands while facing challenges in preserving the well-being and health of their employees and volunteers (Hathaway, 2020; Shi et al., 2020). Other organizations have been forced to close down temporarily as their operations were deemed nonessential or due to social distancing precluding normal operations (Kim & Mason, 2020; Kuenzi et al., 2021). This operational fallout led to applying Cost-cutting measures like alterations to the workforce, comprising staff reductions, furloughs, and abbreviated work schedules (Kuenzi et al., 2021). Managing the crisis and everything it entails has put much pressure on organizations' leadership.

Nonprofit organizations face recurring crises (Gilstrap et al., 2016), and they are known as the resilient sector, a term coined by Salamon, who pioneered the empirical study of the US nonprofit sector in his book, *The Resilient Sector* (2003). This reality might be associated with

the transformational leadership style that has been deemed most effective in the nonprofit sector (Almas et al., 2020; R. Gill, 2011; Kaufman et al., 2019; Riggio & Orr, 2004).

Transformational leadership includes four factors: idealized influence or charisma (acting as strong role models for followers), inspirational motivation (communicating high expectations to followers and encouraging them to grow their commitment), intellectual stimulation (encouraging creativity and innovation), and individualized consideration (creating a supportive climate and actively listening to the followers' needs; Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Recently, evidence of shared or more blurred leadership approaches has been identified (Shier & Handy, 2020). According to Frumkin (2002), one of the main factors that distinguishes nonprofits from corporations is the lack of clear boundaries of ownership and responsibility. These obscured limits might be related to the dynamic interdependence between nonprofits and their respective communities (Dahan, 2019; S. J. Gill, 2010), because power can shift both ways. According to Crutchfield and Grant (2007), this mutual dependency is a key to effectiveness.

The researcher aimed to understand COVID-19's long-standing impact on community engagement through these interdependency relations. Assuming that community needs, and engagement practices have changed due to the pandemic, the organization's strategy and operations must also be affected as a result.

A few supporting evidence to this notion of interdependency during COVID-19 can be found in a national survey by the Nonprofit Finance Fund (2022), which showed 41% of organizations had solicited community feedback about their services, and 35% have acted based on this feedback. This information can indicate organizational efforts to involve the community in decision making. In addition, the survey found that individual donors were the highest source of funding, with 88%. This finding may be explained by the economic burden on institutions

during the crisis. Having individual donors as the main support for the organization's existence may also affect interdependency. Furthermore, research has found that board members had expanded their involvement and dedication to supporting their organization during the pandemic (Willems et al., 2022).

These findings represent changes to the nonprofit sector that may affect the interdependency of organizations and their respective communities following the crisis. Therefore, it is apparent that the COVID-19 crisis affected both CBOs and their communities, which assumes that the dependency between the two was also affected. This research study explored these connections more than 2 years after the initial spread of the virus to provide new knowledge on the long-term effect of the crisis and shed light on the future direction of CBOs and the relations with their community. These connections were explored using the lens of different theories focusing on the sense of belonging, which served as the theoretical framework of this study, to better understand the social behaviors and needs in this interdependency setting.

To explore the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on community behavior, the researcher selected the subsector of Jewish organizations in North America. The American Jewish community emerged in the early 20th century (Benkin, 1978) and underwent many changes thereafter. Nevertheless, membership in Jewish organizations has continued to be a primary way for Jews to articulate their Jewish heritage, pursue objectives, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the community (Sheskin & Kotler-Berkowitz, 2007). The American Jewish population became more diverse with time, which also influenced their organizations (Burstein, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2021).

There are various spheres of Jewish communal organizations; mainstream Jewish organizations tend to have a mission involving philanthropy, social services, or care for Israel

(Benor, 2010). By contrast, some new Jewish organizations have a complicated relationship with organized Jewish life and try to challenge the traditional Jewish organizations by offering new ways of Jewish engagement and education (Rubin Ross, 2017). These groups target different sectors of the Jewish population. Nevertheless, most of them share the same mission of creating and supporting a community (Colton et al., 2013). Therefore, this population's strong community ties and a vast range of CBOs made them an optimal case study to gain valuable information on the effect of COVID-19 on community action.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research is based on people's inherent need for belonging, which is crucial to motivation, life satisfaction, and overall well-being (Deci, 1975; Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to self-determination theory, the concept of belonging exemplifies that people need to feel connected and attached to others.

An important theory related to sense of belonging is social cohesion, defined as a state of affairs concerning the relationship with society at large, as well as other individuals and groups. These connections are demonstrated by emotions and principles that encompass a feeling of inclusion, reliance, and eagerness to engage and assist, along with behavioral manifestations (Chan et al., 2006). Bottoni (2018a, 2018b) identified different levels of social cohesion, and community group connections are classified under the meso level. This level is focused on the individuals' role within these groups and includes the sub-dimensions of participation, which include social and political participation.

Social cohesion tends to rise in times of crisis (Calo-Blanco et al., 2017; Drury, 2018), which was also apparent during COVID-19 (Marzana et al., 2022). There were many examples of people spontaneously organizing into mutual aid groups and other volunteering organizations

to support those in need (Littman et al., 2022), sometimes exceeding demand (Trautwein, 2020). However, this trend is usually short-lived, and social disintegration may regress to pre-disaster levels (Sweet, 1998). Evidence of this shifting behavior was also seen during the pandemic by subsequent increased suspicion and reduced interpersonal contact (Lalot et al., 2022).

There is another related theoretical concept called social capital, which focuses primarily on the individual and group levels (Chan et al., 2006). Social capital involves the relationships and social networks between individuals and the shared norms of trust and reciprocity that emerge from them. These shared norms are fundamental in fostering cooperation and coordination for mutual advantage (Putnam, 2001). Therefore, social capital is an essential element that plays a crucial role in promoting social cohesion, trust, and cooperation among individuals and groups.

This review highlights the connections between theoretical frameworks and related research on the pandemic, demonstrating how they can inform our understanding of community engagement in organizations during the post-crisis phase.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the longstanding impact of COVID-19 on community involvement through the lens of community-building organizational leadership. The study sought to examine this objective by establishing the following research question: What is the impact of COVID-19 on Jewish community-based organizations?

This main question led to the following three sub-questions:

1. To what extent, if at all, has the interdependency between the organization and the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?

2. To what extent, if at all, has community involvement changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?
3. To what extent, if at all, has the leadership approach toward the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?

Limitations

There are various limitations to this study. First, the sample population of this research was focused on Jewish nonprofits that serve a specific ethnic group with a unique history, culture, and values. Therefore, this study had constraints on its ability to represent a range of diverse characteristics such as race and religion. Furthermore, because the population for this study is from areas with increased Jewish populations, such as New York, California, and Texas (Burstein, 2011), other rural areas or certain states were not represented in the study. It may be possible that research on other populations would be able to produce different results.

Second, because the research methodology was a case study, its findings cannot be extended to the greater population. While case studies provide rich and detailed information about the subject of study, their findings are limited in their generalizability. This is because case studies focus on understanding the unique characteristics and context of the case being studied, rather than making generalizations about a larger population. Therefore, the findings of a case study cannot be used to make broad statements about other similar cases or populations. As mentioned by Stake (1995), the case study focuses on “particularization, not generalization” (p. 8).

Third, because this case study incorporated a qualitative method to gather data, its ability to reach a larger population sample is limited, and it is possible that applying mixed methods could produce more findings on this topic.

Fourth, because the interview questions included questions about changes in community behavior, leaders' ability to respond might be limited because it is considered indirect knowledge filtered through their views (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, organizational leaders are usually not the ones who interact with the community, which limits the amount of knowledge they have on the community side. These limitations imply that information received from community members or field managers might produce different findings.

Fifth, interviewing the participants gathered knowledge in a designated place rather than a natural field setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), which may have influenced their responses.

Sixth, this study collected digital material from organizations' websites and social media channels regarding their communications with members. However, this information might have been interpreted differently by a member than by a nonmember observer (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Seventh, because qualitative research is interpretative (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the researcher's understanding of the content of the interviews may have been misguided. Although the study included a cross-checking procedure with another researcher to ensure coding consistency, there was still room for errors in judgment or interpretation based on the researcher's perceptions.

Delimitations

The study's delimitations include a specific population of Jewish CBOs. These organizations were required to follow strict criteria to be included in this research. They had to be located in the United States and offer in-person programs or activities to adults and/or young adults and/or all ages. The minimum number of employees in these organizations had to be five.

Furthermore, because this study incorporated interviews with organizations' leadership, the criteria for participation included holding a paid leadership position. Positions included CEOs, executive directors, and directors.

The study included 20 leaders who represented 20 CBOs or chapters. The organizations studied included umbrella organizations, social services organizations, educational organizations, cultural organizations, and local chapters of national organizations. Ten organizations aimed their programming at young adults, whereas seven organizations offered programming for the entire family, and three offered programs for ages 12 and up.

The study used two data sources: digital materials and semi-structured interviews. Digital material included organizations' websites and social media pages. The digital material helped in learning more about the communication with the community.

The interview data source represents information to which participants have given attention and allowed "researcher control over the line of questioning" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 188). All interviews were conducted via Zoom for an average of 30 minutes. The interviews were recorded via the Zoom cloud recording function, which also provides auto transcripts. The researcher has also recorded written notes during interviews to capture key notions. The study lasted 4 months, starting in December 2022 and ending in March 2023, allowing enough time to recruit participants, conduct the research, and analyze the data.

Assumptions

The success of any research study depends on several assumptions being met. In this particular study, there were several key assumptions that needed to be fulfilled for the study to yield reliable results.

One of the most important assumptions was that participants agreed to participate in the study and provide honest and adequate responses. If participants did not feel comfortable answering the questions truthfully, it could result in inaccurate or biased data, which would negatively impact the reliability of the study.

Another important assumption was that the population size would be sufficient for study purposes. If the sample size was too small, it would be difficult to draw valid conclusions from the data collected. Additionally, it was important to assume that the data collection procedure and timeline would proceed as planned. Any unforeseen delays or disruptions could impact on the accuracy of the data collected.

Assumptions related to the dependability of the study were also critical. The quality of the questions used in the study was assumed to be high, such that they would generate knowledge that answers the research questions effectively. The researcher's ability to remain neutral and factual during the study was also assumed, as any personal biases could impact the validity of the results obtained.

Positionality

Having lived in the United States for the last 8 years, I have had the opportunity to experience the Jewish community through professional and personal settings. As a member of a local chapter of Chabad, a Hasidic movement within the world of Orthodox Judaism, I participated in Jewish holiday traditions and events. In addition, I worked for a year in a CBO serving Israeli and Jewish Americans. These experiences taught me the power of a strong community, whether it is through social activism or celebrations. However, I also learned about the challenges of fundraising and recruiting new members to participate in programs.

During COVID-19, I joined my neighborhood community council with the intent to help bring the community together following the pandemic's dramatic impact on people's emotional states. I conducted a survey to learn about the community's needs and found that many participants wanted to get involved and volunteer within the community. This information led me to assume that the pandemic might have created a lack of social connections that could lead to increased community involvement.

Furthermore, as someone who holds a worldview of an existentialist, I firmly believe people were meant to live together as a community, helping and supporting one another, and as Western society has drifted away from this natural way of living, human suffering has grown. With this notion in mind, I perceived the COVID-19 crisis as a trigger for social change that would bring people back together. This research project sought indications for this conception.

These identifications of the researcher's assumptions, values, and personal background related to this research are described in an honest and direct way to increase awareness throughout the study. As highlighted by Creswell and Creswell (2018), it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the focus of the study remains on comprehending the meaning attached to the issue by the participants, rather than the researcher's own interpretation.

Therefore, this awareness would help the researcher to control her biases and question possible interpretations of the findings to ensure validity.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation study will be divided into five chapters. This first chapter presents the introduction to the research, including key information such as the background of the study, its purpose, possible contributions, research questions, and conceptual and theoretical framework. The other sections are cataloged into five chapters, including a reference section and appendices.

Chapter 2 describes the literature review on the main concepts of this study, which are communities, CBOs, Jewish nonprofits, and the impact of COVID-19 on organizations and communities. Chapter 3 reviews the research approach, methodology, and methods used in data collection, including the analysis procedures. The fourth chapter provides the analysis and discussion of the results. The last chapter focus on the conclusions, recommendations, and implications for future research.

Chapter Summary

This introduction chapter has presented this study's topic: the pandemic's effect on CBOs and their respective communities. It described the background for this study, including a brief history of community engagement in North America and the impact of COVID-19 on social behavior. It also stated the research problem, which is the unclear implications of COVID-19 on community engagement within the relevant context of the post-crisis stage.

The chapter also presented the purpose of this study to explore community involvement through the lens of CBOs. Other valuable information included the study's possible contribution to and significance in various areas and disciplines, such as ethnic studies, social science, and nonprofit leadership. The study also defined key terms to create a clear understanding. It explained this study's main concepts: communities, CBOs, COVID-19, and their connections.

The theoretical framework was also presented. Its main principle is the sense of belonging, which includes related theories such as social capital, social cohesion, and a sense of community. Additionally, the chapter presented the research questions; the limitations of this study based on the sample population, methodology, and methods; and the delimitations of this study, including interview procedures and population criteria. The section also described the study's assumptions regarding the participants, structure, and rationality, as well as the

researcher's positionality, which includes personal, and professional values and the worldview that shapes her perceptions. The chapter ends with information regarding the organization of the study to provide a clear outline for this research study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a contextual overview of this study, including the purpose statement, research questions, and a visual representation of the conceptual framework. The main section presents an elaborative review of relevant literature to explore current knowledge, theories, and historical background regarding the main themes of this study. The purpose of this section is to provide “a persuasive argument that extends beyond the proposed research problem and shows the possible ramifications of the study and the way it fits into the greater scheme of things” (Richards & Morse, 2013, p. 257). The chapter also explains the significant gaps in the literature and aims to highlight areas that are lacking or research that has obtained mixed results to establish the study’s importance.

Context

The purpose of this study was to explore the longstanding impact of COVID-19 on community involvement through the lens of community-building organizational leadership. The study sought to examine this objective by establishing the following research question: What is the impact of COVID-19 on Jewish community-based organizations?

This main question led to the following three sub-questions:

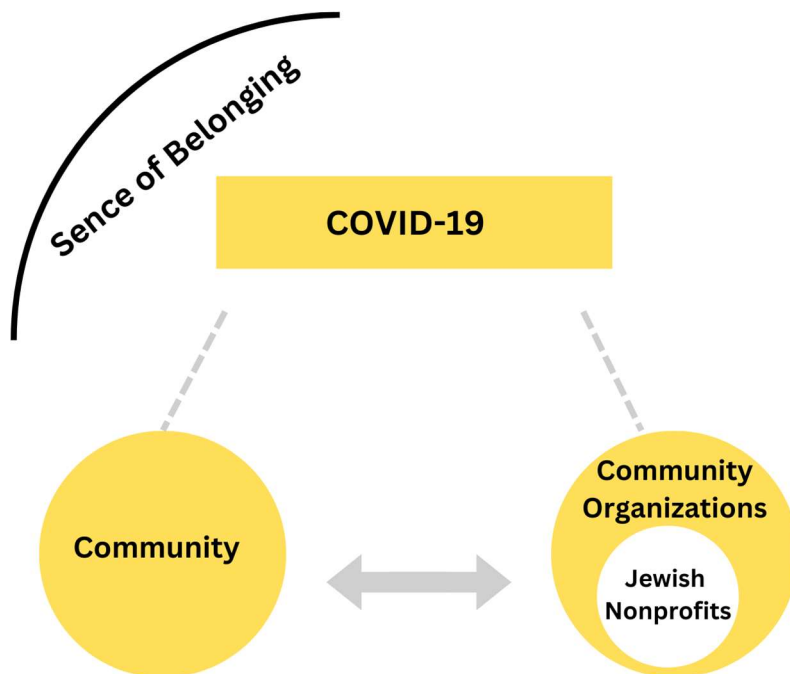
1. To what extent, if at all, has the interdependency between the organization and the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?
2. To what extent, if at all, has community involvement changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?
3. To what extent, if at all, has the leadership approach toward the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?

Conceptual Framework

This study framework presents the connections among the main concepts of this study (see Figure 1). The conceptual framework of this study is based on the premise that COVID-19 has had a long-lasting impact on both CBOs and communities themselves. The impact on communities is viewed through the lens of the 'sense of belonging' theoretical framework. As CBOs aim to serve their communities, a dynamic interdependency is created between them (Dahan, 2019; S. J. Gill, 2010). This framework presents COVID-19's effect on communities and organizations, assuming that the impact on both has affected their mutual relationship. The focus of this case study is on CBOs within the subsector of Jewish organizations.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework for COVID-19's Impact on CBO and Their Members



Communities

People used to live in local communities up until the Industrial Revolution, which occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries. This way of life provided for most human needs. Community help was given based on local customs and an economy of favors (Harari, 2015). All this changed dramatically over the last two centuries beginning with the Industrial Revolution in Europe and North America.

The 19th century was a time of rapid transformation in most European countries, changing them from agricultural to urbanized industrial societies (Farahani, 2016). The growing power of the state and market weakened the norms of family and community dependency and fostered individuality and freedom (Harari, 2015). The concept of “community lost” was developed in the late 19th century to capture these gaps between individuals and their local communities (Farahani, 2016, p. 359).

These changes also affect American communities. Prior to the beginning of the 20th century, the most common form of community was the nominalist type, which was location-based and could be observed in communities of immigrants from different regions with little in common (Zimmerman, 1941).

The evolution of the American community shifted from the nominal type toward the realist community, which was common in rural regions. It is characterized by a population usually born in the area and sharing the same culture, religion, and traditions. This type of community social structure held classes, groups, and associations, and was identified as the typical American community (Zimmerman, 1941). The limited mobility in the 20th century fostered local community life that provided the everyday needs within those boundaries and included communities of interests that were forming from within (Farahani, 2016).

Participation in American communities increased over time. According to Putnam's (2020) study on communities in America, from the beginning of the 20th century until the 1960s, participation in civic associations of all kinds gradually increased, with a temporary drop during the Great Depression. The peak was reached in the 1960s when community organizations had a high number of members. However, during the last third of the 20th century, community groups across America began to diminish, and a new type of association, known as tertiary associations, emerged. These associations were based on common symbols, leaders, and ideals, but members did not necessarily interact with each other. Examples of such associations include the Sierra Club. Despite the emergence of these new types of associations, active in-person participation in community organizations declined, and these organizations experienced a decrease in new members (Putnam, 2001). Thus, over the last half-century, Americans have been dropping out of organized community life, which is in stark contrast to what happened a century ago. Putnam (2020) explored the causes of this social change and implied a compound of trends in economics, politics, society, and culture that happened together as the trigger for this phenomenon. Some of these changes included a decline in social trust, cultural salience such as agreement and unity, and a rise in individualism.

Perceptions of Community

As society has evolved, so has the meaning of the word community. In the late 19th century, Ferdinand Tonnies, a German sociologist distinguished communities from societies by claiming that communities are cohesive social entities inside larger societies (O'Leary, 2007). Martin Buber (2002), a Jewish philosopher, made a distinction between communities and collectives. He viewed community as being with one another, a multitude of persons moving toward one goal in a dynamic form, "A flowing from I to Thou;" in contrast, he perceived

collectivity as people being side by side, “bundling together” (p.37), with a common factor, but without the great passion of a growing community. From a social constructivist perspective, Max Weber, a renowned German sociologist, viewed community organization and communal relationships as arising from the competition for economic, political, or social interests. Weber's theory suggests that communities are formed not by shared traditions or values, but rather by the pursuit of shared interests and the struggle for power and resources. These social connections provide the ground for the interests to be monopolized and applied (Neuwirth, 1969).

Gusfield (1975) provided a more modern definition and distinguished between two main applications of the term community. The first is the territorial and physical aspects of the community, such as a neighborhood or city. The second type is relational, such as professional relationships or those based on shared spiritual beliefs, which prioritize the value of human connections. This notion of value is extended in O’Leary’s (2007) description, which identified community as a group who shares a sense of belonging based on common characteristics such as residential area, religion, culture, race, profession, or hobbies. According to social science researchers, the need for belonging is inherent and provides meaning to people’s lives.

Sense of Belonging

Various social theories are based on human beings’ inherent need to belong. According to self-determination theory, individuals have three innate needs that are crucial to overall well-being: motivation, and life satisfaction: competency, autonomy, and belonging (Deci, 1975; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Competency is related to individuals’ need to feel a sense of mastery when fulfilling assignments that are vital to them. Autonomy means having control over some aspects of life and one’s behavior. The concept of belonging indicates that people need to feel connected and attached to others.

Allen et al. (2021) extended the element of belonging and proposed a dynamic framework that includes four components (a) competencies for belonging (skills and abilities); (b) opportunities to belong (enablers, removal or reduction of barriers); (c) motivations to belong (inner drive); and (d) perceptions of belonging (cognitions, attributions, and reaction, including positive or negative experiences of interactions). As a social system, these four components reinforce and influence one another over time.

A related concept fundamental in community psychology and urban sociology is the sense of community (Farahani, 2016), which is the feeling of belonging to a group of people who care for one another and share a similar path (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The concept initially centered on localities but has since been shifted to additional contexts, such as organizations (Hughey et al., 1999). McMillan and Chavis (1986) claimed that the sense of community is composed of four factors: (a) membership- a feeling of belonging; (b) influence- a sense of mattering; that needs to be mutual; (c) integration and fulfillment of needs- feeling that members' needs will be met by the group's resources; and (d) shared emotional connections- the members' commitment and belief that there will be continuity to their shared experiences.

Another important theory that was developed to capture the impact of group association on the individual is social identity. This theory suggests that people derive part of their self-image from the groups they belong to. They feel a sense of belonging and connection to their in-group, while perceiving those outside of the group (out-group) as different from themselves (Tajfel, 1978). When individuals associate positively with their in-group, it boosts their self-esteem and motivates them to view their group favorably (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This often leads to an exaggeration of similarities between themselves and their in-group members, promoting greater empathy and prosocial behavior towards their group (Tajfel, 1978).

A more general concept that focuses on social connections at different levels is social cohesion, which Chan et al. (2006) defined as a state of affairs concerning the relationship with society at large, as well as other individuals and groups. These relations are exemplified by a set of feelings and norms that includes a sense of belonging, trust, motivation to participate and help, and behavioral expressions.

Social cohesion, which dates to the end of the 19th century when society experienced epochal changes (Bottoni, 2018b), is considered a general concept that provides a holistic view of the general condition of society (Chan et al., 2006). Bottoni (2018a, 2018b) distinguished the different connections of social cohesion into three levels:

1. A macro level that refers to connections to the broader society.
2. A meso level refers to connections with secondary groups, such as larger in and out-groups that can provide social identities.
3. A micro level refers to interpersonal connections, such as families and friends.

The meso level pertains to the role and association of individuals with groups or organizations.

This level comprises sub-dimensions such as participation, which pertains to social and political involvement, and openness, which pertains to the acceptance of diversity and immigration.

Nonetheless, certain scholars have proposed the elimination of the openness component (Bottoni, 2018 a).

Social capital is a related concept that focuses primarily on the individual and group levels (Chan et al., 2006). The concept of social capital was developed in the 20th century to show awareness of how social ties make people's lives more productive. Social capital encompasses the relationships and social networks between individuals, and the shared norms of

trust and reciprocity that emerge from them. This is fundamental in fostering cooperation and coordination for mutual advantage (Putnam, 2001).

One of the classifications of social capital is bonding and bridging. Bonding social capital refers to connections between members of a network who share a similarity. These are social networks that are inward-looking and reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneity within groups, such as ethnic organizations. Bridging means encompassing people from diverse backgrounds. These are *outward-looking* social networks but are usually formed between people with the same power level, such as the Civil Rights movement and youth services groups (Putnam, 2001).

Other scholars have identified another level of social capital: *linking social capital*. Linking social capital refers to the degree to which individuals establish connections with organizations and people who hold greater power and can provide access to resources or services (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Woolcock, 2001). Unlike bridging social capital, which focuses on connecting people from different backgrounds and communities, linking social capital involves building relationships with those who possess greater authority or resources. However, it is still an outward-looking approach, but it recognizes power differences in these connections (Horwitz & Lascar, 2021).

Because social connections are a powerful determinant of our well-being, supportive research shows that community involvement can decrease mental and physical illness. This protective effect is related to close family ties, friendship, participation in social events, and affiliation with civic associations (Putnam, 2001).

Community-Based Organizations

Since the 1980s, the decline of the welfare state and the related shift toward a model in which state services are delivered by non-government agencies enabled an increase activity of nonprofit organizations that provide services to meet various human needs (Dahan, 2019; Hasenfeld & Garrow, 2012). These changes brought added challenges to nonprofits serving communities (Schmid, 2006), which has increased recently due to the government cutting programs and budgets, making CBOs pivotal actors in addressing local needs (Kaufman et al., 2019).

Nonprofits are formed to serve their communities. The definition of a nonprofit's community is broad. It could be based on a geographic location, membership-based, policy-based, or issue-focused (S. J. Gill, 2010). Another common way to classify nonprofits is service providing or advocacy-oriented, although some integrate both into their mission (Wells & Anasti, 2020). Because CBOs can fit into most of these categories, for the purposes of this study, research on nonprofits would be generalized toward CBOs.

Nonprofits' purpose to serve their communities creates a dynamic interdependence between them and their respective communities (Dahan, 2019; S. J. Gill, 2010). This interdependence is key to nonprofits' effectiveness (Crutchfield & Grant, 2007).

Nonprofits operate in a shifting environment (Schmid, 2006; Sisco, 2012) that is fundamentally different from that of corporations. Frumkin (2002) outlined four main differences between nonprofit and for-profit organizations: nonprofits exist to fulfill a charitable purpose, they do not force participation, they operate without allocating revenues to stockholders, and are lacking clear boundaries of ownership and responsibility. Although corporations are usually

driven by revenue and return on investment, nonprofit organization actions need to be guided by the values of the community in which they are based.

Nonprofit organizations contribute positively to society in a variety of ways. They raise funds and awareness for causes and are guided by a purpose and mission. In contrast to business and academia, their mission requires volunteers at the executive level, such as the board of directors, and the operational level, such as task forces and events. Many also employ professional staff (Sneath, 2021). The board is responsible for the organization's financial health and supervises the executive director. In religious nonprofits, this voluntary group of leaders is termed lay leaders and is responsible for helping to connect the organization to outside resources (Bean & Martinez, 2015). Most volunteers start at the operational level before they move to leadership positions (Sneath, 2021).

Trust is a crucial component of nonprofits for three reasons. First, a trusting public is more likely to get involved in communities. Second, trust increases the supporter base, which strengthens lobbying efforts. Third, trusted organizations are more likely to receive financial support (Chapman et al., 2021; Gaskin, 1999; Powers & Yaros, 2013). Sisco (2012) added that nonprofits are held to higher ethical standards than for-profit corporations. Therefore, building and retaining trust with the community is especially crucial for nonprofit organizations and their reputations and can affect their sustainability.

Nonprofits competing for resources is considered typical conduct because individual donors, who make up the majority of all contributions at 67%, drive this behavior (Giving USA, 2022). Kelly (1997) formally defined fundraising as relationship management among charitable organizations and donors. Kelly's definition fostered solicitation strategies based on the belief that people give to people, not organizations. Fundraising literature suggests that solicitation

from community members could be successful (Philipp, 1999; Waters, 2008) as people want to see improvement in their communities and help make a difference (Waters & Tindall, 2011).

As technology's role in fostering communities grows, it becomes a means of communication between the community and its members (Farahani, 2016), with social media and the online sphere providing nonprofits with effective tools to connect with volunteers and raise funds (Lee & Shon, 2021).

A nonprofit's success depends on the assets and capabilities of its communities as well as its ability to learn. Nonprofits can facilitate learning efforts to evaluate needs and assets to improve the communities they serve. This process, which can be accomplished with players from different sectors, can teach communities how to achieve their goals (S. J. Gill, 2010).

In addition to learning, there are other practices that can contribute to nonprofits success. A study by Crutchfield and Grant (2007) on highly successful nonprofits found six standard practices:

- Champion policy transformation and deliver assistance.
- Make markets work by utilizing market forces and recognizing businesses as powerful partners.
- Inspire evangelists by generating significant encounters for individual supporters and building a strong community of supporters by creating meaningful emotional experiences for individuals related to the organization's mission and values. These efforts can help to convert them into evangelists for the cause.
- Nurture nonprofit networks by seeing other groups as partners, not as competitors for limited resources. This notion was also supported by Gomez (2010), who claimed that

the volatility and constant change in the nonprofit sector make partnerships with other nonprofits and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) essential.

- Master the art of adaptation by adjusting to the changing environment and be innovative, agile, and strategic while continually learning from interactions with partners in the broader community.
- Share the leadership by empowering others to lead and distribute leadership within the organizations and throughout the external nonprofit networks.

The quality of nonprofit leadership, according to Riggio and Orr (2004), is the distinguishing factor between successful organizations and those that fail.

Leadership Nonprofit

Scholarship on leadership in nonprofits has found transformational leadership to be the most effective style (Almas et al., 2020; Kaufman et al., 2019; Riggio & Orr, 2004; R. Gill, 2011). This leadership style has the capability to impact staff commitment (Pierro et al., 2013).

Nonprofit organizations have a focus on vision, mission, and values that are usually distinctive from those in the private and public sectors. The leadership competencies needed to pursue them also differ, placing more importance on various success measures linked to the pursuit of purpose, the value of service, and efficiency. Nonetheless, income and available resources remain vital to their survival and development. According to R. Gill (2011), nonprofit leadership requires transformational skills that prioritize employees and members and maintain a profound obligation to the organization's purpose.

Bass (1985) described transformational and transactional leadership as a range rather than independent modes, where transactional leadership relies on motivating and guiding followers through appeals to their personal self-interest. Bass claimed that transformational leadership

encourages followers to act beyond expectations by (a) raising followers' awareness about the significance and worth of definite and idealized goals and (b) getting followers to rise above their self-interests for the good of the group or organization, and (c) leading followers to focus on higher-level needs (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leadership includes four factors:

- *Idealized influence or charisma* describes leaders who act as strong role models for followers who want to follow and emulate them. These leaders are associated with very high standards and are trustworthy. They are deeply respected and perceived as reliable. In addition, they provide followers with a vision and a sense of purpose.
- *Inspirational motivation* describes a leader who communicates high expectations to followers and inspires them through encouragement to grow their commitment and become a part of the company's shared vision. This kind of leadership enhances team spirit.
- *Intellectual stimulation* describes leaders that encourage creativity and innovation while questioning their own views and principles and those of the other leaders and the organization itself. This type of leadership supports and empowers followers to seek new methods and innovative solutions to managing organizational problems.
- *Individualized consideration* describes a leader who creates a supportive climate, listening actively to the followers' needs. Leaders adopt the role of a coach or mentor to support followers in becoming fully actualized.

Bass (1999) stated that transformational leadership results in employee engagement, where motivation exceeds the average level. Reaching that level requires affiliating the employee's interests and values with the organizations. This leadership style encourages independence and challenging work and is related to job satisfaction. From a community

perspective, Kaufman et al. (2019) found that transformational leadership factors were correlated with group involvement in community projects, indicating that using this kind of leadership with groups may be more productive than other kinds of leaderships styles. Because community organizations are relying on volunteers to maintain their operations, a study on the connection between leadership style and retaining volunteers found that transformational leadership style plays a vital role in effectively overseeing and retaining volunteers. This fosters their beliefs that they are indispensable and valued contributors to the organization (Almas et al., 2020).

The complexity of leadership in nonprofit organizations lies in its intricate relationship with group needs, mission objectives, and the various behaviors and linkages involved. (Gilstrap et al., 2016). Building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, including volunteers, the public, and partners, is a key focus for leaders across all types of nonprofit organizations. These efforts are instrumental in achieving mission-critical objectives such as cultivating partnerships, securing grants and donations, fostering community engagement, and responding effectively to crises (Chikoto et al., 2013). According to Schmid (2006), effective leaders are required to develop an awareness and sensitivity to changing conditions and the limits of the organization. Specifically, they should know when to change their leadership style. According to his approach, leaders need to be chosen, trained, and evaluated according to their ability to adapt to organizational changes, not based on their traits. This approach is particularly important for nonprofit organizations that provide human and community services as they navigate ongoing transitions and changes resulting from their reliance on government funding.

Creativity is also an important aspect of nonprofit leadership. A study that explored nonprofit leadership practices that support social innovation in human service organizations suggests that the leader's role is to create opportunities, form partnerships, and create a structure

that enables the mobilization of employees. These acts supported shared leadership that facilitated action within and across organizations (Shier & Handy, 2020).

Studies on leadership in nonprofit organizations have focused on the qualities of the executive leader. By identifying leaders and followers, individual leaders are the ones being credited in regard to organizational developments. This approach is missing the contribution of other actors within and outside the organizations, which were instrumental in achieving the organizational outcomes. However, changes in the political-economic landscape are found to lead toward a shared or more blurred leadership approach (Shier & Handy, 2020).

Jewish Organizations

The American Jewish community emerged in the early 20th century, based on the Eastern European model, prior to 1914 (Benkin, 1978). The Eastern European model provided social, educational, and cultural services to Jewish communities in the region, emphasizing collective action, mutual aid, and a strong sense of community. However, unlike the ideology of segregation toward Jews in Eastern Europe, the American ideology was inclusive toward both Jews as a group and individuals.

The first immigrant Jews coming to North America were granted to stay on the premise that they would be responsible for their own poor. This request was a common practice for the Jewish community since the Middle Ages (Benkin, 1978), with communal organizations prominent in distributing social services to the local Jewish population.

Jews were integrated well into American society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Nevertheless, they still wanted to preserve their Jewish identity under modern conditions. This tension between a desire to integrate and concern to preserve Jewish heritage was the focus of identity studies at the beginning of the 20th century (Sheskin & Kotler-

Berkowitz, 2007), as well as the background for the expansion of many community associations and organizations. At the time, Jewish organizations included various homogeneous associations of immigrant American Jews to secure their heritage, and others based on regional ties (e.g., a shared hometown such as the *landsmanshaft*). According to Benkin (1978), other kinds of Jewish organizations provided services to the needy, such as charitable institutions, community welfare organizations, and the Hevrah Bikkur Holim (also known as the society for visiting the sick). These organizations were popular due to the high poverty rates among new immigrants.

Local organizations provided opportunities for immigrants to socialize and connect with others in a familiar environment, allowing them to share their experiences and concerns, and ease their socialization with American society; they also became a place for networking and helping others out in the professional world. The power of these community organizations placed the Jews at the heart of the nation's economic behavior (Benkin, 1978).

Because many of these community institutions, such as relief agencies and socialist clubs, aimed to provide resources to integrate Jewish immigrants into the general population, their mission was not sustainable. Once the population settled in and climbed the American socio-economic ladder, these organizations had to adapt their missions, expand their audience, or close down. The next generation of native-born American Jews belonged to groups emphasizing their ethnic status (Benkin, 1978). Although there were important changes in the Jewish population over time, memberships in Jewish organizations continue to be a primary way for Jews to express their Jewish identity, carry out personal and shared goals, and help sustain the future vitality of the community (Sheskin & Kotler-Berkowitz, 2007).

Jewish Values

Jewish values portray an integral part of many Jewish organizations. One of the central values is *tzedakah*, which means charity, and refers to virtue, a commitment of both the community and the “good” individual (Benkin, 1978). Another widespread value is *kol Yisrael arevim zeh la'zeh*, which means that every individual who identifies as Jewish has a responsibility to care for and support others who identify with the same community (Shaul Bar Nissim, 2019). A similar value is *am echad* (one people), which symbolizes a view of global Jewish peoplehood. Another value that encompasses the importance of Jewish identity is the value of *l'dor v'dor* (from generation to generation), which captures the idea of the preservation of Jewish identity, both at an individual and communal level, as it is transmitted through successive generations. A more modern value that emerged in the 20th century in Jewish American organizations was the notion of *tikkun olam* (healing the world), which brought about a renewed emphasis on the impact of Jews on both their Jewish and non-Jewish surroundings. The insertion of these ethnoreligious norms and values in different organizations exemplifies the importance placed on the preservation and strengthening of the Jewish community (Shaul Bar Nissim, 2019).

Data

The Jewish population in the United States constitutes 38.8% of the total global Jewish population (DellaPergola, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2013), making it an essential aspect of any global Jewish population estimation. However, due to the absence of official census documentation and the abundance of alternative sources, the evaluation of the Jewish population in the US requires careful consideration (DellaPergola, 2014). The current estimate of the Jewish

population in the US is 5,700,000 based on data collected over the last 10 years (DellaPergola, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2013).

There is little comprehensive research on the organizations within ethnic, racial, or religious communities, including Jewish organizations (Burstein, 2011). The latest available data on Jewish organizations is from 2011, according to Burstein's (2011) report. The research found that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data on nonprofit charitable organizations showed that there are presently 9,482 Jewish non-profit organizations. The 10 states with the most prominent Jewish populations and related organizations are New York, California, Texas, Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, Ohio, and New Jersey. Burstein's study shows the stability of Jewish community life, with religious and educational organizations standing out in numbers. Other kinds of organizations focus on Jewish continuity and cultural. Few organizations are targeted at young adults compared to children and the elderly. In addition, recent data estimates that there are about 220 Jewish community centers, 180 Jewish family services, 30 Jewish vocational services, and about 45 Jewish free loan societies (Sheskin et al., 2018).

Modern Trends

From the end of the 20th century, challenges confronting the American Jewish community—such as significant variation in religious expression, a declining sense of belonging to the community, and the rise of intermarriage—led to changes in Jewish organizations (Shaul Bar Nissim, 2019). One of the changes that occurred was a shift from a focus on Jewish culture to the incorporation of religious expressions and practices within the Jewish Federation, a leading national Jewish organization in America, which serves as an umbrella organization consisting of around 200 different Federations. Local volunteer leaders and philanthropists

established the Federation at the beginning of the 20th century. Its mission is to serve the needs of the Jewish community locally, in Israel, and internationally (Neigher, 2003). It incorporates religion, cultural and historical ties, and Jewish identity (Shaul Bar Nissim, 2019). The Federation underwent a transformation from a secular organization to a faith-affiliated one (Sider & Unruh, 2004), which had a significant impact on its identity, goals, and members. This change was marked by a shift in focus from involvement in secular Jewish affairs to the incorporation of religious content and practices in its programs and activities (Shaul Bar Nissim, 2019).

American Jewish life has evolved to become more complex organizationally, which is also evident in recent data on the Jewish American population. The modern trend shows that many organizations are pursuing specific segments of the Jewish population, such as families with children, young adults, and intermarried couples. The funding of these organizations primarily through private donors highlights a trend in charitable giving, with major donors increasingly directing their funds toward nonprofits that promote engagement with Jewish life in particular ways (Pew Research Center, 2021). Whereas in the 20th century, big donors were inclined to donate to umbrella organizations such as Jewish Federations and causes such as supporting Israel, starting in the 1990s, a new trend emerged to fund specific initiatives that increase Jewish engagement and build Jewish identity (Wertheimer, 2018). According to Wertheimer (2018), although Jewish organizations used to focus on big donors, engaging new members in Jewish initiatives needs to encourage the contribution of money and time according to people's abilities. This helped to build Jewish social capital, which is constructed when donors of all sorts know they are supporting Jewish life. Today's Jewish organizations' funding model tends to include fees from community members for specific programs or annual membership dues that provide added benefits. This transactional model has received critiques based on the

notion that Judaism is supposed to offer a respite from the transactional world, rather than seeking more transactional opportunities, despite the prevalence of such relations in society (Colton et al., 2013).

Although there are many kinds of Jewish organizations, most share the same mission to create and support the community (Colton et al., 2013). This focus on enhancing Jewish community life is gained by serving their current members and attracting those who are not engaged. Achieving this goal requires understanding the characteristics of the population (Sheskin & Kotler-Berkowitz, 2007).

The Jewish communal organizations can be categorized into different spheres. Mainstream Jewish organizations typically have a mission that involves philanthropy, social services, or support for Israel, and they focus on strengthening the Jewish community and combatting anti-Semitism. Examples of these institutions include the Jewish Federation, as well as various educational and religious organizations (Benor, 2010). In contrast, new Jewish organizations have arisen that challenge traditional Jewish institutions by providing alternative forms of engagement and education (Rubin Ross, 2017).

These groups often cater to specific sectors of the Jewish population and embrace unconventional orientations, such as ambivalent views toward Israel and a rejection of taboos surrounding intermarriage. They also prioritize serving disadvantaged communities regardless of religion (Benor, 2010). Some of these organizations include Moishe House, which focuses on building community among young adults; Limmud, which hosts Jewish learning events; and Hazon, which promotes environmental sustainability (Pew Research Center, 2021).

As Jewish communities have evolved, organizations have faced new challenges, such as changes in Jewish identity, inadequate infrastructure, and the need for sustainable structures

(Colton et al., 2013; Levin, 2010; Saroglou & Hanique). The ability to adapt culturally, financially, and technologically is critical for nonprofits to survive and grow in today's rapidly changing environment (Colton et al., 2013).

New Jewish organizations, such as indie minyanim, grassroots community-led prayer groups, and Moishe Houses, have leveraged technological advancements to create and collaborate more easily, building upon the vital role that organizations have historically played in coordinating Jewish communities. These technological advancements, as well as new innovative variations of Jewish communal organizations, question the direction of Jewish life, its diversity, and its flexibility to enhance the Jewish future (Rubin Ross, 2017).

Jewish Leadership

Recent research on Jewish leadership in nonprofits focused on developing leadership programs (Hameiri, 2019; Lewis, 2004) for volunteers. A system of defined voluntary organizations has characterized Jewish life in America since the early 20th century, leading to the creation of an elaborate infrastructure in organizations, where volunteers engage in a wide range of activities, from raising funds to providing services. Volunteers assigned to leadership roles, in contrast to professional ones, are not necessarily required to possess leadership skills, competencies, or behaviors (Lewis, 2004).

Because the organizational strength of the American Jewish community depends heavily on governance's ability to lead successfully, many Jewish organizations have prioritized the topic of leadership training. However, regardless of the broad popularity of leadership training courses, there is little to no agreement about what is meant to be a Jewish leader. Moreover, research on leadership development programs for lay leaders of national and local Jewish organizations found that most programs did not prepare them to lead. Popular lay leadership

training programs focus on financial management, marketing, and fundraising. Programs hardly contain content about Jewish communal leadership's history, values, or principles (Lewis, 2004).

In Jewish community organizations, a lay leader is a term used to define all adult volunteers. However, in several instances, lay leaders hold executive positions, and they are often experienced community members who make substantial contributions to the organization. They collaborate closely with the senior management of the organization and have an impact on its operations (Hameiri, 2019), which provides another layer of support to the organization's leadership. A recent survey of American Jewish nonprofit leaders showed that CEOs felt that their board chairs were responsive and supported their decisions. Nevertheless, most thought board members should offer more appropriate help with fundraising (Leading Edge, 2021).

Moreover, when asked about their ability to manage the organization through significant changes, only 47% of the leaders felt confident (Leading Edge, 2021), which emphasizes the need for more cooperation among Jewish leaders (Fishman, 2013; Levin, 2010). The 2008 recession was an example of a Jewish communal partnership. Although the organizational leadership had to manage financial challenges and scarce resources, they exemplified motivation to help each other and a sense of "being in the same boat," which decreased their initial competitiveness (Siskind, 2010, p.174).

COVID-19 Crisis

On December 31, 2019, Wuhan Municipal Health Commission in China announced cases of "viral pneumonia," later known as COVID-19. From a few cases in China, the disease spread quickly across the globe, and by March 11, 2020, the WHO defined it as a pandemic. In March 2020, many affected countries applied various measures to mitigate the spread of this highly transmittable virus, such as lockdowns, business shutdowns, hygiene protocols, social distancing,

and school closings. This crisis was a period of significant instability and change (Herrero & Kraemer, 2020) that shed light on the fundamental role of the state and public sector in securing citizens' lives (Bland, 2020).

On a global level, recent data on COVID-19 shows more than 616 million cases, including 6.5 million deaths (WHO, 2022). These numbers exemplify the significant impact of the pandemic, which is still taking a toll on human lives. Moreover, some people who caught the virus did not recover fully, regardless of their prior health situation (Ladlow et al., 2022). Recent data on the American population show that approximately one in five adults sick with COVID-19 still suffers from long COVID (CDC, 2022a). Individuals with post-COVID illnesses can have a broad range of symptoms for a prolonged time. These symptoms can be resolved and then resurface again (CDC, 2022b).

The pandemic has also highlighted the disproportionate effect of healthcare on people of color (Reed, 2021). A survey on the effect of COVID-19 on households across America during the first few months of the pandemic found that people of color and lower-income households were disproportionately affected (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [RWJF], 2020). The Black American community was the most vulnerable population, evident by rates of illness and mortality risks (CDC, 2022c). This population has also suffered from a negative impact on the well-being of their families communities (Mays et al., 2022).

The COVID-19 crisis has caused great harm and disruption to the global economy, significantly affecting the small and medium business sectors and leading to rising unemployment and production shortages. It also led to a significant global societal transformation. This pandemic and the consequent socioeconomic crisis created a condition in which profoundly longstanding elements were examined and transformed, and new challenging

concepts were tested (Bland, 2020). The unstable economic crisis has affected the everyday life of millions of workers. A national study in the UK found that during the first wave in 2020, 42% of employees reported reduced working hours, and 22% reported being furloughed (Ferry et al., 2021). A similar survey in the U.S. during the same time frame found that 43% of rural households reported a negative employment change, and almost half of the U.S. households reported severe financial problems (RWJF, 2020). The economic burden during the pandemic had shifted a year later in 2021, with unemployment falling and the inflation rate rising (Desilver, 2022). This economical shift brought an added burden to millions of Americans who face financial hardship due to rising consumer prices, specifically lower income groups that tend to be affected disproportionately (Richter, 2022).

Torres and Orhan (2023) highlighted that the crisis brought about significant changes in work environments that challenged the traditional notions of online work. Many of the established work-related dynamics were threatened. Furthermore, the classification between essential and nonessential jobs and industries created more challenges that affected people's lives on different levels. While some individuals had to work outside of their homes, endangering the lives of their families, others faced the added burden of childcare responsibilities due to school closures, making remote work more complicated. Furthermore, those sharing living spaces with other adults may have had limited home office space, making the challenges of remote work even more pronounced (Grelle & Popp, 2021). A study on the pandemic's impact on employment found that employees working from home who chose to reduce hours to manage other caring responsibilities had high levels of psychological distress (Ferry et al., 2021).

Another piece of evidence for COVID's impact on employment can be found in research on alcohol consumption and employment during COVID-19. The study found that alcohol

consumption was 47% higher among those who reported negative employment impact than those who were not affected (Weerakoon et al., 2021). This impact of the pandemic has highlighted the need to improve employees' physiological and psychological well-being, regardless of the context or conditions in which remote workers operate (Torres & Orhan, 2023).

Another major impact of the pandemic relates to the education system, as school closures shifted the classroom to virtual learning. For families with school-age children, this change made parents responsible for their kids' continued education. This transition has been significantly challenging for parents; during the first month of the pandemic, 36% of households with children in the U.S. were facing severe problems maintaining their children's education. Among essential working households, almost one in five noted serious problems in finding childcare. Another related issue was accessibility, with 34% of households with children lacking sufficient internet access to enable virtual learning (RWJF, 2020). These results indicate that many families could not adequately support their children's education, which could have a prolonged impact, especially on vulnerable populations.

For college students, the unexpected shift to distance learning had a social impact. Research on students found less connection to peers compared to pre-pandemic levels and lower levels of motivation. Nevertheless, the students felt more connected to their professors (Boardman et al., 2021). Another study on college students found that students who were financially affected by COVID-19 experienced significantly more challenges during remote learning (Katz et al., 2021).

These examples demonstrate that accessibility was a crucial issue in education during the pandemic. Many students suffered from digital inequality, which is a global issue that surfaced

during the pandemic. Digital inequality has restricted people's ability to cope with restrictions through online activities and communication (Beldad, 2021).

The use of technology during the crisis has been a primary alternative to social interactions. Prolonged time spent at home during the pandemic led to increased technology use, which had implications for people's online privacy and mental well-being (Beldad, 2021).

This brief review exemplified the vast impact of the pandemic on society as a whole and highlighted the significant changes people had to endure during the pandemic. According to Louw (2020), COVID-19 created an existential crisis; it brought despair and anxiety, but at the same time, a quest for security, meaning, and hope. A glimpse into the history of plagues can provide context on how society has overcome previous plagues.

The History of Plagues

Throughout history, the three most significant epidemics of plague have been recorded from the 6th century until the 19th century. The first major plague outbreak was the Justinian Plague, which occurred in the 6th century AD. It lasted for about 250 years and is estimated to have caused the deaths of between 25 and 100 million people worldwide. The plague had a significant impact on the Roman Empire, leading to major economic and military disruptions, and ultimately contributing to its decline and fall (Loomis, 2018).

The second pandemic, the Black Death in the 14th century, is the most dramatic and influential epidemic in recorded human history (Arcini, 2016; Lagerås, 2016; Loomis, 2018). The epidemic spread over the entire European continent and killed almost half of the total population (Arcini, 2016; Loomis, 2018). The pandemic's rolling waves allowed it to last for several generations and, in some areas, for more than a century. In just a few years, the Black Death's profound and rapid population reduction across Europe led to drastic economic changes,

land desertion, and social unrest; it was a true societal crisis (Lagerås, 2016; Loomis, 2018). The significant loss of life brought Europe to political, economic, and cultural turmoil that lasted for decades following the first outbreak (Loomis, 2018.)

Notwithstanding the countless tragedies that occurred during these times, the lengthy crisis enabled social change. The shift brought about changes in the economic and political relationships between social classes (Lagerås, 2016), which served as the foundation for the significant expansion that occurred in the 16th century (Arcini, 2016). This expansion included agricultural developments, technological expansion, and increased consumption and trade (Lagerås, 2016). The pandemic also played a significant role in the decline of the feudal system, the diminishing power of the Catholic Church, and the transformation of the medical profession (Loomis, 2018).

The third major pandemic was caused by the bubonic plague that occurred in the late 19th century. Lasting over a decade until the early 20th century, it is estimated to have caused the deaths of around 12-15 million people worldwide. One of the significant long-term consequences of this pandemic was the weakening of the imperial power of Great Britain (Loomis, 2018).

Plague outbreaks continue to emerge, and during the 1900s, the world witnessed three pandemics, all caused by influenza viruses—the Spanish flu (1918), the Asian flu (1957), and the Hong Kong flu (1967)—with the Spanish flu having the most devastating effect and killing 50-100 million people globally (Arcini, 2016).

From a historical perspective, the dramatic impact of COVID-19 worldwide, which led to social, economic, and cultural transformation, could place it as a quintessential pandemic similar to the Black Plague (Eisenberg & Mordechai, 2020). Hence, it may also cause long-term social

changes. For social theorists such as Marx and Weber, social change involves a shift in the relative levels of social groups, including social and economic classes, which is formed by connections, antagonism, and struggle (Neuwirth, 1969).

COVID-19's Impact on Nonprofits

Nonprofit organizations frequently face crises that can disrupt their mission delivery, cause internal stakeholder challenges, and result in unanticipated occurrences (Gilstrap et al., 2016). According to Janes (2010), an event becomes a crisis due to its abnormal type and scope, which overcomes the organization's ability to manage because usual activities are insufficient to handle the new condition, and there is a lack of experience and resources that fit the new changes.

According to Coombs and Hollady (2012), crisis management includes three stages: the pre-crisis, which focuses on prevention and preparation; the crisis, which includes the response; and the post-crisis stage, which emphasizes learning and adjustment. Research has emphasized the importance of organizational learning from a crisis (Deverell, 2009; Mikušová & Horváthová, 2019). There are various ways organizations can learn from a crisis. Deverell (2009) suggested a conceptual framework that includes an in-depth inquiry process based on four fundamental questions:

1. What lessons are learned?
2. What is the focus of the lessons?
3. When are lessons learned?
4. Is learning prevented from implementation or accomplished?

This framework can assist leadership in gaining valuable knowledge to help the organization manage future challenges.

Mano's (2010) study provides another perspective on utilizing organizational learning from a crisis. According to Mano, the use of the double-loop learning process enhances the comprehension of organizational competence in the aftermath of a crisis. According to Argyris (1977), the double-loop learning model is a dynamic learning process for organizations that involves active learning, doubt, and reflection, and is hard to implement successfully. However, some conditions that require informed decisions in a rapidly changing environment, such as exterior crises, can create the basis for this kind of learning.

During an economic crisis, demand for social services continues to rise (Lin & Wang, 2016). Research on human services and community organizations affected by the Great Recession, a global economic downturn that began in the United States in 2007, suggests reconsidering standard fundraising efforts based on the organization's funding stream and limiting the spending. Moreover, Lin and Wang (2016) found that maintaining good relationships with external funders is crucial. This challenge for fundraising is reinforced by Klein's (2009) idea that during a crisis, people shift from giving to individuals to giving to causes. This shift can affect common fundraising strategies, making it even more challenging to raise funds.

Nonprofit organizations relying on government funding can be considered less secure in the funding environment during challenging times. A study on nonprofit service organizations dependent on public funding found a few strategies that helped them overcome budget cuts, such as investment in external affairs, expanding the organizational mission and scope of service, and working on performance measurement. Moreover, effective fundraising from private donors included different sorts of communication and outreach, such as inspirational articles and volunteer opportunities. The overall emphasis was to create many opportunities to engage a wide

range of individual givers. Because board members play a vital part in private fundraising, the leadership mentioned that the decision on which members to pick was mainly based on their ability to raise money and less on other competencies. Most of these leaders were from diverse professional backgrounds, showed strong management or advocacy skills, and were well-prepared for this scenario. Throughout the increasingly competitive service environment, they aimed for the organization's sustainability (S. E. Park & Mosley, 2017).

Research on other kinds of crises, such as natural disasters, found six main leadership characteristics for successful crisis management: being a team player, being strategic, honest with stakeholders, quick to respond, composed, and prepared (Gilstrap et al., 2016). Other research has identified collaboration as a critical strategy during a crisis (Simo & Bies, 2007). These kinds of characteristics that form effective crisis management require specific fundamental skills, which may be lacking within the operational team responsible for leading the crisis because they are usually not required for leading during the regular workflow. This possible lack of leaders' competencies to manage a crisis can, in turn, hurt the organization's recovery (Janes, 2010).

Nonprofits may be especially vulnerable in times of crisis, which require them to have an effective strategy and preparatory measures in place (Sisco, 2012). However, the multifaceted COVID-19 crisis stressed organizations' limits because it was not a typical emergency (Shi et al., 2020).

COVID-19 imposed severe pressures on nonprofit organizations (Willems et al., 2022), triggering profound organizational changes from new safety protocols to starting new programs in response to the pandemic (Kuenzi et al., 2021). However, not all nonprofits have been affected in the same way. Although some have provided critical responses, such as social services and

health care, others, such as nonprofits that focus on culture and arts, have been forced to close down temporarily because their operations were deemed nonessential or because social distancing prevented normal operations (Kim & Mason,2020; Kuenzi et al., 2021).

This operational fallout led organizations to apply Cost-reduction tactics, such as modifications to personnel, involving termination of employment, temporary leaves of absence, and decreased working hours (Kuenzi et al., 2021). On the other hand, non-profit organizations that cater to underprivileged communities have encountered a significant surge in requests for services, all the while grappling with implementing safety protocols to ensure the well-being of their staff and volunteers (Hathaway, 2020; Shi et al., 2020).

Nonprofit organizations depend on various funding sources, such as charitable donations, earned income, and government funding, to support their programs and community services. A study on COVID-19's impact on U.S. nonprofits' financial stability has found that earned income, the primary source of revenue, has decreased significantly. In addition, government funding and available grants were insufficient to provide financial stability, leaving nonprofits extremely vulnerable (Johnson et al., 2021). According to The Independent Sector (2020), 83% of large and medium-sized nonprofits experienced a drop in revenue, and 71% had to reduce their programs in 2020 compared to the previous year. Despite this, charitable donations from large foundations, businesses, and individuals increased during the first year of the pandemic.

According to the Nonprofit Finance Fund's (2022) annual survey, individual donors were the highest source of income (88%) for nonprofits in 2021, with foundations just below them with 84%. However, for many smaller or local organizations that do not provide social service, this could serve as a temporary relief (Johnson et al., 2021).

This rise in individual donations can be associated with the increase in board activity levels, with boards showing more involvement and dedication to support their organizations during the pandemic (Willems et al., 2022). These findings suggest higher dependability on individual donors, which may affect organizations' operations and strategy.

Another form of financial dependability can be seen through social capital. Although social networks in times of crisis usually ensure individuals receive help and support, the COVID-19 restrictions disrupted this pattern of social capital by limiting in-person interactions and opportunities to volunteer, which is important in facilitating coordination for mutual benefits (Faulk et al., 2021; Horwitz & Lascar, 2021; Putnam, 2001). This limitation changed how social capital functions. According to Horwitz and Lascar's (2021) study on the Jewish community during the pandemic, bonding social capital connected Jewish people from lower-income households to those with strong social ties in the community. These relations enabled linking social capital, as Individuals and entities in positions of influence, including Jewish organizations, offered essential tangible aid to those requiring assistance, which helped boost the resilience of their community.

During the pandemic, many organizations shifted to remote working, and this trend is expected to continue in the post-pandemic era due to worker preferences (Parker et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the U.S. labor market experienced unprecedented turmoil caused by COVID-19. The pandemic caused significant job losses, followed by a tight labor market in 2021 due to the Great Resignation. According to a Pew Research Center survey, the primary reasons for workers quitting their jobs in 2021 were low pay, lack of opportunities for advancement, and feeling disrespected. Many of these workers who left their jobs and found employment elsewhere reported higher income, greater opportunities for advancement, flexibility, and work-life balance

in their new roles (Parker et al., 2022). These employment trends have an impact on the staffing of organizations, particularly nonprofits whose ability to pay competitive wages is lower than that of the free market and who require in-person staff for their services.

COVID-19 and Social Behavior

The COVID-19 emergency had a dramatic impact on the lives of people and communities (Marzana et al., 2022). Government social restrictions required people to comply, which led to changes in their social behavior (Aresi et al., 2022; de Ridder et al., 2021; Roblain et al., 2022) and caused significant psychological and physical impact (Di Corrado et al., 2020)

These changes included working from home and engaging in activities online, enabling more family time and global connections (Bland, 2020). At the same time, social restrictions also led to increased social isolation and loneliness among different age groups (Ellis et al., 2020; Kotwal et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2020). Nevertheless, Groarke et al. (2020) found that higher levels of social support among adolescents, such as living with other adults and family time, served as protective factors against feelings of loneliness. The research also found that online connections increased depression levels, which indicates that face-to-face interactions are essential for well-being.

Another impact of the crisis on people's emotional state occurred through the media. The excessive daily news coverage during the crisis, which included comments from experts in different fields such as medicine and the economy, increased the community's fear of getting infected, creating psychological pressure during and after the lockdown (Yousef, 2022).

The sudden lack of ordinary social interactions disrupted social identities (Zagefka, 2021), which created an urgent need for people to find opportunities for social connections to support their well-being. However, they had limited options due to government restrictions on

organizations' operations (Bowe et al., 2022). This lack of social opportunities, as well as other restrictions, has negatively affected people's sense of belonging (Allen et al., 2021; Hathaway, 2020), as well as their sense of competency and autonomy, which are crucial basic needs for overall well-being. Some community leaders tried to connect vulnerable members to the online environment to help foster a sense of belonging, yet the ones who needed it the most were unable to participate due to limited accessibility (Hathaway, 2020).

As COVID-19 has spread globally, it has created a variety of related narratives that are shared across cultures, such as managing sickness and the rise in community help (Milner & Echterling, 2021). Yue and Yang (2022) argued that prosocial behaviors are crucial during a large-scale crisis, such as a natural disaster or health emergency, because they benefit the people who receive help and those who provide it. Accordingly, Bowe et al. (2022) explored adult voluntary helping during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK. They found that coordinated community help for members provided mutual benefits and helped to foster a sense of community identification and unity, increased mental health, and reduced depression and anxiety. The creation of community identity is considered a direct result of social engagement (Cuba & Hummon, 1993).

A study conducted in the UK examined the connection between social identity and mutual aid groups during the pandemic. The study found that those who identified strongly with the mutual aid group had more favorable views of the group and experienced better psychological outcomes. On the other hand, participants who perceived the group to be highly political reported lower levels of identification with the group, negative views of the group, and lower levels of subjective psychological well-being (O'Dwyer et al., 2021).

The term *sense of connectedness* refers to the overlapping aspects of social identity and a sense of community (Landmann & Rohmann, 2022, p.439). A study on coping mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic found that individuals who felt a strong sense of connectedness to close groups experienced better mental health outcomes and showed greater resilience to short-term changes, compared to those who felt connected to more distant groups. Moreover, being part of these close groups before the pandemic predicted participants' well-being during the crisis (Landmann & Rohmann, 2022). These findings were also supported by Lalot et al.'s (2022) study, which explored the social cohesion that emerged during the pandemic in six UK local authorities. The study found that previous involvement in social organization programs prepared people to manage the various challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, they reported higher levels of social activism, greater political trust, and stronger personal relationships. The study also found that increased social cohesion within social groups was related to greater reported well-being and positive feelings about the future.

These examples emphasize the benefits of community involvement during the pandemic. They can be added to previous research that showed the strength of community involvement in decreasing mental and physical illness. This protective effect is related to community organizations (Putnam, 2001) and can be referred to as the *social cure*.

The social cure hypothesis is based on the assumption that people's healthy bodies and minds depend greatly on social aspects that influence their social identity. According to this hypothesis, social cure refers to the extent to which group memberships and related social identity provide individuals with meaning, support, and agency, which can positively affect their health (Jetten et al., 2017).

According to Bland (2020), times of crisis can enable people to reflect on their beliefs, moral grounds, and social cohesion, which give meaning to one's existence in the larger collective. This notion can be related to the rise in social cohesion and the actions of solidarity that are common in the aftermath of crises (Calo-Blanco et al., 2017; Drury, 2018). Although the social cohesion trend is associated with a time-bounded emergency crisis, elevated collective solidarity and cohesion were also apparent in the early days of the pandemic (Marzana et al., 2022). This behavior was illustrated by people spontaneously organizing through mutual aid groups and other volunteering associations to support those in need (Littman et al., 2020). Some aid groups have far exceeded the demand for help (Trautwein, 2020), which also occurred in previous social crises (Simsa et al., 2019). Nonetheless, this kind of solidarity could be short-lived, after which social disintegration may return to its typical levels (Sweet, 1998). This notion has received support from Marzana et al.'s (2022) longitudinal study on Italian university students in the first months of the pandemic. The study found a rise in strong feelings of unity during the lockdown, which was replaced after the lockdown by increased emotions of anger and resentment and decreased sense of community as people started to focus on personal problems and trying to return to a sense of normalcy.

The pandemic has also led to negative feelings and actions toward certain social groups. Passini and Speltini's (2022) study on Italian adults analyzed the possible connection between COVID-19 and prejudices toward other social groups and found that concerns about the pandemic heightened prejudiced attitudes toward immigrants. This connection was mediated by individual perceptions of this group's cleanliness. This finding is historically significant because the fear of illness and cultural beliefs about cleanliness and hygiene have historically been used

to discriminate against certain social groups, such as immigrants, who may be viewed as unclean or dirty, thereby impacting social interactions.

Other social groups were affected based on their race, as seen by the rise in the reports of racial bias and hate incidents against Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders during the COVID-19 pandemic (V. T. Park et al., 2022; Shimkhada & Ponce, 2022). A study on their personal experience of hate incidents found evidence of severe psychological distress and feeling a lack of community safety (Shimkhada & Ponce, 2022).

The Jewish community is another minority group that has been impacted. The ADL's 2022 survey results of over 4,000, Americans reveals a concerning trend: belief in anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and tropes has nearly doubled since 2019 and is now at its highest levels in 30 years. The survey also found substantial rates of Israel-focused anti-Semitism, with significant overlap between this and trope-focused anti-Semitism. Furthermore, young adults have only marginally less belief in anti-Jewish tropes than older generations, and more anti-Israel sentiment (Anti-Defamation League [ADL], 2023). The crisis has worsened an already troubling trend in online anti-Semitism, as demonstrated in a 2018 survey by the Fundamental Rights Agency, which found that almost 90% of respondents identified online anti-Semitism as a problem, with 80% having encountered anti-Semitic abuse online (Comerford & Gerster, 2021). This increase in hate incidents might be related to the different information spread about COVID-19 through various media sources and social networks (Yousef, 2022).

In the aftermath of a crisis, people's tendency is to find the sole factor responsible. Similarly, public and media attention during the pandemic was set on finding the wrongdoers and assigning blame for the spread of the virus. Research on news consumption found that articles with highly toxic content were more likely to be shared and spread across online news

sources. This content led to greater political polarization and politicizing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and affected government efforts to mitigate the virus (Chipidza, 2021). Furthermore, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, various extremist groups, conspiracy theorists, and disinformation actors have utilized economic uncertainties and anxieties to radicalize and mobilize online audiences during global lockdowns. These threats often contain anti-Semitic hate speech, posing risks to social cohesion, public safety, and democracy (Comerford & Gerster, 2021).

The resulting rise in distrust and decline in social interaction, coupled with possible decreases in confidence in public institutions and other people, may indicate a longer-term impact of the pandemic toward social disintegration rather than cohesion (Lalot et al., 2022). Nevertheless, it may also be a way to cope during the pandemic.

As people tend to seek coping techniques during a crisis, observable coping reactions to COVID-19 varied from heroic deeds and acts of help to self-interested actions such as stockpiling. A global study that explored coping strategies found that people's perception of the pandemic as more threatening increased their chances of acting prosocially as well as in a self-centered manner. This prosocial pattern, which was more common in individualistic countries such as the U.S, was also evident when people perceived themselves as moral. The study suggests that acting prosocially may be a viable way to retain psychological well-being (Tse et al., 2022).

On a community level, research on patterns of prosocial behaviors in Italian adults during the pandemic's first months found that the most common pattern was a combination of online and offline help. These volunteers perceived their community as more resilient in coping with emergencies (Aresi et al., 2022). Common prosocial behaviors during the pandemic involved

grocery shopping and medication delivery, but also offering valuable emotional support and guidance to community members (O'Dwyer et al., 2021). These findings present the impact of the pandemic on people's behavior and communities during the crisis.

As restrictions have been lifted, some people have tried to return to their pre-pandemic lives whereas others have chosen to continue wearing masks and self-isolating, indicating the complexity of the reconstruction stage following 2 years of restrictions. The long-standing impact of the pandemic on social behavior remains unclear. The studies reviewed herein suggest different directions social behavior has taken following the crisis, from expanding community engagement to rising prejudice and hate toward specific groups. Bland (2020) assumed that following the crisis, there could be an essential shift from I-it to I-Thou, which would replace the values associated with the capitalist economic system. Considering the many changes individuals and communities faced during the pandemic, the social factor appeared to be the most meaningful.

From a theoretical lens, the sudden shift toward social distancing led to a lack of belonging that lasted for a long time and is still present for some. This social foundation that was affected tremendously implies a magnitude effect that would change social behavior. More research is needed to understand the possible implications for the post-pandemic future.

Gaps and Inconsistencies in Literature

This research study on the long-standing impact of COVID-19 on CBOs and their respective communities has identified a few gaps and inconsistencies in the literature. One of the main gaps is related to the time frame of the current research. Because the COVID-19 mitigating restrictions that started in March 2020 have only recently been removed in most counties, most of the relevant literature is focused on the crisis phase. Therefore, this research study aims to

contribute to the literature on the COVID-19 phenomenon by integrating and significantly extending existing research. The current state of the pandemic demands extensive research, and this study seeks to add to the existing literature on the subject (Zagefka, 2021).

Another area where research is lacking in the nonprofit management literature is organizational resilience. There is a need for more studies on this topic to better understand how nonprofit organizations can withstand and recover from crises and disruptions (Searing et al., 2021). Because current literature remains largely silent on how nonprofits react to the pandemic (Willems et al., 2022), this study research on nonprofits following the COVID-19 crisis can contribute knowledge to the literature on organizational practices and strategies that supported the organization during the crisis.

The researcher also found a gap concerning the limited research on CBOs, which has mostly focused on the educational environment. Because research tends to view nonprofits in a general manner as serving communities (S. J. Gill, 2010), this study could provide valuable knowledge by exploring the unique nature of these organizations and their path following the pandemic.

The study also identified mixed research findings regarding the impact of the pandemic on social behavior, from a rise of prosocial behavior, through individual help and community involvement (Trautwein, 2020) to disintegration (Marzana et al., 2022) and isolation (Kotwal et al., 2022), as well as an increase in prejudice and bias incidents toward certain social groups (V. T. Park et al., 2022; Passini & Speltini, 2022). These different findings represent the depth of social behavior during the crisis phase but also emphasize the need to add more knowledge to the current literature on social behavior. Because the post-pandemic world is very uncertain (Hwang & Höllerer, 2020), any findings could provide valuable information.

The study has also found limited research on Jewish organizational leadership. From the available literature, most studies were focused on leadership development (Hameiri, 2019; Lewis, 2004). Furthermore, there seems to be little or no agreement about what it means to be a Jewish leader in the literature (Lewis, 2004). Hence, this study could help identify Jewish leadership characteristics.

Another related gap concerns the limited research on Jewish organizations and how they supported their members during the COVID-19 pandemic (Horwitz & Lascar, 2021). Therefore, this study's focus on this subsector could provide valuable, relevant information. Another gap is regarding the use of social capital theoretical lens to explore the Jewish American community. Heretofore, there is limited research on the application of the social capital concept to the study of Jewish communities (Berger & Gainer 2002; Schlesinger, 2003).

The study also found inconsistency regarding the leadership role in nonprofits. Previous research on nonprofit leadership found transformational leadership to be the most effective leadership style (Almas et al., 2020; S. J. Gill, 2011; Kaufman et al., 2019; Riggio & Orr, 2004). However, a study by Crutchfield and Grant (2007) on highly successful nonprofits found a model of distributed leadership within the organizations and throughout the external nonprofit networks, and recent research has identified evidence of shared or more blurred leadership approaches (Shier & Handy, 2020). Hence, there are inconsistencies regarding the current nonprofit leadership style, and this study could provide more information to help shed light on the leadership direction.

Reviewing these gaps and inconsistencies in the literature shows mostly gaps concerning nonprofit leadership, CBOs, and Jewish nonprofits and leadership, which emphasizes the many possible contributions of this study. Furthermore, the research found inconsistencies regarding

the different directions of social behavior during the pandemic, creating a dim view of the pandemic's effect on social life. Because the pandemic is still ongoing, further COVID-19 related research is still in process, emphasizing the importance and relevance of this research on the pandemic's post-crisis effects on social behavior.

Chapter Summary

The second chapter of this dissertation presented the conceptual framework for this study. It provided an extensive review of the related literature on main themes, including communities, CBOs, nonprofit leadership, Jewish organizations, and the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on nonprofit organizations, social behavior, and communities. This overview places the proposed research “in the current body of knowledge” (Richards & Morse, 2013, p. 256).

Furthermore, the chapter described the gaps and inconsistencies in the literature, which exemplified the need for this study and its ability to contribute valuable new knowledge. This chapter substantiated that the researcher was proficiently grounded and equipped to start the research. The following chapter presents the methodology for this research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter Overview

The following chapter presents the methodology for this study. The method was carefully planned to fit the research purpose and the researcher's worldview. The chapter provides key information, including the research design, the different data sources, the instruments that were applied in the study, detailed collection procedures, human subjects considerations, analysis process, and means to ensure internal study validity.

Context

The purpose of this study was to explore the longstanding impact of COVID-19 on community involvement through the lens of community-building organizational leadership. The study sought to examine this objective by establishing the following research question: What is the impact of COVID-19 on Jewish community-based organizations?

This main question led to the following three sub-questions:

1. To what extent, if at all, has the interdependency between the organization and the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?
2. To what extent, if at all, has community involvement changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?
3. To what extent, if at all, has the leadership approach toward the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?

Research Design

This dissertation used qualitative research to explore the long-term effects of COVID-19 on community involvement. Analyzing qualitative data can give the researcher a fundamental, in-depth, holistic view (Miles et al., 2020).

The qualitative research approach is based on the author's worldview of *existentialism*. Existentialism is the philosophy of human existence that flourished in the 20th century. It featured in Germany in the 1920s and France after World War II. Following 1950, existentialism was exported to the United States and countries worldwide. The leading existentialist philosophers were Martin Buber, Karl Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus (Michelman, 2010). The common goal of existentialist philosophers is to present a philosophical explanation of the distinct elements of human existence that differentiate a human life from the existence of other animals, plants, and things. These features include an awareness of time and death. This consciousness of one's life and surroundings are fundamental to human existence.

There are several broad variations of existentialism. The existentialism philosophy during the 20th century in Europe had a fundamental feature concerning the individual's responsibility (McShane, 2001). It viewed the world without objective values or rules. In the absence of objective values, the meaning, significance, and value of human life and actions are not a constant variable but rather a subjective outcome of the connection between a human being and its surroundings, which emphasizes individual responsibility (Michelman, 2010).

Existentialism gained popularity through Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy in 1944, during World War II. According to Sartre's view, existentialism is a philosophy of radical individual freedom, accountability, and dedication to the greater good of society. Sartre argued that existence comes before essence because people do not gain a present essence; instead, they must find and define it for themselves. Thus, every person is responsible for creating their own essence through a series of choices taken throughout their life (Michelman, 2010). He argued that people must create meaning and shape the purpose of their being (Judaken, 2012).

Choice has a fundamental place in existential philosophy. Because people are entirely free, they can choose their lives in a subjective manner without external variables such as morals, standard ethics, rules, or traditions, which obligates a human being to take full responsibility for his choices and actions. However, to fulfill the freedom and concomitant responsibility, a human must create an ethical framework of values and meaning, guiding his/her actions (Judaken, 2012; Michelman, 2010).

The condition in which a human is obligated to choose without knowing for sure what is good and what is wrong, while also having to take responsibility for the outcome, often leads to anxiety. Nevertheless, this situation can create the foundation for existential honesty. This notion involves recognizing the ability to generate significance and purpose independently of outside authority. It necessitates understanding that this capability is entirely reliant on the autonomy of others, just as the autonomy of others is dependent on ours (Michelman, 2010). Therefore, human beings have a social responsibility (Judaken, 2012).

This notion of meaning was emphasized in the work of Viktor Frankl (1946/2006), the founder of logotherapy, a form of existential analysis. In his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, he posited that the fundamental drive of humans is the desire for purpose and comprehension of their surroundings, and this comprehension is the force that enables them to confront anguish and adversity. Frankl argued that the modern man has the means, but he lost the essence and suffers from a feeling of emptiness and a lack of meaning, which he called the existential vacuum. Its main symptom is boredom, expressed by a triangle of depression, aggression, and addiction. The existential vacuum has many consequences on a person's life. According to Frankl, when a person can fulfill his inner void to create an essence and external meaning to his life that he can tend to, his humanly true essence will appear to him, and most of his problems and neuroses will

be solved. Existential themes still play a role in modern times, such as the human subject's isolation, the pursuit of authenticity, the subjectivity of reality, and living a purposeful life (Judaken, 2012).

The researcher's existentialist worldview, specifically the pursuit of meaning, the "why" that stems from the relationship between humans and their surroundings, forms the basis of this study. This led to the decision to use a qualitative, in-depth study to examine the impact of the crisis on CBOs and the communities they serve. By doing so, the study aimed to identify potential changes in human behavior. To explore this topic, the study employed a case study approach that was carefully designed to address the sensitive nature of the research.

This case study focused on Jewish organizations in the U.S to explore the consequences of the pandemic on their communities following the crisis stage. The case study method is commonly used to analyze a social unit in its natural setting to understand a social situation or process (Richards & Morse, 2013). It is usually conducted in social science fields (Yin, 2017). Accordingly, this study analyzed the changes in Jewish nonprofits and their respective communities to understand the pandemic's consequences on social behavior. According to Roberts and Hyatt (2019), qualitative studies emphasize people's experiences and perceptions. Data derived from qualitative studies can also provide knowledge, attitudes, and emotions. Therefore, by using qualitative research, this study has gained an extensive range of data that includes the impact of COVID-19 on organization and communities.

There are three main types of case study research: (a) explanatory case studies, (b) descriptive case studies, and (c) exploratory case studies (Yin, 2017). These three approaches are differentiated by the research purpose. Explanatory case studies usually involve questions of how and why in an attempt to learn about a process over time, whereas questions such as what

can better fit exploratory or descriptive case studies. Considering the nature of this research to explore the lasting impact of COVID-19 and the main research question, this researcher chose to apply an exploratory approach for this case study of Jewish nonprofits in North America.

Furthermore, because COVID-19 is the first global pandemic in the 21st century, and because its implications are still unfolding, this researcher chose to use an inductive approach, which is typically employed when there is a lack of sufficient data on a phenomenon. This approach involves building general themes from specific details (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Utilizing an inductive exploratory case study approach enabled the researcher to explore the impact of COVID-19 and generate new insights and knowledge that provided a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

Data Sources

This research focused on Jewish nonprofit organizations in North America. For this study purpose, these organizations are defined as community-based nonprofits that involve Jewish cultural characteristics and can contain religious components.

Jewish nonprofits are spread across the U.S, especially concentrated in states with high Jewish populations, such as New York, California, and Texas (Burststein, 2011). They represent an example of strong community involvement with a large variety and rich history of social organizations (Benkin, 1978; Sheskin & Kotler-Berkowitz, 2007).

The study participants were the organizations' leadership. This decision is based on the premise that the leadership is the most knowledgeable population to provide macro-level insights about community needs, trends, and practices. Furthermore, as the organizations' leading representatives, they can provide personal reflections about if and how their leadership has changed or adapted to fit the community's new needs, as well as their vision for the organization

as a whole. Although Jewish nonprofits also have lay leaders who oversee the organization as part of their board duties, and have periodic meetings with the paid leadership, they still lack the knowledge possessed by the paid leaders who oversee the day to day operations and can provide more in depth information about the impact of the pandemic on the current situation in the organization. Furthermore, focusing on professional leaders to explore the crisis' impact can reveal significant changes that affected the organizations both during and after the crisis (Knowles et al., 2019).

Because the number of nonprofit charitable organizations is estimated at 9,482, a selected process to find applicable organizations included the following inclusion criteria: all nonprofits were located in active Jewish community regions in the United States, with a minimum of five employees. The organizations provided in-person programs or activities to adults and/or young adults and/or all ages. Furthermore, as this study incorporated interviews with the organization's leadership, all participants held a paid leadership position. Positions included CEOs, executive directors, and senior directors.

Considering the focus of this study on particular group with specific criteria, the sampling strategy used in this study was the snowball method. This approach is often used in studies studying special populations. The strategy includes targeting an initial group of individuals. Then, these participants suggest other potential colleagues to take part in the study (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016)

Roberts and Hyatt (2019) stated that qualitative research usually involves a small sample size of participants, in the single or double-digit numbers. Hence, this study utilized snowball sampling to select 20 leaders who represented 20 different organizations or chapters in the U.S., according to the aforementioned criteria.

Data Gathering Instruments

Good qualitative research tends to include a variety of qualitative data sources the researcher could use to explore and make interpretations about a research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Accordingly, this study applied several data sources, including digital materials and interviews.

The interview type for this study was semi-structured interviews, a standard data collection method in qualitative research (Kallio et al., 2016). There were two main reasons for choosing this interview type. The first concerns the suitability of semi-structured interviews for this study, because it is the preferred instrument when the researcher understands the field of inquiry to develop interview questions but not enough to anticipate the responses (Richards & Morse, 2013). The second reason is regarding the benefits of this study, because one-to-one semi-structured interviews can foster self-reflection on specific experiences without interruptions (Breen, 2006) and provide detailed information and in-depth thoughts. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix A.

The researcher also collected publicly available digital materials such as information available from the organizations' websites and their Facebook and Instagram pages. These materials were used to support the data from the interviews and provide more information regarding the organizations' communication with their members.

The interview protocol (see Appendix A) was applied to answer the research questions. All protocol items provided vital information for the study's main research question. Nevertheless, the items can also be divided per the sub-questions in the following way.

For the first sub-question—To what extent, if at all, has the interdependency between the organization and the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis? This study included the following interview items:

1. How would you describe the impact of COVID-19 on your organization?
2. What would you consider the most significant changes to the organization following the crisis?
3. Do you have any challenges in addressing community needs? If so, please elaborate.
4. Following the crisis, are any new practices being applied to provide for the needs of community members?
5. Do you think the interdependency between the organization and the community has changed due to the pandemic?
6. Considering the impact of the pandemic on people, communities, and organizations, do you anticipate any further changes to your organization?

For the second sub-question—To what extent, if at all, has community involvement changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis? This study included the following interview items:

1. Do you recognize any new characteristics/behaviors within the community members? If so, please explain.
2. Following the crisis, what changes do you see in the organization community (new needs/wants)
3. Is the relationship between the organization and volunteers changed due to COVID-19? If so, in what way?

For the third sub-question: —To what extent, if at all, has the leadership approach toward the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis? This study included the following interview items:

1. Following the crisis, what do you perceive as your most significant leadership challenges?
2. Following the crisis mode, do you feel your leadership has changed? If so, in what way?
3. Do you have any challenges in addressing community needs? If so, please elaborate.

To ensure that the chosen method was valid, this study used data triangulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) by using multiple data sources as interviews and digital materials.

Furthermore, this study included two approaches suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018) for enhancing reliability: checking transcripts for accuracy and using another researcher to cross-check codes derived from the data collection for consistency purposes.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process started in December 2022 and was completed in March 2023, taking a total of 4 months. For recruitment purposes, the research has first searched online to identify organizations that met the study requirements, including reviewing their website to learn about their programs and activities and checking LinkedIn to learn how many staff numbers they have. After identifying an initial list of optional organizations, the researcher reached out to participants for recruitment through social network and via direct email addresses found on the organization's website or through LinkedIn. The recruitment text used for this purpose is provided in Appendix B. All communication with the applicants was through emails and LinkedIn messages. Furthermore, at the end of each interview, the researcher asked the

participants for their recommendations on other possible interviewees that fit the study requirements. This encouraged the snowball sampling mentioned previously. Overall, the researcher reached out to about 150 potential applicants.

All potential research candidates received the informed consent and were asked to review it, ask questions, and sign it before the interview (see Appendix C). The informed consent form, which can be found in Appendix C, clarified that participation in this research is voluntary, and data is gathered only for this research purpose. Furthermore, the study asked the participants' permission to record the audio conversations using the Zoom cloud recording function. This function provides auto transcribing that was used to collect the interview data.

The researcher scheduled the interviews according to participants' availability. The participants were invited for a 30-minute virtual interview via Zoom, a videoconferencing software program. The interview was audio recorded and notes were recorded manually to obtain essential notions. Furthermore, at the end of each interview, the researcher asked the participants for their recommendation on others possible interviewees that fit the study requirements. This encouraged the snowball sampling mentioned previously.

The digital material for this study included organizations' websites as well as its Facebook and Instagram pages, which were publicly available. The researcher looked at the main pages of the organizations' websites to determine the ways the organization is inviting members to activities and communicating those activities, as well as the number of followers and kinds of posts that are being posted on their social media pages to evaluate its community size. This data was collected electronically before the interviews and helped to ensure study criteria were met.

The semi-structured interviews included pre-set items while enabling the researcher to ask direct follow-up questions. Applying this type of interview provided opportunities for

clarification and further explanation, which resulted in a better understanding of the various ways COVID-19 affected Jewish organizations and their respective communities.

All files have been stored on a secured hard drive on the researcher's private laptop. Access was allowed only to dissertation committee members and the researcher assistant.

Human Subject Considerations

To ensure the ethical treatment of human subjects, the researcher strictly followed the principles and guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Pepperdine University. This included obtaining a CITI certificate, which can be found in Appendix D. Prior to initiating the study, the researcher obtained IRB approval, documented in Appendix E.

The researcher requested the IRB exempt option because the study was designed to represent no greater risk than typically encountered in one's daily routine. After gaining IRB approval, the researcher started to recruit voluntary participants for this study. The participants had reviewed and signed the informed consent prior to the interviews. Additionally, participants were informed using the initial communication that the information gathered would not contain names or any personally identifiable or confidential information.

The only interactions with participants were during the interview procedures. On average, participation took 30 minutes to complete, and the participants did not exhibit any signs of tiredness or exhaustion.

To minimize the risk of a breach of confidentiality, the researcher did not store any identifiable information about the participants and assigned all participants an alias (e.g., participant 1). In addition, the researcher kept all files secure, password protected, and computer security up to date.

The participants did not receive any compensation for their involvement in the study. However, the protocol included questions that prompted them to reflect on their experiences during the pandemic and the changes that have occurred within their organization, community, and leadership. As a result, participating in the study could potentially benefit the participants by helping them gain a better understanding of their own experiences and the changes that have taken place since the pandemic began. Additionally, some of the interviewees expressed a keen interest in taking part in the study and sharing their perspectives on and experiences of how COVID-19 has affected their organization and community.

Analysis Processes

This study applied a thematic analysis approach to analyze the data and code themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as “A method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data” (p. 79). Thematic analysis is a widely used method of analysis in qualitative research, which can be used in two ways; the first approach utilizes deductive analysis to find the themes from existing academic theories and data. The second approach utilizes inductive analysis to derive themes directly from interview data (Patton, 1990) and is usually applied in cases where there is not enough knowledge about the phenomenon (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

The study employed an inductive approach because COVID-19, as a pandemic phenomenon with significant implications for the world, lacks sufficient prior data to describe its impact 3 years following its initial spread. To discover themes related to the pandemic’s impact, the study utilized interview transcripts. The data collected from interviews and digital materials was analyzed according to Creswell and Creswell’s (2018) suggested stages. In step 1, the researcher organized and prepared the data for analysis, including typing interview notes and

verifying accurate interview transcripts from Zoom. In step 2, the researcher became familiar with the data by reading the transcripts, notes, and digital material, and gained a general sense of the information and reflected on its meaning in regard to this study's research questions (i.e., step 3). The researcher started coding the data, including labeling categories. The researcher coded every piece of data, revising the codes with every new transcript to ensure the label still fit the text. After forming a list of codes, the researcher invited an additional reviewer to cross check the codes to help ensure consistency (i.e., step 4). The researcher generated a small number of themes and added descriptions of each theme (i.e., step 5). The researcher represented the description and themes by using a narrative section in the discussion to present the findings of the analysis.

Means to Ensure Internal Study Validity

Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended using multiple approaches to enhance the researcher's ability to assess the correctness and accuracy of the findings. Accordingly, this research incorporated three strategies to verify the accuracy of the findings:

1. Triangulation by using interviews and digital materials.
2. Presenting negative or discrepant information from the themes, which can be seen in Chapter 5. Discussing contrary statements adds to the research's credibility and makes it more realistic and valid.
3. Clarifying the bias the researcher brings to the study. Throughout the study, the researcher, who comes from a Jewish background and works in a Jewish organization, maintained objectivity by avoiding practices and interpretations that might influence the participants she interviewed.

To further reduce bias and limit opinionated memos, the researcher utilized Zoom recording and auto-transcription.

To verify the study's reliability, the following strategies by Creswell and Creswell (2018) were employed. Transcripts were obtained from Zoom's auto-transcription function and manually checked for mistakes to ensure accuracy. The study included another researcher who cross-checked codes to ensure agreement that clarified discrepancies and helped achieve a high level of coding consistency. One more approach that was applied to achieve reliability was to ensure there was no shift in the definition of codes. This was accomplished by constantly comparing data with the codes to see if the meaning had changed.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the qualitative exploratory case study approach that was used in this study; its reasoning included the researcher's worldview of existentialism, and the research purpose. The chapter also introduced the population for this study, Jewish nonprofit leaders, and selected criteria to ensure compatibility with the research. The data sources were semi-structured interviews conducted via Zoom and digital materials from the organizations' websites and social media pages. The data collection described in detail included the Zoom cloud recording function. To ensure participants were treated with high ethical standards, the study was conducted carefully following IRB requirements and guidelines.

The analysis of the findings used a thematic inductive approach and included coding procedures. The study has applied multiple strategies to verify the validity and reliability of the results. The researcher carefully chose the method and all its different components to match the purpose of this study and ensure high-quality standards.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings

Chapter Overview

The following chapter presents the results of this study. The chapter includes an overview of the participants, the analysis methods, and codes identified in the study. The chapter provides the list of themes and the findings as they relate to each of the research questions.

Context

The purpose of this study was to explore the longstanding impact of COVID-19 on community involvement through the lens of community-building organizational leadership. The study sought to examine this objective by establishing the following research question: What is the impact of COVID-19 on Jewish community-based organizations?

This main question led to the following three sub-questions:

1. To what extent, if at all, has the interdependency between the organization and the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?
2. To what extent, if at all, has community involvement changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?
3. To what extent, if at all, has the leadership approach toward the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?

To investigate the research questions, a qualitative exploratory case study approach was employed, utilizing both semi-structured interviews and examination of digital materials. An interview guide consisting of eleven semi-structured questions was developed to facilitate the interviews. Each participant was asked the same set of 11 interview questions:

- IQ1: How would you describe the impact of COVID-19 on your organization?

- IQ2: What would you consider the most significant changes to the organization following the crisis?
- IQ3: Following the crisis, what changes do you see in the organization community?
- IQ4: Do you recognize any new characteristics/behaviors within the community members? If so, please explain.
- IQ5: Is the relationship between the organization and volunteers changed due to COVID-19? If so, in what way?
- IQ6: Do you have any challenges in addressing community needs? If so, please elaborate.
- IQ7: Following the crisis, has the organization implemented any new practices or programs in response to community needs?
- IQ8: Following the crisis, what do you perceive as your most significant leadership challenges?
- IQ9: Do you think the interdependency between the organization and the community has changed due to the pandemic?
- IQ10: Following the crisis mode, do you feel your leadership has changed? If so, in what way?
- IQ11: Considering the impact of the pandemic on people, communities and organizations, do you anticipate any further changes to your organization?

All protocol items provided vital information for the research's main question.

Nevertheless, the items were divided per sub-question, as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1*Interview Items Per Sub Question*

Research Question	Related items
To what extent, if at all, has the interdependency between the organization and the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?	(1) How would you describe the impact of COVID-19 on your organization? (2) What would you consider the most significant changes to the organization following the crisis? (3) Do you have any challenges in addressing community needs? If so, please elaborate. (4) Following the crisis, are any new practices being applied to provide for the needs of community members? (5) Do you think the interdependency between the organization and the community has changed due to the pandemic? (6) Considering the impact of the pandemic on people, communities, and organizations, do you anticipate any further changes to your organization?
To what extent, if at all, has community involvement changed as a result of the COVID- 19 crisis?	(1) Do you recognize any new characteristics/behaviors within the community members? If so, please explain. (2) Following the crisis, what changes do you see in the organization community? (3) Is the relationship between the organization and volunteers changed due to COVID-19? If so, in what way?
To what extent, if at all, has the leadership approach toward the community changed as a result of the COVID- 19 crisis?	(1) Following the crisis, what do you perceive as your most significant leadership challenges? (2) Following the crisis mode, do you feel your leadership has changed? If so, in what way?

Interview Participants

The recruitment for interview participants began once Pepperdine University IRB approved the research. The participants of this study were recruited using a snowball sampling method. This approach is often used in studies investigating special populations (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016). The strategy included targeting an initial group of individuals by reaching out using LinkedIn, emails, or social connections. Then, these participants suggested other potential colleagues to take part in the study. All participants worked in a senior leadership position in a Jewish nonprofit; positions included executive directors, senior directors, and CEO's. The

organizations were all based in North America; some interviews were with the HQ leadership of a national or global organization that provided input on the North America communities at large. Many of the participants had prior work or educational experience with other Jewish organizations. Table 2 presents the list of participants, including their gender, indication of previous related experience in the Jewish landscape, the organization’s location, and the age group they serve, while omitting the leaders' titles to protect participant confidentiality. To represent a diverse group of Jewish organizations that serve members, the study included social services organizations, educational organizations, umbrella organizations, and community focus organizations. Some of the organizations were serving also non-Jewish members.

Table 2

List of Participants, Gender, Organization Location, Target Age Group, and Previous Jewish Experience

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Previous Jewish experience	Organization location	Organization members
P1	M	No	National	Young adults
P2	F	Yes	CA	All family
P3	F	Yes	CA	Teen and up
P4	F	Yes	CA	All family
P5	F	Yes	DC	Young adults
P6	F	Yes	PA	All family
P7	M	Yes	NY	All family
P8	F	Yes	NY	Young adults
P9	F	Yes	National	Young adults
P10	F	Yes	AR	Young adults
P11	M	Yes	National	Young adults
P12	F	No	National	All family
P13	F	Yes	NY	Young adults
P14	F	No	PA	Young adults
P15	F	Yes	PA	Young adults
P16	M	Yes	NJ	All family
P17	F	Yes	NY	Teen and up
P18	M	No	National	Adults
P19	F	No	TX	All family
P20	F	No	National	Adults

Participants were identified and selected by using the following inclusive criteria:

- Holding a leadership position in a Jewish nonprofit.
- Jewish nonprofit located in an area with increased Jewish population in the United States.
- The Jewish organization offers in person activities or programs to adults and/or young adults and/or all ages.
- Five or more staff members.

A recruitment email was sent to around 150 potential participants. Twenty interviews of participants who fit the research criteria have been used in this research. Five of them were male, and 15 were females.

Quantitative Procedures

Data was collected from December 2022 to March 2023, using an interview protocol (refer to Appendix A) during virtual interviews conducted on the Zoom online conferencing platform. Prior to each interview, participants were informed that the session would be recorded solely for transcription purposes, and their verbal consent was obtained. An icebreaker question was used to initiate the discussion, followed by 11 questions for participants to reflect on. In some instances, additional clarification questions were asked. At the end of the interview, participants were given an opportunity to add any other information they deemed relevant. The interviews lasted from 20 to 45 minutes, and the transcripts, ranging from 17 to 35 pages, were generated using Zoom's auto-transcription feature.

Once the data was collected, the researcher started the analysis process in accordance with Creswell and Creswell's (2018) suggested stages. In step 1, the researcher organized and prepared the data for analysis, including reviewing the interview notes and listening to the

recording to verify that the transcripts were accurate. In step 2, the researcher read the transcripts once again and reviewed the digital material to gain a better understanding of the content and its connection to the study's research questions—step 3. The researcher started coding the data, including labeling categories. After forming a list of codes, the researcher invited an additional reviewer to help review the codes. The reviewer received one transcript divided by the interview questions and the list of codes, including a code book with a short explanation for each code. The reviewer was then asked to code the text according to the content once the process was finished. The reviewer and the researcher met online to cross-check the codes, compare the results, discuss discrepancies, and reach agreements to ensure consistency. Following the initial meeting, the researcher revised the codes to ensure they represented the data effectively. The reviewer was then asked to code the text again using the revised list of codes to ensure consistency. Scholars often use intercoder reliability (ICR) evaluation methods to identify the extent to which two or more coders concur with the coding conclusion (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). To calculate ICR, the study divided the number of agreements by the total number of agreements plus disagreements (Miles et al., 2020). For this study, the cross-check process was able to achieve an ICR of 0.83, a significant level of agreement.

Through the analysis process, the researcher identified 40 codes. Table 3 shows the codes and their frequency per categories. Table 4 provides a sample page of the codebook. The codes were then used to create seven themes. Table 5 shows the division between the codes and the themes.

During the data analysis process, Google Sheets were utilized for various tasks, such as codebook creation and data comparison with the reviewer. Additionally, for coding the transcripts, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software called Quirkos was employed.

Quirkos is a widely used software in social science studies, offering a user-friendly and visually appealing interface for coding data. The codes or themes of the data are represented by color-themed bubbles in Quirkos, which makes it easy to navigate and interpret. Figure 2 shows the themes in different colors using Quirkos.

The analysis process involved a review of the main website pages and social media accounts of the participating organizations. The researcher identified that 18 organizations had a primary focus on community, frequently inviting members to attend events both in-person and online, and sharing information about past events, programs, and community gatherings. Additionally, these organizations often shared pictures of community gatherings and member spotlights. In contrast, two organizations focused primarily on news and updates of a more general nature, such as news related to Israel or the war in Ukraine. All of the organizations' social media pages were frequently updated, indicating that they were active in maintaining their online presence.

The analysis of the organizations' main websites revealed a similar picture, with 18 organizations' websites mostly consisting of information about programs, invitations to join, information about community events, or ways to volunteer. Two organizations' main pages were focused on news or organization mission.

Table 3

Codes Frequencies Per Category

Category	Code name	Frequency	Percentage
Crisis	Disruptive	14	70%
	Crisis funding	6	30%
	Jewish values	5	25%
	Pride	10	50%
	Staffing issues	4	20%
	Positive	12	60%
	Mission	5	25%
Community	Mental Health	14	70%
	Low engagement	7	35%

Category	Code name	Frequency	Percentage
Organization	Time worthy	8	40%
	Socialization issues	8	40%
	Gap	6	30%
	Community passion	12	60%
	Behavioral change	9	45%
	Meaning	5	25%
	Financial need	6	30%
	Value organization	7	35%
	Anti-Semitism	6	30%
	Further changes	13	65%
	Financial help and services	5	25%
	Social initiatives and programs	14	70%
	ZOOM communication	6	30%
	Virtual programs	10	50%
	Growth	6	30%
	Remote work	8	40%
	Stronger connection	5	25%
	Work life balance	8	40%
	Partnerships	11	55%
Leadership	Higher involvement	7	35%
	Further changes in the organization	9	45%
	Reflection on community	14	70%
	Empathy	8	40%
	COVID-19 presence	6	30%
	Confidence	4	20%
	Flexibility	8	40%
	Organizational culture	5	25%
	Organizational funding needs	10	50%
	Staff management	10	50%
	Reevaluation	12	60%
Managing growth	6	30%	

Table 4

Sample Page of the Codebook

Category	Code name	Code definition	Code example
Community	Value of the organization	The organization has indicated a sense of value from the community	A lot of the people that we serve kind of even realize more so the importance of the work that we're doing because of all the issues out there.
Community	Gap	Mentioning a gap between populations or generations related to COVID-19 impact	I would say that people really up outside of the social anxiety you do actually see a generation gap. So there are definitely more faculty and staff who have stayed, masked or masked in various spaces. Students, you know, as soon as the masks could come off they were they were without masks.
Community	Lack of socializing skills	The community's current situation includes a lack of	One of the things I'm hearing from preschool is how many of the kids are showing up without the normal like level of socialization.

Category	Code name	Code definition	Code example
		socializing abilities in some capacity	
Impact on the Organization	Virtual Programs	The organization indicated offering virtual programs to its members	Almost all, if not all, of our programs. events. lectures, every single thing that we do virtual and accessible to anyone anywhere at any time.
Impact on the Organization	COVID presence	COVID is still present in the decision-making process in the organization	So there isn't a day that goes by where we don't talk about COVID. So either a client calling in to talk about something that's affecting them, or they need help getting connected to services like a vaccine, or they want to talk about health care, or they're anxious, or someone's passed away from COVID.
Leadership	Flexibility	The leadership has indicated openness to change	So I think it's made me definitely more like open minded to people working from home. And you know things like that.
Future changes	Further changes in the organization	The leadership foreseen more changes in the organization	We have really good things going on, and you know we sort of set ourselves a challenge to imagine what it would look like to expand the footprint of the work we do to our alumni throughout their lives, I think making pushing that experiment to come to life is certainly a large challenge in front of us.

Table 5

Codes Per Theme

Theme 1. Crisis Reflections	Theme 2. Community Preferences	Theme 3. Community Challenges	Theme 4. Connectivity	Theme 5. Effective Leadership	Theme 6. Management Issues	Theme 7. Organizational Changes
Disruptive	Community passion	Mental Health	Partnerships	Empathy	Organizational culture	ZOOM
Funding	Low engagement	Socialization issues	Stronger connection	Reflection on community	Staff management	Remote work
Team Pride	Time worthy	Financial need	Financial help	Confidence	Funding needs	Work life balance
Mission	Gap	Anti-Semitism	Higher involvement	Reevaluation	Managing growth	Growth
Jewish Connection	Behavioral change	Further changes	Value organization	Flexibility	COVID-19 presence	Further changes

Theme 1. Crisis Reflections	Theme 2. Community Preferences	Theme 3. Community Challenges	Theme 4. Connectivity	Theme 5. Effective Leadership	Theme 6. Management Issues	Theme 7. Organizational Changes
Positive outcomes	Meaning		Virtual programs			
Staffing issue			Social initiatives & programs			

Figure 2

Research Themes



Findings

Findings Related to Research Sub Question 1

Research sub question 1 explored the impact on the interdependency between the organization and the community and how these changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Using the protocol items, the researcher identified a total of 24 codes that were divided into four themes: crisis reflections, community challenges, organizational changes, and connectivity.

Theme 1: Crisis Reflections. The first theme, crisis reflections, focuses on leaders’ experience from the crisis approximately 3 years after the pandemic started. This theme includes seven codes that represent the way the leadership had portrayed the crisis impact on the

organization. The codes that were identified frequently were disruptive, positive, and pride. The code disruptive refers to the magnitude of the crisis on the organization's operations. For some organizations, this included layoffs and shifting programs online, but for other organizations that provide essential services, their work has increased and included different challenges, as described by an executive director from a social service organization:

So, the impact...was enormous. When in March 2020, we went from having 1,000 volunteers a month coming to pack and deliver food to low income individuals in the community, to having to have really small volunteer shifts and spreading out all of our volunteer so people could social distance.

The code positive refers to outcomes from the crisis, as can be seen by executive director from Pennsylvania in regard to technology use:

On the positive side I would say, the ways that we're using digital tools, that we have many more communications channels that are kind of right fit for various different social groupings. Our board of directors had been hemming and hawing about. Can we have board members? We're more geographically diverse. And are we going to lose something? You know, kind of having our board of directors' meetings not in person, and all of those concerns kind of gone away, and we, you know, jumped head first into that. So certainly.

Pride was also a recurring code, referring to the way the leaders perceived their teams' work following the crisis, which shows appreciation, as can be seen in the remarks of an executive director of a young adult-focused organization:

And as great as I thought my staff was. I thought they were even greater after that... I think there is a sense of some kind of bonding that happens when I guess when you go through a big trauma together. You get a better sense of camaraderie, or whatever.

Jewish connection was also identified as a code related to the crisis, because organizations mentioned Jewish values as being part of their management of the crisis, as described by executive director of a social services organization:

I'm talking to the board, and we're talking about all these challenges, and .. they're like saying to me ... they are in our value system, and the Jewish organization, we always try to be action oriented, and find a way to do the mitzvah, or like, overcome that obstacle and do the right thing right? Like we have this very strong value system issues, and, our organization, I feel lives and breeds those values.

Other codes included in this theme were emergency funding and recruitment issues, especially in the mental health sector in regard to the crisis mode. The last code was related to the role of the organization mission during the crisis, as noted by an executive director of a young adult organization.

I say initially. it really pushed us to define our core mission, which allowed us to pivot and continue to reach that mission, even though what you might call service delivery was in a really different form, and that was really powerful in and of itself because it was a forced pause that, you know, obviously caused a lot of stress also. But it really, I think it ended up re-inspiring all of us about what we do, and it kind of gave us the excuse to step away from some of the things that we were doing just because we were kind of in the routine of doing them.

Theme 2: Community Challenges. The second theme related to RQ1 is community challenges, which included five codes that captured the data collected in regard to community problems organizations have reported facing as a result of the pandemic. The main code was mental health, which appeared in 14 of the interviews. A director from a California umbrella organization has noted the impact of the pandemic in the following statement:

It's stuck with us, and it's definitely still here the mental health crisis because that sort of rose up alongside the whole COVID pandemic. It's almost like a shadow pandemic people are calling it, although it's not in the shadows anymore.

Lack of socialization was also coded frequently and mostly referred to young generations such as university students, teens, and preschool kids. An executive director of a campus organization shared the following experience:

Most of our students are not as well equipped as I had seen prior to 2020. They're not as well equipped to build relationships on their own. They demonstrate a significantly lower level of maturity than their predecessors. You know their ability to make friends. Their ability to be social engage is of a much lower level than we had seen previously.

Another related code was further changes, which focuses on leadership assumptions in regard to the impact of COVID-19 in years to come. Because some of the responses were related to further changes in generally or based on the economy, some have focused on changes in future generations as a result of the pandemic, as noted by an executive director of a young adult organization:

An experiment continues to be where social norms and the kind of the level of social anxiety that folks took in. You know how these changes things. I'm sure the epigeneticists will say like, well, this is going to be generation changing for some time,

because people have this all baked in now, and so I do think there will be longitudinal effects in that way.

Another code recoded was the rise in anti-Semitism and its impact on the community, as noted by a New York executive director in regard to the community:

A real increased fear about anti-Semitism that is, is completely warranted and not just on campus. It's. Listen. It could be worse. It's not the worst situation, by any means. But as a New Yorker, I was born and raised in Queens, I've never seen anti-Semitism in my life until the last 2 years, never. And so that kind of fear, particularly for a population a quarter of whom come from the former Soviet Union, a quarter of whom are Mizrahi. So, you're talking about Persian Jews, Syrian Jews, for whom persecution and the trauma of fear is baked into their background. That's no joke.

Another executive director from Pennsylvania described their challenges as an organization in regard to anti-Semitism:

As COVID was happening, and people were living their lives primarily in the rat hole of the Internet, like white supremacy and anti-Semitism has definitely become like the line between acceptable public discourse and kind of horrible ideas that you know people might hold, but would never say out loud, or you know, kind of fringe ideas really has gotten blurred. And so, we're definitely dealing with much more traffic on that front, and I don't know that we can't meet those needs... I would not have anticipated the resurgence of, you know, anti-Semitism in this particular way in the United States.

One other code identified was a rise in financial needs as a result of the pandemic that had an unequal impact on the community, as noted by a CEO of an umbrella organization:

The other thing is those who are economically vulnerable beforehand become even more economically vulnerable. It's a real problem, the pandemic actually, I think created the have and the have not in a new way, and the wealth gap has gotten even further stretch.

Theme 3: Organizational Changes. The third theme was organizational changes, which captured the significant changes that happened to the organization as a result of the pandemic.

The theme includes five codes. Remote work was identified as one of the codes, as organizations reported shifting to remote work in some capacity. This shift was described by an executive vice president of a national organization:

Of course, it's changed the whole world of work, and the whole way we operate, our whole concept of what needs to take place in person versus what doesn't. What it means to work together in person as a team versus what doesn't? I think we're still figuring that all out. I think there's a long tail. A long, long tail of COVID.

Another CEO of an organization based in New York reflected on the impact of remote work for young employees:

I'm a little bit concerned about young professionals, because a lot of being a professional is learning via mentoring. How does somebody dress? How does one have lunch? How do you eat lunch or just having a casual conversation? You know hallway talk. We used to always say that the best part of a meeting is what happens in the parking lot afterwards. That's when the real work gets done. It doesn't happen on Zoom. You know, there is no Zoom parking lot.

Another related code was work life balance that represent a shift in staff and organization mindset in regard to the balance between work and personal time, as described subsequently by a director from California:

Yeah, it's, I think a lot of it is a rebalance of how people approach their work and what is expected of people. You know. I think when people work from home, we try to give people a pretty long runway to figure out their time and their commitments. I think it is good to be at an organization that allows people to drop their kids off and pick them up from school, which would not be possible if people had to be in an office every day from 8'clock until 5'clock. You sort of lose that opportunity to give to your employees to show up as whole people in their lives.

Other codes that were identified were the addition of Zoom as a tool for communicating internally and with volunteers, and organizational growth as related to increased members using services or taking part in programs. There was also another code of 'further organizational changes' that captured leaders' assumptions regard to the organizational future changes. Most of the remarks were general in their nature and focused on the hope of continuing to evolve. An example can be seen in the following statement made by a CEO of an organization with chapters across the U.S. in regard to the future of the organization:

The mistake I'm hoping we do not make is to make an assumption that what our goal is to get back to 2019. But, in fact, where are the places that we've changed and the world has changed, for we can grow our impact and work. So, I think that takes time.

Other organizations have assumed further organizational challenges, as noted by an executive leader of a campus organization:

It was like 50 plagues for commuter students, because they're already at a lot of disadvantages socioeconomically, psychologically, there're a lot of other issues, and because of the impact of the depth that they experience that trauma. Whatever is happening at a residential school for us, it's going to take two to three times as long to

come back. So, I think that we're going to be seeing results of this, at least for the next 10 years and I think that will impact us in terms of leadership, in terms of money, in terms of staff support, in terms of student capability.

Theme 4: Connectivity. The fourth theme for RQ1 was connectivity, which included seven codes that captured organizational involvement in the community following the crisis as well as evidence of new partnerships and sense of value from the community. The code value organization record organization remarked in regard to community perceptions. The community refers to members as well as other Jewish organizations. An executive director of a national organization referred to the members' perception, noting that "a lot of the people that we serve kind of even realize more so the importance of the work that we're doing because of all the issues out there." Another executive director of a social service organization mentioned the sense of value from other organizations:

I think that the community was really impressed with the way we stepped up. I think the community also sees us as a serious hunger relief organization, because we started collaborating more with the food pantry system, and because we never closed our doors ever through this process.

Another related code identified was the perception of a stronger connection between the community and the organization following the crisis. An example of this connection was described by a CEO of organization with national chapters in North America in regard to their alumni relations: "the relationship between so many of our alumni and our staff is really much deeper, because it was something that in a lot of ways we went through together." Another example of this stronger connection was noted by an executive director of a campus organization in regard to the connection to student leadership:

Initially, student leaders really felt disempowered because we had to kind of take control of so many of the decisions, but that actually ended up bringing us closer to student leaders. Once we were able to kind of realize what was going on and explain that. As a result, the student leadership structure that we have with the student board...it's never been stronger. I mean, it really ended up bringing us together.

Three codes focused on activities and programs that were offered to the community following the crisis: virtual programs, financial services, and social initiatives and programs. Organizations have mentioned online programs' continuation following the crisis. Some leaders saw it as a way to extend their reach in the population, to be more accessible to members. As mentioned by a national executive director:

We've made almost all, if not all, of our programs, events, lectures, every single thing that we do virtual and accessible to anyone anywhere at any time. We have everything also still up on our website and on our streaming platform.

Another director of a young adult organization emphasized the benefits of online programs.

We're never going to get rid of the virtual option that is continued to be important both for accessibility for people who want to access our programming nationally, so they're not able to be in person with us, but they want to access our programming, or for people locally if it's hard for them, if they have any mobility issues or health concerns, they can access our programming from home. It also makes it a lot easier to be able to provide ASL interpreters or captioning system...so, it's actually been a really big change in accessibility, being able to provide that.

Organizations have also started offering new financial assistance for members. For some, it was out of their usual scope of work, as noted by an executive director of a campus organization:

We have started an initiative for menstrual equity to help students. This has been a complaint from students on campus more so recently that they can't afford to buy menstrual products and the campuses do not give them out for free. So, we have started a menstrual product drive on our campuses as well...and that's new for us. That's not a traditional role, that's more of a community service provider role.

Organizations have also mentioned creating new social initiatives and programs as a result of new community needs. Some initiatives were centered around mental health and involved the recruitment of social workers, while others primarily targeted the social aspects. As noted by a director of a young adult organization, "For the Jewish life programming there's been a shift towards relational experiences and kind of like relationship building, so actually trying to get smaller groups of people together to have more impactful conversations." Another director of a campus organization also mentioned adapting their programs to community needs.

We used to have many more large-scale events. We're now having more small-scale events both for COVID safety and because of the lack of social skills that students are just not as comfortable as they were going to these like huge 200-300 person events.

These adaptations were related to another code identified, higher involvement, which means more involvement of organizations in their respective community than prior to the pandemic. As noted by a national CEO in regard to the organization's community:

We shifted in the way of like trying to reach out, to connect to them more because they weren't able to come to us, so really trying to maintain that connection with them and the

support because people went through a lot. and we are very close with the people that are part of our community.

Another executive director from a campus organization emphasized the organizational change to adapt to this shift:

I think that this scale has shifted in such a way that the staff is expected to do more of the community facilitating when we used to be primarily in a training and support place. And so, we're working really hard, because we're retraining. I'm working hard at retraining my staff, and my staff is working really hard at retraining the students to understand all of their roles. It's not the job of the staff to do everything. It's our job to empower and support.

The code of partnerships represents new collaborations with organizations and the community at large. As noted by an executive director from California, "I think that it opened up opportunities for new collaborations and partnerships with other organizations." Another executive director from Pennsylvania mentioned the role of the Federation in strengthening partnerships, as noted subsequently:

So, I think the community kind of really responds, and I think this is largely because of the Jewish Federation. They really made the Jewish community aware of what we were experiencing and the things that people could do to help. And they were, they responded. You know just amazingly. I mean, there were a bunch of organizations that provide services and needed help. But we, you know we're smaller than a lot of them, and we were right up there with them, and people really got to know what we were doing more, and so I do feel like we have this stronger community partnership than we probably did before the pandemic.

Findings Related to Research Sub Question 2

For the second sub-question about changes in community involvement, the study has identified one theme, community preferences.

Theme 5: Community Preferences. The fifth theme included six codes. The most frequent code identified was community passion after the crisis. In this regard, some organizations indicated that members' participation in programming has gone back to what it was prior to COVID, as described by a director of national organization. "I think the community really wanted to get back to face to face and once we open everything, everything just came back to normal." Another director of a young adult organization has described the rise of new members, stating, "We actually have now a lot of people in their early mid-twenties who moved to DC during COVID. And now they're connecting with us as their spiritual community, and they're really hungry to meet new people."

Some of the organizations that offered immersive travel experiences have indicated a rise in travel post-crisis, as described by an organization CEO with chapters across the U.S.; "I think the idea of being able to be together is really, I mean, we're seeing numbers very high for immersive experience."

In contrast, some organizations mentioned low engagement in relation to members and volunteers or by specific age group. A CEO of an umbrella organization noted the following impact on members:

There's a lot less events and meetings than there used to be. There's a lot less convening. There's a lot less of that going on in terms of people to people. We have tried to get back as much to normal as humanly possible.

Others have described the impact on the relations with their volunteers, such as the CEO of a New York nonprofit.

Much of the volunteer experience is based on relationships. Well, I'm not going to have fun, then why would I want to volunteer? How do you have fun? You go to a meeting, and you meet people, and you work on something together. It's not as impactful on the zoom ... So yeah, so volunteerism is a little bit down.

Another related code was in regard to behavioral change of members, such as new preferences with respect to content, program, or event attendance. For example, a director from an umbrella organization has mentioned shift in their event sizes following the crisis:

There's always going to be some uncertainty, and we see people, you know, being less likely to come to large events. Some of our events are 800 or 1,000 people, and some folks are just not comfortable with those kinds of numbers. We have a lot of folks who attend those kinds of things are a little bit older, a little bit more susceptible to, you know, disease in different ways.

Another CEO of a organization with national reach emphasized the impact of the behavioral changes on their organization:

I would say that communities are changing. and I think the communities we serve are changing, and the pandemic in a lot of ways, was a catalyzer for that, it is changed behaviors one example that we're seeing is in San Francisco. People have moved to different parts of the city, and it is impacted immigration patterns, the way that people interact in person the way they gather. And so, we need to change in order to meet the needs of our community members in different localities. And that's like, you know. It was always the case, but even more so now it really has to be community by community.

This notion of a gap in regard to the impact of the pandemic between communities and generation was also recorded as a separate code. A campus director mentioned the differences in regard to masking:

You do actually see a generation gap. So, there are definitely more faculty and staff who have stayed, masked or masked in various spaces. Students, you know, as soon as the masks could come off, they were they were without masks.

Another gap was found between different age groups, as mentioned by a director of a Texas organization:

[We] have a little bit of an aging population and so I do think that there is something to how heavy COVID weighs on people's mind depending on their age and their health, and that kind of thing. And I will say, you know what we've witnessed is. There are some folks who it's essentially over for them. They don't pay attention to it. They don't think about it, but there are some folks who still, as we're trying to engage them, have it as a concern, and a very deep concern, and that we, as an organization, try to be sensitive to that, and acknowledge that in ways that it's. It's just always kind of there.

Two other related codes that were identified as part of community preferences were time worthy and meaning. Time worthy focused on people evaluating their time differently following the crisis. As noted by the national director of an educational organization.

I think people are more discerning about when they choose to be in person, and when they don't, you know what's worth coming out and exposing yourself around, and what's not, but I think that where people deem something worthy of their travel and their exposure, and all that, and they show up, I think it's even more dear to them... and then

where you've asked people to show up when it actually could have been something they watched in their pajamas from the comfort of their living room, they don't like that.

Another example of the code was described by a CEO of an umbrella organization.

I used to go out for lunch and dinner with people every single day. People don't want to do it anymore... I hate to say it like this but what's nice about it is that I think it's dialed back. People's use of their own personal time a little bit, and people value their own time differently, and they're not overly programmed in the sense as they were before.

The study also identified a similar code, meaning, as participants indicated the pursuit of meaning and meaningful engagements of members following the crisis. As mentioned by a national executive director:

Because we went through something very profound on a personal, emotional level. We see that people are asking themselves life-changing questions. The amount of people that I have recently just giving an example. That said I'm moving to Israel. Oh, my God! So, for years they were like stock. They didn't think about it...they're prioritizing things different. And I think they're brave to go and act on their dormant wishes that they did not act on years before.

Another example of the pursue of meaning was noted by an executive director of a young adult nonprofit:

And then the other change is our commitment to Jewish. We were never not committed to Jewish education. But our programming is more structured around Jewish education. Now, we're teaching maybe five classes a semester where we were teaching maybe 2 or 3 beforehand. I think their kind of a lot of students' recommitments to their own interests and identities as a result of the pandemic, too.

Findings Related to Research Sub Question 3

For the third sub-question that was focused on changes in the leadership approach toward the community, the researcher identified two themes: management issues and effective leadership.

Theme 6: Management issues. The management issues theme focused on the challenges for leaders as a result of the pandemic, including managing staff, growth, fundraising, and organizational culture in a remote or hybrid setting.

The code managing growth was related to growth in members or services offered, or to scaling back after the crisis. When asked about their leadership challenges, a CEO of an organization with a national reach described the complexity of scaling back:

Scaling back up rapidly, bringing in new staff. As an example, we're a team of 28 people. of whom 13 were hired in the last year. So, there is the need to continue to run programming while bringing new staff into the organization, the reconstitution of an organizational culture, organizational learning that has to take place at an accelerated pace and then managing expectations with external stakeholders and funders around what's realistic and what isn't given the sort of professional realities.

Another management issue that surfaced was coded as COVID presence, which signified organizations that were still deliberating on issues related to the pandemic with respect to their current operations, as described by an executive director of a social services organization from California.

But you know COVID is still with us, right? And so, it's a very dynamic situation. And because we're doing direct service, and we want to make sure that our staff stays safe, and our client stays safe we just have to be on it. It's just a whole other layer of how we

do business right. which I think is true for most people on earth and most companies. But other folks can just kind of go back to business as usual, but because we're in the people business, and we work with populations that are acutely vulnerable to COVID. And it just makes everything a bit more complex.

Another frequent code was organizational funding needs, which focused on organizations' financial needs to cover operational and programmatic expenses. Some organizations mentioned that the pandemic hold on in-person gatherings has affected their fundraising efforts during the pandemic. Others mentioned inflation as another source of budgeting issues. As mentioned by a CEO of an organization with chapters in different states, "We had 2 plus years without being able to fundraise in any new environments and that's coupled with a higher cost of doing business with inflation and travel and those things, so that's a challenge."

Another executive director based in New York described the impact of the crisis on their donor base:

The first year of COVID a lot of philanthropists were directing their funds towards COVID response. So, we did see a decrease in individual fundraising. And we understood that it made sense, and we were hoping to recoup that, and as soon as we would have started recouping. That war broke out in Ukraine, so a lot of our major donors are again redirecting their funds for a crisis response. So, we have seen a decrease in our giving.

Another CEO from an umbrella organization mentioned the community new needs in addition to current expenses as a financial stressor:

The challenge that we have is at the expense of filling in the financial gap for the vulnerable and the cost of the rise and services combined with inflation. It's all financial. It's just financial. If the number of people who need mental health services is even doubled. Yeah, that's a big number to raise money for. And look, we're back to doing things that we didn't do over the pandemic...so our challenge is needing more money to address the needs that have not gotten away emerging needs and still funding the other things that we typically have done that are coming back.

Another code was staff management, which focused on issues related to staff specifically due to remote work, which affects the organization's ability to connect with the staff and lead effectively. As described by a director in a young adult-focused organization:

Without people working together in the office. There are a lot more communication issues, and people don't have kind of like those authentic and natural relationship building moments with their colleagues following the crisis.

Another director of a national organization mentioned the challenge of building trust in a remote working environment:

It does have an impact on the teams' trust, because when you don't meet face to face, you have some trust issues, and you have some small talks out of the zoom that you're not aware of, because it's not in the kitchen or in the hallway, so it's hard to manage that as well.

Another related code was organizational culture that has been affected due to the pandemic and remote work in some of the organizations participating in the study, as mentioned by an executive director of a young adult organization:

Another challenge is all the new hires who never have been [in our facilities], or staff trainings, or those things so organizational culture and alignment, I think, is a huge challenge coming out of the COVID crisis and how to, you know, be an organization going in one direction together.

Theme 7: Effective Leadership. The last theme in this study is effective leadership, which included five codes. Three of these focused on leadership changes due to the pandemic, such as increased empathy, confidence and flexibility. In regard to flexibility, a director of an umbrella organization noted its importance in relations to the pandemic:

Flexibility is something that has emerged from COVID in the way you both communicate with employees and communicate with stakeholders. Giving people things to opt into. I think...it all has to do with people choosing how they spend their time differently.

In regard to the empathy code, a director in a social service organization described the impact of COVID-19 on her leadership and empathy:

I think managing people and being a leader when you're seeing people in their homes it levels the playing field a lot. I think it has increased my empathy and patience to be a more responsive leader, to trust people differently and to think differently about what leadership looks like, and the type of leader that people really need when they themselves are experiencing a crisis. And when everybody is experiencing a crisis and that has been really both informative and formative to me and for me, and I think of it as an enormous learning opportunity that then becomes infused in like who and how we hire and even those conversations are different than what they were like before the pandemic.

Another director of a national organization emphasized the importance of leaders having empathy following the crisis:

From a leadership perspective, it's been a deep lesson in empathy, or the need for empathy, the need to really understand where people are, understand what they need. All of these things were true before, but it was unavoidable during the pandemic, the benefits of caring for your staff and caring for the members of your community as a way to, you know, not only help get people through a difficult time, but also a way to achieve... a sustainable work, life balance. You know the importance of team culture, organizational culture. Those are all things that that I feel have not only become more important, but I've gotten better at.

Another significant code was community reflections, which illustrated the leadership reviews of community as a result of the crisis. Some were in regard to the difficulty of creating a sense of belonging using online components, as mentioned by a director from California: "that's really hard to do and make them feel like they belong to something, when it's completely virtual." Other leaders focused on community relations. As was mentioned by an executive director from a Jewish organization focused on young adults in regard to the organization's community relations and role within the larger community:

I think we've learned to be more responsive to community needs, and that being related to COVID and accessibility, but also following summer of 2020, and the murder of George Floyd, and understanding how a Jewish and Arts institution should have a voice in the racial justice movement and serve as an anti-racist organization.

Another code that appeared in 12 of the interviews was identified as reevaluation. It represents a wide range of factors organizations have chosen to rethink due to the pandemic: issues such as way of working, fundraising, programs, and community approach. For example, a CEO of a New York nonprofit mentioned the use of Zoom for communication versus in-person

gathering, stating, “This is really important. I mean, it’s something which we as a leadership grappling with. What is the right balance. As you get people back together, the right balance between technology and between being social beings.” Another director of a California organization mentioned reevaluating their financial strategy.

We are like in strategic planning again and we’re completely redoing the business model. And part of the business model is rethinking the financial structure of the organization. We’re doing that, I definitely have seen other nonprofits do that often in survival mode, and I think ours hit a little bit later because some of our issues...they really came to the forefront in the last year or so, and kind of are pushing everybody’s hand on this.

Chapter Summary

The chapter described all the data gathered from the research, including an extended review of the analysis process and visuals that showcase the codes recorded, their frequency, and the seven themes that emerged. A summary of the data and related quotes were provided for each of the research questions. Having presented the results of this study, the researcher will discuss the following key findings in Chapter 5:

- F1: Leaders have undergone a significant shift in their perspective on the COVID-19 crisis.
- F2: The pandemic has caused significant changes in community involvement.
- F3: Challenges that arose during the pandemic are still ongoing.
- F4: The connection between the community and organizations has become stronger.
- F5: Remote work has impacted organizational culture and staff's sense of belonging.
- F6: Managing organizations has become more complex following the crisis.
- F7: The leadership approach toward the community has changed.

These findings underscore the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on organizations' operations, programming, management challenges, and leadership approach. From a social perspective, the study has identified long-lasting effects on social behavior, preferences, priorities, and issues. In Chapter 5, the researcher will discuss the implications and conclusions of this study, as well as study limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

Chapter Overview

In the final chapter of this study, there is a thorough analysis of the research findings, including their connection to the theoretical framework and current literature. The chapter also discusses the implications of the results, evaluates the study, makes suggestions for future research, and concludes with final remarks.

Study Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the longstanding impact of COVID-19 on community involvement through the lens of community-building organizational leadership. The study sought to examine this objective by establishing the following research question:

- What is the impact of COVID-19 on Jewish community-based organizations?

This main question led to the following three sub-questions:

1. To what extent, if at all, has the interdependency between the organization and the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?
2. To what extent, if at all, has community involvement changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?
3. To what extent, if at all, has the leadership approach toward the community changed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?

The study conceptual framework assumes the pandemic's long-lasting impact on organizations and communities has also altered the relations between the two, whereas the impact on communities is viewed through the lens of various theories connected to the human being's inherent sense of belonging. The theories include self-determination theory, sense of belonging, social cohesion, and social capital.

Based on the research questions, a qualitative exploratory case study approach was applied via both semi-structured interviews and digital material examination. The study has collected data from 20 interviews of senior leadership from 20 different organizations or chapters across North America as well as their digital artifacts, including websites and social media pages. Inclusion criteria for this study included the following: all nonprofits were located in active Jewish community regions in the United States, with a minimum of five employees. The organizations provide in-person programs or activities to adults and/or young adults and/or all ages. Furthermore, because this study incorporated interviews with the organization's leadership, all participants held a paid leadership position. Positions included CEOs, executive directors, and directors.

The findings of this study include 40 codes that were grouped into seven themes: crisis reflections, community preference, community challenges, connectivity, effective leadership, management issues, and organizational changes. These themes represent the magnitude of COVID-19's impact on Jewish nonprofit operations, programs, activities, staff, and leadership, and their connection to the communities they serve, which endured challenges and altered their behaviors and preferences. The themes were used to derive seven study findings.

Study Findings

F1: Leaders have Undergone a Significant Shift in Their Perspective on the COVID-19 Crisis.

The findings from the leaders' reflections about the pandemic, exemplify how the time since the first spread in December 2019, has changed the way leaders are viewing the crisis, trending towards a more holistic view including positive changes that have taken place as a result of the pandemic, such as expansion of work, technological advancements, and helping the community. For example, as mentioned by an executive director of a social service organization

“I’m glad we could figure out how to get people to do something where they felt like they could contribute”.

The passage of time has allowed leaders to express their gratitude for their employees' work during these challenging times, particularly in organizations that played a critical role in responding to the pandemic. Such organizations faced a significant increase in service demands while also dealing with challenges in maintaining the health and well-being of their employees and volunteers. This observation supports the literature on the impact of crises on nonprofits (Hathaway, 2020; Shi et al., 2020).

F2: The Pandemic has Caused Significant Changes in Community Involvement.

The study's findings showed that people are interested in being part of organizational communities, but this tendency has become more complex following the crisis. Due to pandemic-related emergency measures, people were deprived of in-person gatherings, which affected mental health and socialization skills for some, resulting in a reluctance to participate. However, for others, it led to greater engagement and participation, particularly in travel-related experiences that offer more immersive and meaningful experiences. As an executive director of a young adult organization noted, "in the period following... the elimination of most travel restrictions, we encountered... a 3 to 1 application rate for our overseas experiences... a really significant amount of demand."

The rise in community engagement appears to be towards gatherings that involve value and meaning for members, which led to changes in preferences toward certain programs, as noted by a national senior director of an educational organization:

People don't want to travel if they don't have to in places like San Francisco Bay area where we have a lot of programs, and where there are lots of bridges and lots of traffic people used to really. (people used) to go to the end of the earth to meet 3 times a year in

person. Now they're not. They're not as willing to do it so for sure, there's more reluctance to travel if the value of it isn't obvious.

This example highlights how some organizations have experienced a decrease in community engagement and connections. These changes could be related to people's altered perceptions of time in the post-pandemic world. As emergency measures during the crisis shifted people's social behavior, making them more comfortable with Zoom communication or remote work, they have become more cautious about how they spend their time and what activities take them outside their homes. Consequently, people are seeking engagement and community, but it needs to be more meaningful and valuable to them. This notion is related to Bland (2020), assertion that crises can prompt individuals to reflect on their beliefs and sense of social cohesion, which give meaning to their lives within the larger collective.

These findings may differ between people from different states that implemented different COVID policies. However, the older population was mainly reported as preferring the use of virtual applications or less crowded events, indicating the significant impact of the pandemic on this certain population that is known to be more prone to mental health problems and loneliness. These findings are consistent with social trends during the pandemic, as the rise in isolation is still apparent among the older population (Kotwal et al., 2021). An executive director of a social services organization has mentioned this notion:

For some of our clients, particularly our older adults, they're very much still living within the pandemic. Because there that whole host of medical and psychological needs and have so many limitations, and they're well beyond age 65. And so, they're in a high-risk category for Covid, and so their lives are still very much shaped by COVID.

F3: Challenges That Arose during the Pandemic Are Still Ongoing.

The findings of this study highlight how the pandemic's implications on people's social, emotional, and financial states, as well as the rise in hate incidents, are still ongoing. The closure of schools, businesses, and other entities due to the pandemic's stay-at-home orders has led to a rise in mental health issues (Di Corrado et al., 2020), which continues to be a concerning issue for many organizations even three years after the pandemic started. Mental health issues have been reported among different age groups, with the lack of socialization skills being mostly referred to in the younger generations, including university students, teens, and preschoolers. These impacts can lead to further challenges in the years to come. It is important to note that the increased use of screens by teens and young adults prior to the pandemic may have played a part in this lack of socialization and contributed to the mental health crisis. The lack of socialization has been connected to the literature on the pandemic's impact on students (Beldad, 2021; Boardman et al., 2021).

Another challenge faced by communities is the rise in financial hardship, which was exacerbated among people who already suffered from financial disparity, as supported by the literature on the pandemic (Richter, 2022).

The rise in anti-Semitism is another troubling trend, which has nearly doubled since 2019 and is now at its highest levels in 30 years (ADL, 2023). This notion was reported more often among organizations serving university students, and it may be related to young adults' excessive use of online media and lack of social connections during the crisis. A senior director in an organization with national reach has mentioned in regards to anti-Semitism in universities across the U.S:

the rise in anti-Semitism, you know I haven't really talked about that. But that's been a huge thing that has come in the aftermath of Covid...it's apparent that it's becoming bolder and more common and more like accepted.

The challenges that the community has faced and continues to face suggest that they may continue to evolve in the coming years. It is essential to be aware of these challenges because the desire to return to normalcy can overshadow the ongoing impact of the pandemic on many households.

From a theoretical perspective, the sudden shift toward social distancing resulted in a prolonged sense of isolation that persists for some. The older population's preference for virtual programs that lack a sense of belonging may lead to continued mental health issues in this demographic.

The findings of this study are consistent with the theoretical framework on which it is based. According to self-determination theory, individuals have three innate needs that are essential for overall well-being, motivation, and life satisfaction: competence, autonomy, and belonging (Deci, 1975; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The emergency measures implemented during the crisis limited social opportunities, negatively affecting people's sense of belonging (Allen et al., 2021; Hathaway, 2020), as well as their sense of competence and autonomy, which are crucial basic needs for overall well-being. Therefore, the 70% increase in reported mental health issues post-crisis in this study may signify a continuation of the negative impact on people's sense of belonging, highlighting the lasting effects of the pandemic.

F4: The Connection Between the Community and Organizations has Become Stronger.

The study findings suggest that the connection between organizations and the community has become stronger as a result of the pandemic. This is evidenced by the development of new programs and initiatives in response to the community's evolving needs, new partnerships with

other organizations, increased involvement in the community, and a sense of appreciation and value received from the community.

This increased interdependence between nonprofits and their respective communities can be attributed to the community's greater needs and dependency on these organizations. As a result, organizations had to adjust their operations, programs, and approaches to meet these needs, which in turn required additional funding from the community to cover the added costs. This dynamic interdependence between nonprofits and the community can lead to greater effectiveness, as noted by Crutchfield and Grant (2007).

While some organizations mentioned limitations in providing certain types of assistance to the community, they have extended their operations in other forms. Additionally, some organizations have provided out-of-scope services. It is worth noting, however, that not all organizations have experienced changes in their interdependence with the community.

The findings of this study are related to the concept of social capital, specifically the linking social capital level. Linking social capital refers to the extent to which individuals build relationships with organizations and individuals who hold relative power over them by granting opportunities for resources or services (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Woolcock, 2001).

The study found ample supportive data regarding linking social capital, as organizations offered members financial help and services during and after the crisis. As a result, members built stronger connections with these organizations, recognizing the value they received from the organization. These strengthened connections were demonstrated through involvement in the organization, volunteering, donating funds, or referring others to join the organization, reflecting the reciprocity of the relationships.

The study findings are relevant to the concept of social cohesion, which is a holistic view of the general condition of society (Chan et al., 2006). Bottoni (2018a, 2018b) identifies three levels of social cohesion: macro, meso, and micro. This study focused on the meso level, which examines the role and affiliation of individuals with groups or organizations.

According to the study, the crisis strengthened the connection between some of the organizations and their respective communities. Organizations provided a place for members to convene and engage with others, as well as continued support during and after the crisis. These actions helped foster trust and were valued by members, as indicated by the community's positive perceptions of the organization. This increased affiliation with the organization.

F5: Remote Work has Impacted Organizational Culture and Staff's Sense of Belonging.

The pandemic has shifted towards remote work, which has impacted all the participating organizations in some capacity. This change has altered the relations between organizations, employees, and work meetings. The shift towards remote work is part of a broader trend towards achieving a work-life balance, which was mentioned by some organizations and relates to changes in the work environment (Torres & Orhan, 2023). Achieving a work-life balance involves viewing work in a more holistic way that emphasizes the mental health of the individual. However, the shift towards remote work might also be connected to the rise of mental illness as people work from home, which can affect their social connections and mental state and heighten feelings of loneliness. As was mentioned by an executive director of an organization with chapters across the U.S:

The idea of full, remote work and unlimited PTO sounds so sexy I mean it's so appealing, but it's not clear that it's actually healthy, and for some it's great, and I think for others, it's hard to work remotely; you're really isolated, and you might not have a setup or an office that's conducive to that work. And so, we're starting to see like...where is that

really positive? And where does it create other challenges? and how do we, being in a community building and Jewish space like, how do we bring Judaism and togetherness and community building and belonging to like the community, our staff, our team.

F6: Managing Organizations has Become More Complex Following the Crisis.

The study highlights significant challenges in managing nonprofit organizations in the aftermath of the crisis. Nonprofit organizations have undergone significant changes during the first 2 years of the pandemic, from implementing new safety protocols to starting new programs in response to the pandemic, as reported by previous research (Kuenzi, 2021).

This study further identifies other challenges related to the aftermath of the crisis, such as difficulties in fundraising to cover the costs of new programs and initiatives or dealing with the general rise of costs due to inflation and lingering funding issues from the crisis.

Managing growth has also required prioritizing and dealing with uncertainty in decision making as community behavior has changed. The pandemic has added another layer of challenge to management, particularly for organizations providing services to the older population, in adding a COVID-19 layer to decision making.

Additionally, managing staff in a remote setting has been challenging for different organizations. Nonprofit organizations mostly rely on connecting staff to the organization's mission and other team members to create a sense of belonging, as they cannot compete with for-profit sectors in terms of salaries and benefits. However, working remotely has made this issue more difficult and has affected the organizational culture and employees' connection to the organization and each other. For people-centered community-based organizations, the remote component seems to have much more impact than other sectors. These management issues can affect staff motivation and, in turn, impact the organization's operations and sustainability.

These management issues are a continuation of pressure on leadership to deliver since the crisis, which has taken a toll on leaders. This sentiment is evident in the following statement by an executive director from New York:

We've had an enormous amount of executive director turn over because burnout is through the roof, we're tired. I didn't get into this to talk about anti-Semitism once a day. I didn't get into this to be a trauma counselor. That's not my training. My training is leadership development and Jewish education, programming. My training is fundraising. My training is getting an organization to be high functioning and sustainable. My training is not fielding phone calls from alumni, for whom I am their primary Jewish contact. They call me and say both my grandparents died within a week. Can you help me pay for it, right? So, these are the sorts of things that you know we're really seeing.

F7: The Leadership Approach Toward the Community has Changed.

This study's findings exemplify the pandemic drastic impact on nonprofits, requiring their leadership to continue guiding their staff through a time of great uncertainty and emotion while caring for their growing community needs. This experience has been reported as causing some leaders to feel more confident, open-minded, and flexible when it comes to changes and more empathetic to their staff and community. Many leaders have reported evaluating previous actions, strategies, programs, and approaches, as well as current decision-making. This notion of reevaluation reflects the leaders' efforts to adapt culturally, financially, and technologically, which is critical for nonprofits to survive and grow in today's rapidly changing environment (Colton et al., 2013). Furthermore, the shift toward technological advancements as a result of the pandemic have led many Jewish organization to become more modernized and adapt better to current needs.

The study findings suggest that the crisis experience has heightened leaders' awareness of changing community needs, leading them to adopt new ways of operating and innovating. Such awareness and sensitivity to changing conditions and organizational limitations are characteristics of effective leaders (Schmid, 2006). The shift in the leadership approach toward the community emphasizes the importance of meeting people where they are and fulfilling their needs, as opposed to adhering to a predetermined agenda or approach. This change reflects a growing awareness of the importance of community needs. As mentioned by a senior director in an education focus organization:

We're trying to in our new strategic plan meet people where they are more. We're going to try and do an ambassador program to connect people who are either new to the Jewish community or new to our community in general to get more engaged.

It is important to note that most of the leaders who participated in this research have had prior experience in the Jewish world, either professionally or educationally. This understanding of the essence of the Jewish community adds another level of depth to their reflections on this study's findings. These reflections show a process of lessons learned that leaders have utilized, which relates to Coombs and Hollady's (2012) post-crisis stage that emphasizes learning and adjustment. Furthermore, the indications of doubt and reflections identified in the research by some of the organizations can relate to Argyris's (1977) double-loop learning process, which enhances the comprehension of organizational competence in the aftermath of a crisis (Mano, 2010). Thus, it appears that the learning process is occurring in most of the organizations that took part in this study, either as a deliberate part of their post-crisis awareness efforts or as an organic outcome of their experiences.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the study analysis are as follows:

- C1: The challenges that emerged during the pandemic are still ongoing, and nonprofit organizations must remain flexible and adaptable to navigate ongoing uncertainty and change.
- C2: The pandemic has strengthened the relationship between the community and nonprofit organizations, indicating potential for collaboration and positive change in a post-pandemic world. This connection is vital in overcoming financial stressors and community challenges.
- C3: Remote work has significantly impacted organizational culture and staff's sense of belonging, underscoring the importance of prioritizing employee well-being and engagement in a virtual work environment.

The study's findings regarding the ongoing impact of the pandemic on communities, such as mental health issues, suggest that these issues continue to affect many households three years after the crisis began. Furthermore, they will likely continue to shape people's behaviors in the coming years, as future generations that were affected at different ages grow up. This notion should be prioritized with increased awareness by organizations serving communities, as well as policymakers.

Reviewing the findings related to changes in communities, such as social and emotional issues, financial hardship, and hate incidents, as well as organizations' financial issues and the possibility of future shifts, emphasizes the importance of collaboration among local Jewish organizations. Sharing practices, supporting, and strengthening each other is crucial to navigate through these challenging times, reduce costs, and reach more members. The study's findings on

stronger connections between Jewish organizations and their communities, along with a more collaborative approach, provide hope that these organizations can emerge from these difficulties even stronger.

Managing staff in a remote setting for a people-centered organization seems to be one of the most challenging issues facing organizations. Since the mission and values of an organization are integral to its culture, employees working from home may find it difficult to feel connected to the organization, especially new staff members. This can impact their sense of belonging and motivation. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to find new ways to foster employee motivation and connection with the organization while working remotely.

Implications

Based on the findings presented in this study, it can be inferred that there are significant implications for practice, policy, and scholarship.

For practice, the results of this study, conducted with a group of 20 Jewish organizational leaders, can be useful for other nonprofits seeking to learn about organizational issues and community challenges and behaviors. These findings can help organizations become more aware of similar issues with their staff or community members and reflect on current approaches and strategies to meet community needs and preferences. The study can also encourage organizations to find ways to improve organizational culture in a remote or hybrid workplace, which can help staff feel a sense of belonging and connection to the organization, thereby influencing their satisfaction levels and quality of work.

In terms of public policy, the frequent reports of social issues, particularly the mental health crisis, suggest the need for increased attention and funding, as nonprofit organizations cannot provide the level of support required.

Scholarly contributions include insights into Jewish leadership attitudes and lessons learned post-crisis that can be included in an academic book about the impact of COVID-19 on leadership. The study can also contribute to the literature on the impact of the pandemic on social behaviors as part of social science studies. Additionally, the study can provide insights into the effects of remote work post-crisis and team management, which can be included in studies about nonprofits or management.

Recommendations

One of the significant findings of this study pertains to the changes in members' behavior due to an extended period of online programs that altered the way people engage in certain activities. Some data collected in the research indicates a decrease in in-person engagement in synagogues. Since this study did not include religious organizations, it would be worthwhile to explore synagogue spirituality and the sense of belonging post-crisis and what strategies organizations use to foster engagement. As spirituality is deemed a meaningful engagement, it would be intriguing to examine how the pursuit of meaning is taking place from a member's perspective after the crisis. Given that the Jewish religion emphasizes social interaction, it would be interesting to determine if people have shifted their approach to spiritual practices. One of the directors of a national organization mentioned her concerns in this area:

People are looking for connectivity to the Jewish community. Now it may be different, and we have to, along with our partners and the agencies we have to adapt to it. I am particularly concerned for synagogues that I think people have learned from the pandemic. They don't really need them as much even in the "dateem" (Orthodox Jews) world. During the pandemic people were setting up minyans in their backyards and tents right? That's for example, telling us that people still want to be involved in the Jewish

community. It's just how. We're trying to in our new strategic plan. Meet people where they are more. We're going to try and do an ambassador program to connect people who are either new to the Jewish community or new to our community in general to get more engaged. So, I think there are some positive changes to come out of it for sure.

Another recommendation arising from this study is related to fundraising issues that were reported by some of the organizations. It would be interesting to research the relationships between Jewish foundations and their grantees to determine whether their grants, requirements, and focus have changed as a result of the pandemic. Since many organizations depend on these grants, it would be valuable to explore how the pandemic has affected these relationships and how the changes may have impacted the services offered by the organizations to community members. This research could help identify the implications of any changes in these relationships and provide insights into how organizations can better adapt to the evolving funding landscape. This inquiry was described by a CEO of a global organization:

If you're looking at the Jewish communal landscape right, a huge element of this is philanthropy, and what the funder landscape look like. One thing that we heard was funders, especially the major philanthropies of the U.S. Jewish community really being flexible with their grantees during the pandemic period some, increasing their grant, to address the needs that emerged overnight. And I think there's some of that culture that is residual, meaning that mindset of really being flexible with grantees, and I think from my... impression as a grantee is that there's been a shift in philanthropic culture to an extent. I suppose, a question that I think, would be worth exploring also is like, what are the ways in which philanthropic institutions are viewing changes from the pandemic, and

what that means for grantees...it's like a yin and yang, and we're all like part of this this puzzle together, and one influences the other significantly.

Another research recommendation is to expand this study to the global Jewish community, using a global Jewish organization such as Hillel International to learn about the impact of the pandemic on different parts of the world within the same age group.

Additional research recommendation could focus on conducting interviews with community members as a case study to learn about their experience of community involvement from their perspective during and after the crisis. This would provide valuable insights into how their relationships with organizations and other members have changed and could strengthen the study's results.

Evaluations

This study aimed to include a diverse group of Jewish organizations in North America that were large enough to serve a significant number of members. As a result, the researcher developed inclusion criteria that made recruiting for this study more challenging than originally anticipated. Ultimately, 20 interviews were conducted with leaders of organizations that met the inclusion criteria.

Furthermore, the impact of emergency measures may vary in different states, which in turn could affect the community and the organizations serving them, as states implemented varying measures for different durations. This study included organizations from 7 states and 6 headquarters of national or global organizations, providing insights into their respective chapters in North America. However, the study may not accurately represent the differences between states. Including organizations from different states or with more representation from particular states may have provided different results. Additionally, because the study included a variety of

organizations, including educational, service providers, and community-centered ones, choosing different organizations could also lead to different findings.

On a personal note, the researcher approached this study with the assumption that community engagement would increase in the aftermath of the pandemic. However, the findings suggest that community engagement has taken a different form, emphasizing the value of time spent in community gatherings and revealing that older populations are more reluctant to engage. Additionally, the study shed light on the significant impact of the pandemic on people's mental health and the effect of remote working on organizations. These findings have expanded the researcher's view on the long-term impact of the pandemic and the ongoing implications for organizations and communities. The experiences and reflections shared by the study participants during the interviews have not only deepened the researcher's understanding of their crucial role in helping their communities overcome the struggles endured during the crisis, but have also greatly increased the researcher's appreciation for their work, empathy, and care, all guided by Jewish values toward their team and community.

Closing Comments

In summary, this study aimed to capture the impact of COVID-19 on Jewish community-based organizations (CBOs) and their respective communities. Through interviews with 20 leaders from different organizations or chapters across the US, the study identified seven themes that captured the changes that organizations and communities have gone through since the pandemic began in December 2019.

The pandemic was a complex crisis that had various implications for people's financial, social, and mental well-being. The findings of this study reveal the long-term impact of the pandemic on the workplace, individuals' preferences, and social behavior, and highlight the

connection between organizations and the communities they serve. From a community standpoint, people appear to be willing to participate in social gatherings, but their needs must be met to ensure successful engagement. This involves providing more attention, guidelines, and support, as well as offering programs and activities that have explicit meaning and value. Since people are looking for meaningful engagement, Jewish organizations could provide a much-needed community space for exploring identity, learning wisdom, and reflecting on Jewish heritage. This implies a promising trend, and perhaps another positive outcome of the pandemic.

In accordance, organizations seem to be increasingly aware of their community's needs, more receptive to change and collaboration, and more empathetic toward their staff and members in the aftermath of the crisis. This change in approach has the potential to propel Jewish organizations towards innovation, creativity, and growth. Conversely, organizations that aim to revert to their pre-pandemic operations may encounter difficulties in retaining staff and thriving.

Despite some people believing that the pandemic has ended, and life has returned to normal, the current state of normalcy is different from pre-pandemic times, and there are still pressing issues that require attention. Mental health concerns, for instance, have been on the rise, but they may be overlooked or forgotten by the public due to this perception.

As this research is conducted in a timeframe that is three years following the initial spread, these changes may represent the seeds of a more powerful impact as previous global pandemics (Lagerås, 2016; Loomis, 2018), including social, economic, and cultural changes.

From a theoretical lens, the sudden shift toward social distancing during the pandemic led to a lack of belonging and a rise in mental health issues which is still present for some. Given the limitations of government policies and budgets, there is a shortfall in providing sufficient funds for mental health care. However, given the significant amount of literature that supports the

connection between community engagement and mental well-being (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Tse et al., 2022; Putnam, 2001), community engagement can enhance the sense of belonging and therefore provide an effective and beneficial approach to heal the adverse effects of mental health issues caused by the pandemic, often referred to as the social cure (Jetten et al., 2017).

In the 1960s, a confluence of economic, political, social, and cultural trends led to a breakdown in social connections (Putnam, 2020). However, the global pandemic may serve as a catalyst for reversing these changes. To achieve this, community organizations must take the lead and bring people together through creativity, innovation, empathy, and care. In today's climate, there is a greater need than ever to foster community cohesion, which can be accomplished through collaborative efforts, unconventional thinking, and a belief in change.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

Ice breaker: Tell me a little about your career in the Jewish world?

1. How would you describe the impact of COVID-19 on your organization?
2. What would you consider the most significant changes to the organization following the crisis?
3. Following the crisis, what changes do you see in the organization community (new needs/wants)
4. Do you recognize any new characteristics/behaviors within the community members? If so, please explain.
5. Is the relationship between the organization and volunteers changed due to COVID-19? If so, in what way?
6. Do you have any challenges in addressing community needs? If so, please elaborate.
7. Following the crisis, are any new practices being applied to provide for the needs of community members?
8. Following the crisis, what do you perceive as your most significant leadership challenges?
9. Do you think the interdependency between the organization and the community has changed due to the pandemic?
10. Following the crisis mode, do you feel your leadership has changed? If so, in what way?
11. Considering the impact of the pandemic on people, communities and organizations, do you anticipate any further changes to your organization?
12. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX B

Text for Recruitment Purposes



PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY Graduate School of Education and Psychology

My name is Orit Zigman Lador, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Graduate School of Education & Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study examining the impact of COVID-19 on Jewish organizations and their respective communities, and you are invited to participate in the study. If you agree, you are invited to participate in an individual interview which is expected to take no more than 45 minutes and will be audio-recorded. Participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential during and after the study.

If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact me by email at orit.zigmanlador@pepperdine.edu.

Thank you for your participation,

Orit Zigman Lador
Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education & Psychology
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent



PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY Graduate School of Education and Psychology

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Study Title: The Impact of COVID-19 on Community Based-Organizations: A Case Study of the Jewish Nonprofits.

Principal Investigator: Orit Zigman Lador; orit.zigmanlador@pepperdine.edu

Information Sheet Introduction

To complete a Ph.D. in Global Leadership and Change at Pepperdine University, I am conducting research study on the long-term impact of COVID-19 on Jewish nonprofits and their respective communities. I would like to invite you to be part of this research.

If you agree to participate in this research, here is some key information:

- Your participation is voluntary
- There are minimal risks associated with this study
- No compensation will be provided to the participants
- You will be provided with a copy of the consent form
- You will be interviewed for 30-45 minutes by the researcher
- Your interview will be recorded for transcription purposes only

Invitation:

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you work in a leadership position in a Jewish nonprofit in North America. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding whether to participate. You must be 21 years of age or older to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

Reason for Research:

The shift of the COVID-19 crisis toward endemic has led the world to open again without restriction, enabling people to socialize and return to their everyday life. Nevertheless, since the

last two years of living in a crisis mode had dramatic implications on people's emotional states and social behavior, ranging from depression and isolation to prosocial behavior, it is unclear if and how these changes would modify community involvement. Therefore, by investigating community-based organizations, specifically Jewish nonprofits, this study can explore the longstanding impact of COVID-19 on community engagement and shed light on changes in social behavior.

Study Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an approximately 30-45 min interview via Zoom and will be audio recorded.

Interview Protocol

Ice breaker: Tell us a little about your work and career in this area.

Questions:

1. How would you describe the impact of COVID-19 on your organization?
2. What would you consider the most significant changes to the organization following the crisis?
3. Following the crisis, what changes do you see in the organization community (new needs/wants)
4. Do you recognize any new characteristics/behaviors within the community members? If so, please explain.
5. Is the relationship between the organization and volunteers changed due to COVID-19? If so, in what way?
6. Do you have any challenges in addressing community needs? If so, please elaborate.
7. Following the crisis, are any new practices being applied to provide for the needs of community members?
8. Following the crisis, what do you perceive as your most significant leadership challenges?
9. Do you think the interdependency between the organization and the community has changed due to the pandemic?
10. Following the crisis mode, do you feel your leadership has changed? If so, in what way?
11. Considering the impact of the pandemic on people, communities and organizations, do you anticipate any further changes to your organization?
12. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

Data Sample Usage

Your answers will be collected and analyzed. Your data will be kept confidential. A numeric code and/or a pseudonym will be assigned to each participant to protect their identity. The data will be collected to generate the findings of the study. No identifiable information will be disclosed (e.g., name).

Potential Risks and Discomforts

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include no more than minimum risks involved in day-to-day activities. Any risks involved in participation are those associated with general interviews, including fatigue or boredom.

Potential Benefits to Participants and/or to society.

The research will include the following benefits:

1. Your participation may provide a better awareness of the long-term effect of COVID-19 on your organizations and community through the interview reflection questions. However, you may not get any benefit from being in this research study.
2. Findings of the interview will shed light and inform scholars and practitioners on the long-term impact of COVID-19 on community-based organizations, and community involvement.

Research Study Cost to You

There is no cost to you to be in this study.

Compensation

You will receive no compensation for participating in this study.

Problems During the Research Study

Your welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact the research listed at the beginning of this consent form.

Protection of Personal Information

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. Your identity and the name of your organization will be kept confidential at all times and in all circumstances. The data will be stored electronically on a password-protected computer in my office and will only be seen by the research team during the study. The data will be stored for three years after the study is complete, after which it will be permanently destroyed.

The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Pepperdine University, and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but the data will be reported as a group or summarized data, and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

Rights as a Research Subject

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s) listed at the beginning of this form.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

Phone: 1(310)568-2305

Email: gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation is voluntary. You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study (“withdraw”) at any time before, during, or after the research begins

for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with Pepperdine University. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

Documentation of informed consent

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (a) you have read and understood this consent form, (b) you have had the consent form explained to you, (c) you have had your questions answered and (d) you have decided to be in the research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Signature of Interview Participant

I have read the information provided above. I have been given a chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this interview.


Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX D

CITI Program Certificate

  Completion Date 24-Jan-2020
Expiration Date 22-Jan-2025
Record ID 34959803

This is to certify that:

Orit Zigman Lador


Has completed the following CITI Program course:

GSEP Education Division
(Curriculum Group)
GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE)
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Pepperdine University

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.


Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w93df92d8-804c-4ae8-ac4e-36708569eb8e-34959803

APPENDIX E

IRB Approval

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: November 21, 2022

Protocol Investigator Name: Orit Zigman Lador

Protocol #: 22-10-1983

Project Title: The Impact of COVID-19 on Community Based-Organizations: A Case Study of the Jewish Nonprofits

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Orit Zigman Lador:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

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