

**Growth and Resilience of
Pioneering Nonprofit Human Service Organizations:
A Cross-Case Analysis of Organizational Histories**

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge of organizational history is important for recognizing patterns in effective management and understanding how organizations respond to internal and external challenges. This cross-case analysis of twelve histories of pioneering nonprofit human service organizations contributes an important longitudinal perspective on organizational history, complementing the cross-sectional case studies that dominate the existing research on nonprofit organizations. The literature on organizational growth, including lifecycle models and growth management, is reviewed, along with the literature on organizational resilience. Based on analysis of the twelve organizational histories, a conceptual model is presented that synthesizes key factors in the areas of leadership, internal operations, and external relations that influence organizational growth and resilience to enable nonprofit organizations to survive and thrive over time. Both cross-sectional and longitudinal examples from the organizational histories illustrate the conceptual map. The paper concludes with a discussion of directions for future research on nonprofit organizational history.

Keywords: nonprofit, organizational history, growth, resilience, human services