How can School Leaders Leverage Perceived and Attractive Quality to Increase Customer Value to Ensure Organizational Sustainability?

A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

The long-term sustainability of private, independent school education in the United States may be on the decline as the industry faces new challenges and opportunities. The purpose of this systematic literature review is to understand how school leaders may leverage the concepts of perceived and attractive quality to create more customer value and contribute to the sustainability of private education in the United States. A systematic literature review was conducted of papers published in academic journals between January 2007 and April 2021. A deductive content analysis was chosen using total quality management values, tools, and techniques as an analytical framework. The review of literature revealed how current research on these subjects has found positive results in the business and healthcare industries. Applied in the correct manner and context, the theories of both perceived service quality and attractive quality could be found to have positive influences in education. It was also found that quality concepts in conjunction with a school culture that assures customer value creation, is of great importance to the short term and long-term sustainability of private education.

Keywords: Sustainability, Leadership, Perceived Quality, Attractive Quality, Customer Value

1. Introduction

Research suggests that the long-term sustainability of the private school education industry in the United States is on the decline (NAIS, 2020). One of the reasons for this decline is that the quality of private education is, in many instances, not meeting the high cost of the tuition associated with it (NAIS, 2020). At the time of writing, the author of this manuscript is actively on an independent school leadership team in Tampa, Florida. In an ever-increasingly competitive market to recruit and retain private school families, school leaders must find novel, creative, and innovative methods of attaining sustainable and prosperous high-quality, independent schools. One possible catalyst for change may be found within the United Nations (UN) sustainable development goals (UN, 2020).

UN sustainable development goal number four seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UN, 2020). Also connected is the ninth goal: "To build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation." Linking parts of these two essential goals and using them as a guide, this body of research seeks to better understand how independent school leaders can ensure high-quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities while fostering innovation within schools in an ever increasingly complex world. One such way to frame and understand these questions is by looking to the literature on quality management to create an analytical framework.

Quality management may provide valuable insights into how schools can develop sustainable, thriving educational organizations that contribute to the public good (Minh Hue et al., 2018). Service quality, as a concept and approach, has particular application in the private school sector. Parasuraman et al. (1985) defined service quality as the degree of discrepancy between customers' normative expectations for the service and their perceptions of the service performance. For example, perceived service quality in education is a measure of how the perceived education of a child meets or surpasses the parent's (the customer's) expectations. From the parent's perspective, the perceived value of independent school education must be of equal or greater than the high price tag associated with it when compared to a child's free public-school alternative. The purpose of this paper is to present findings from a systematic literature that was conducted to understand how the concepts of perceived service quality and attractive quality may contribute to knowledge about how school leaders can develop more customer value, thereby helping schools become more sustainable.

Education in the United States

There exists a universal belief that "all children deserve an inclusive and equitable quality education" (UN, 2020). The US constitution makes no mention of education. However, each state provides that guarantee in some form within its own state constitution. In Florida, for example, the constitution states:

> "It is a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high-quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high-quality education and for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of institutions of higher learning and other public education programs that the needs of the people may require." (Constitution of the State of Florida, 1968).

Defining "high-quality education" is a complex task that requires the analysis of multiple viewpoints within the literature. Assessment data shows that only 35 percent of the 176,746 students in Florida who took the SAT in 2018 hit the benchmark scores that indicate they are likely to succeed in college (Ritchie, 2018).

With this low percentage, one might reasonably assume this assessment data does not equate to 'high-quality education' by public schools. We can ask the question using Parasuraman's (1985) definition of quality; with only 35% of students statewide hitting a benchmark score, indicate the state is meeting and/or exceeding customers' expectations? This leads us to a series of new questions. Who exactly are these customers in a school setting? How exactly do these state legislators define "high-quality education"? Similarly, how do we define quality in education? These questions and more will be discussed in this systematic literature review.

It should be noted here that the terms 'private school' and 'independent school' are used interchangeably in this manuscript. Independent schools are independent in philosophy, driven by a unique mission, governed by an independent board of trustees, and primarily supported through tuition payments and charitable contributions. They are accountable to their communities and are accredited by state-approved accrediting bodies (NAIS, 2021).

Quality in United States Education

According to Deming (1986), Total Quality Management (TQM) is a management philosophy that requires a radical cultural change from traditional management to a continuous improvement management style in an organization. A quality culture is a system of shared values, beliefs, and norms that focuses on delighting customers and continuously improving the quality of products and services. Quality culture can foster the TQM principles like continuous improvement, open communication, fact-based problem solving, and decision making (Sohel-Uz-Zaman & Anjalin, 2016).

Over the last 30 years in the United States, there have been attempts to define quality in education. For example, in 1991, the Florida State Legislature created "Blueprint 2000," a plan for school improvement and accountability. A report stated that stakeholders believed that Blueprint 2000 had increased parent involvement in the school improvement process but that it had not significantly affected either the allocation of financial resources or school-based decision-making. School employees continued to dominate the membership of school advisory councils, and one-third of the councils did not reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of their schools (Florida State Legislature, 1996).

In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act was signed into law to close student achievement gaps by providing all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). This meant requiring universal standards of achievement for all students before permitting them to move to the next level. Due to some key criticisms, such as relying too heavily on standardized testing and giving schools harsh penalties, No Child Left Behind was replaced in 2015 by The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This new educational initiative required that all students in America be taught to high academic standards to prepare them to succeed in college and careers. This act also

included a stipulation for access to high-quality preschools. Although quality within schools has taken many different forms, the basic principles of continuous improvement, customer focus, processes, and employee commitment are prevalent throughout.

Snyder (2015) suggests that with a focus on quality management systems and engaged leadership grounded in a value system, schools can become places of healthy learning and work that support student development. Furthermore, developing work cultures that engaged members of the school and community are critical for building schools as learning organizations (Snyder, 2015). In 1993, the Educational Quality Benchmark System (EQBS) was designed (Snyder et al., 2000). The system was designed to assist schools and districts in their in their work to integrate quality management in their educational systems, which was in response to national and state policy reform initiatives, namely, Blueprint 2000 (Snyder et al., 2000). These researchers took the principles of quality management and adapted them for schools, ultimately resulting in the creation of this systematic framework (EQBS) for both defining and measuring quality in education.

Sustainability in Education

"Sustainability is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship, and strengthen governance" (Ki-moon, 2013). Education plays a crucial role in realizing this statement by the former secretary-general of the United Nations. Several important frameworks exist today to help guide educators and educational institutions towards a sustainable future for all. One such framework is the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The PISA 2018 Global Competence assessment measures students' capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to engage in open, appropriate, and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development (PISA, 2018). The assessment has been widely praised by educational leaders worldwide due to the importance of instilling global competencies in our students.

> Global competence is a multi-dimensional construct that requires a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values successfully applied to global issues or intercultural situations. Global issues refer to those that affect all people and have profound implications for current and future generations. Intercultural situations refer to face-to-face, virtual, or mediated encounters with people who are perceived to be from a different cultural background. Developing global competence is a life-long process, but it is one that education can shape (PISA, 2018).

In 2006 the not-for-profit International School Connection's (ISC) global community of educators approved its validated set of 10 Global Learning Benchmarks. It recommended that these be a guide for developing students as capable global citizens while integrating global realities into their classrooms and schools

(Sullivan, 2019). The overarching purpose of schooling is to prepare every student, every day and year, in the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, values, and experiences that are required to live and work in a simultaneous local/global world (Snyder, 2019). Global competence is a vital part of all education in this day and age. The strong connection to sustainability strengthens the idea that educators need to rethink and redesign schooling for this global era.

Challenges and Opportunities for Private School Education in the United States

In order to create high-quality education, we must first create high-quality schools, and in the United States, 25% of pre-kindergarten through twelfth-grade schools are private, equating to 10% of all school-age children (Broughman, 2017). The growing availability of choice in K–12 schooling has increasingly turned parents into consumers, with the ability to influence the fate of different school sectors through their decisions (Barrows et al., 2019). One of these sectors is called charter schools. Charter schools are independently operated public schools with the freedom to design classrooms that meet their students' needs. All charter schools operate under a contract with a charter school authorizer (usually a nonprofit organization, government agency, or university) that holds them accountable to the high standards outlined in their "charter" (Reimagining Education: One school, one classroom, one student at a time, 2021). In their research, Barrows et al. (2019) found that charter schools have closed a substantial portion of the satisfaction gap between the district and private sectors, which may, in turn, erode the size of the private sector. This poses a significant risk to the sustainability of private education in the United States.

Innovations and growth in the public school sector have narrowed the gap between public vs. private education. There exist many reasons for this shift, including the Obama Administration creating a coordinated set of initiatives that unleashed a wave of innovation and reform at the state and district levels while continuing to ensure quality services for the most vulnerable students (Progress in Our Schools, 2021). Florida, in particular, has also come to embrace the idea of "school choice," referring to a state program that allows families to use public resources to receive education outside of their neighborhood school. This removes tax dollars from traditional public schools but opens up access to otherwise unaffordable private education. For example, the Step Up for Students Family Empowerment Scholarship may be used towards private school tuition and fees up to $7000 per student per year. This is significant when considering that the average tuition price tag among private schools in Florida is $7,670 (Educationdata.org, 2021).

Private schools have historically perpetuated inequality. Nevertheless, with a change in mindset, they can advance education without having to leave people behind (Schneider, 2018). For example, Schneider argues, there are three specific targets that private school leaders need to set their sights on to serve what he describes as the public good.

Firstly, private schools must focus on educational practices rather than status-based outcomes. Schools must ask: are we doing this because it will improve the learning experience, or are we doing it in pursuit of status? Next, private schools must prioritize diversity, not as charitable work but as a core element of their missions. Students in diverse schools will learn more socially, gain new perspectives on the world, get along better with others, and develop a greater ability to empathize. Finally, private schools must prioritize innovation and communication with the broader world of education. Innovative schools that actually share their practices with other schools will benefit the public good (Schneider, 2018).

With the proper resource allocation and leadership focus, these shifting mindsets could differentiate private education significantly from competing public and charter school choice options.

The independence of private schools is spurring innovation that can benefit education for the entire US, not just a tiny swath of privileged students (Tavangar, 2014). Given this phenomenon, innovative independent schools may position themselves as leaders in all areas of education and ultimately cement their place as educational role models from which all other schools can learn. However, it should be noted that filling a private school with costly tuition-paying students can be a difficult task.

As mentioned previously, the author of this manuscript was a practicing independent school administrator at the time of writing. There exists little current research on the specific day-to-day cultural and business aspects of independent schooling and the complex nature of how they are operated. Much of the knowledge expressed in these following few paragraphs is built on conversations with other school administrators and context from working closely with other leaders in the independent school ecosystem in Florida.

There exists a common catchphrase used within and among independent schools in the United States. Recruitment and retention refer to the process of schools finding and admitting mission-appropriate students and families then doing everything possible to retain that family for as many years as possible. Recruitment and retention in the private school sector are tied directly to the organization's long-term sustainability. High enrollment equates to more tuition money, which leads to better facilities and higher teacher salaries which, in turn, attracts better teachers. Independent schools have long fought their steadily growing attrition rates for various reasons, such as geographic relocation, financial reasons, and dissatisfaction with the school's program (NAIS, 2020). In schools with under 500 students, it is crucial for a school to retain as many families as possible in order to continue operations and promote organizational sustainability.

It is the responsibility of an excellent independent school leader to ensure high recruitment and retention numbers and fulfill the role of guaranteeing the kind of education promised in the admissions process, which is, in reality, what is happening in classrooms. In other words, the quality of education that a school says it is providing is being provided. The best-case scenario for a school is that the quality of teaching and

learning in the classrooms meets or exceeds the marketing of the educational experience, and all parents are fully aware and delighted. Any good school leader will state that this is rarely the case. The next possible scenario is that teaching and learning meets or exceeds the school's marketing. However, parents are less aware, which, in turn, can cause the decreased perceived quality of the product they are buying as a result of being less aware of what is happening in their child's classrooms or daily school experience. In this case, a school leader must improve the communication and perspective pipeline between home and school to improve perceived quality. The worst-case scenario for a school is to have both challenges; the teaching and learning at the school do not live up to what has been marketed; thus, a decrease in the perceived quality of the education being provided occurs. This is a challenging position to be located as a school leader, but nonetheless, one which happens to exist, within pockets, of many independent schools.

2.   Methods

Literature reviews are research inquiries, and all research inquiries should be guided by research questions. Research questions, therefore, drive the entire literature review process (Kitchenham, 2007). The selection of studies to be included in the review, methodology for data extraction and synthesis, and reporting, should all be geared toward answering the research questions (Xiao & Watson, 2019). Stand-alone literature reviews can serve as valuable overviews of a topic for planning practitioners looking for evidence to guide their decisions, and therefore their quality can have very real-world implications (Templier & Paré, 2015).

This systematic review focused on the question of how can school leaders embrace perceived and attractive quality to create value for customers? Despite differences in procedures across various types of literature reviews, all the reviews can be conducted following eight common steps: (1) formulating the research problem; (2) developing and validating the review protocol; (3) searching the literature; (4) screening for inclusion; (5) assessing quality; (6) extracting data; (7) analyzing and synthesizing data; and (8) reporting the findings (Figure 1) (Xiao & Watson, 2019).
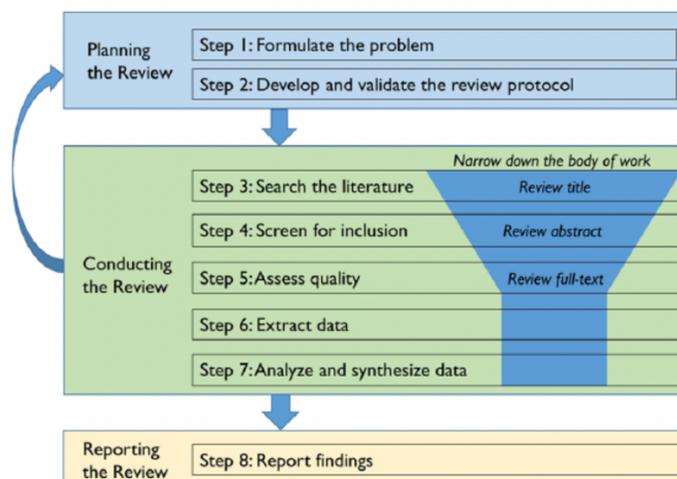
Figure 1. *Steps to conducting a systematic literature review (Xiao & Watson, 2019)*

As stated, this literature review aims to systematically review and analyze the current research on how leaders leverage perceived and attractive quality to increase customer value. An extensive database search took place using specific keywords to find appropriate literature within this research area. As part of the review protocol, a set of eligibility criteria was created to whittle down the vast amount of literature. The following inclusion criteria were present in the search:

1. The publication was an academic and peer-reviewed study,
2. Published between January 2013 and April 2021,
3. Contained full text,
4. Written in English,
5. Focused on perceived quality or attractive quality, or both
6. Focused on customer value

The following exclusion criteria were present in the search:

1. Not a literature review.

The following electronic databases were used to search for literature: Science Direct, Emerald, Eric via EBSCO, and JSTOR. Figure 2 displays the PRISMA model to visually display the methodology of how records were identified, screened, and included.
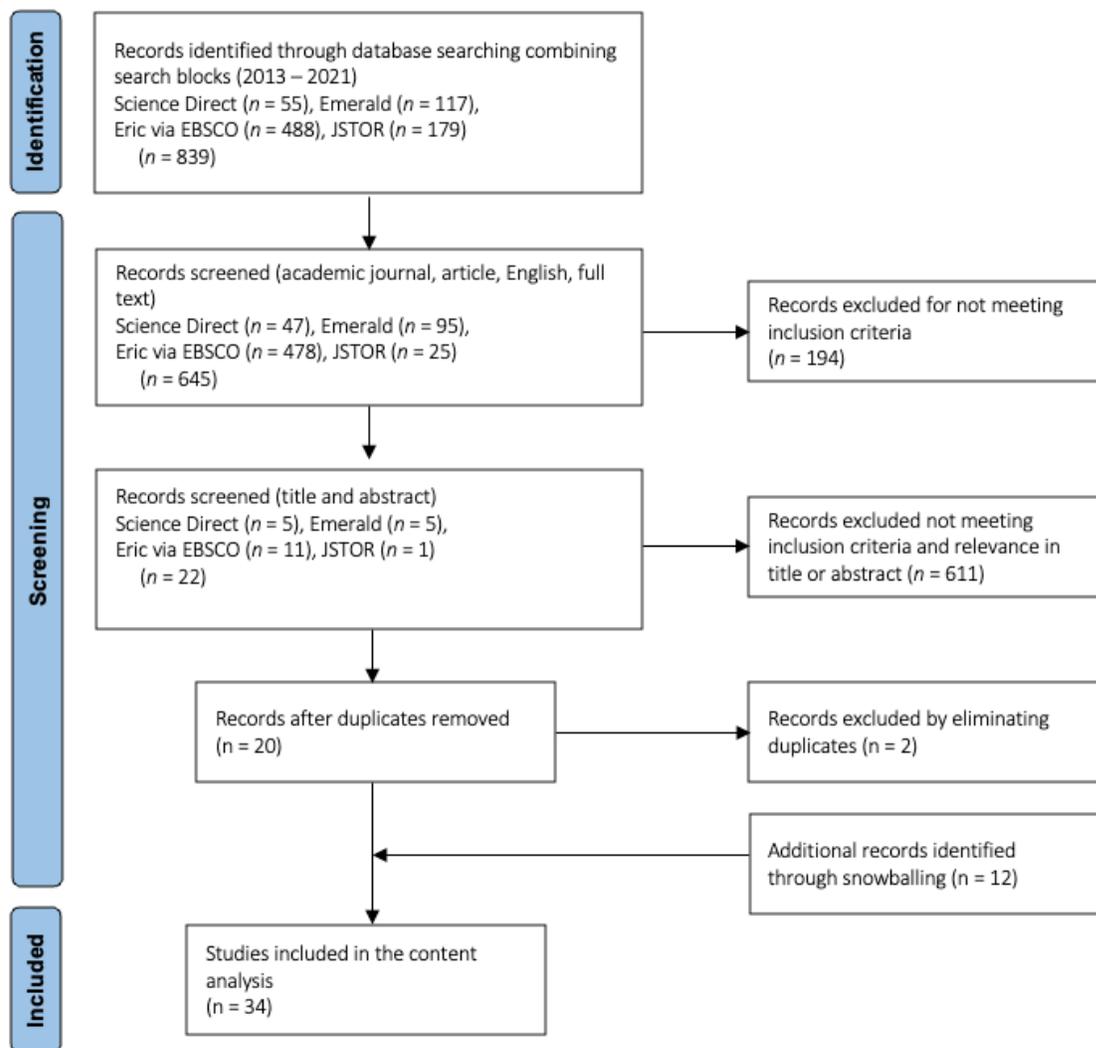
Figure 2. *PRISMA search process for the articles included in the review.*

The systematic literature review is often contrasted with traditional literature reviews because systematic reviews are objective, replicable, systematic, comprehensive, and the process is reported in the same manner as for reporting empirical research (Weed, 2005). Systematic reviews entail a series of techniques for minimizing bias and error, and as such systematic review and meta-analysis are widely regarded as providing 'high-quality' evidence (Tranfield et al., 2003). This systematic literature review specifically explored research results that have explored how perceived quality and attractive quality can increase customer value. To the greatest extent possible, the search within relevant databases identified only the literature on perceived and attractive quality connected to the research question; how can school leaders leverage perceived and attractive quality to increase customer value to ensure organizational sustainability?

Within the search, publications were identified using the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined within this methodology. Initially, 839 articles were retrieved, which was reduced to 645 after exclusion based on inclusion criteria. Next, publications were screened on their title and abstract based on inclusion criteria and relevance to this study. This further reduced the total number of articles to 22. Duplicates were removed, bringing the total to 20 articles. Additional records were identified through snowballing and advice from doctoral supervisors and other colleagues within the university department. The final sample of articles constituted 34 empirical studies.

Data Analysis

The next stage in conducting the systematic literature review is assessing quality, extracting data, then analyzing and synthesizing that data. A deductive content analysis was chosen using total quality management core values as an analytical framework. According to Deming (1986), total quality management (TQM) is a management philosophy that requires a radical cultural change from traditional management to a continuous improvement management style in an organization. According to Hellsten & Klefsjö (2000), TQM can also be defined as a management system consisting of three interdependent units: core values, techniques, and tools. TQM aims to increase external and internal customer satisfaction with a reduced amount of resources. The essential idea is that core values must be supported by techniques, such as process management, benchmarking, customer-focused planning, or improvement teams, and tools, such as control charts, the quality house, or Ishikawa diagrams, in order to be part of a culture (Hellsten & Klefsjö, 2000). This diagram can be seen in Figure 3.
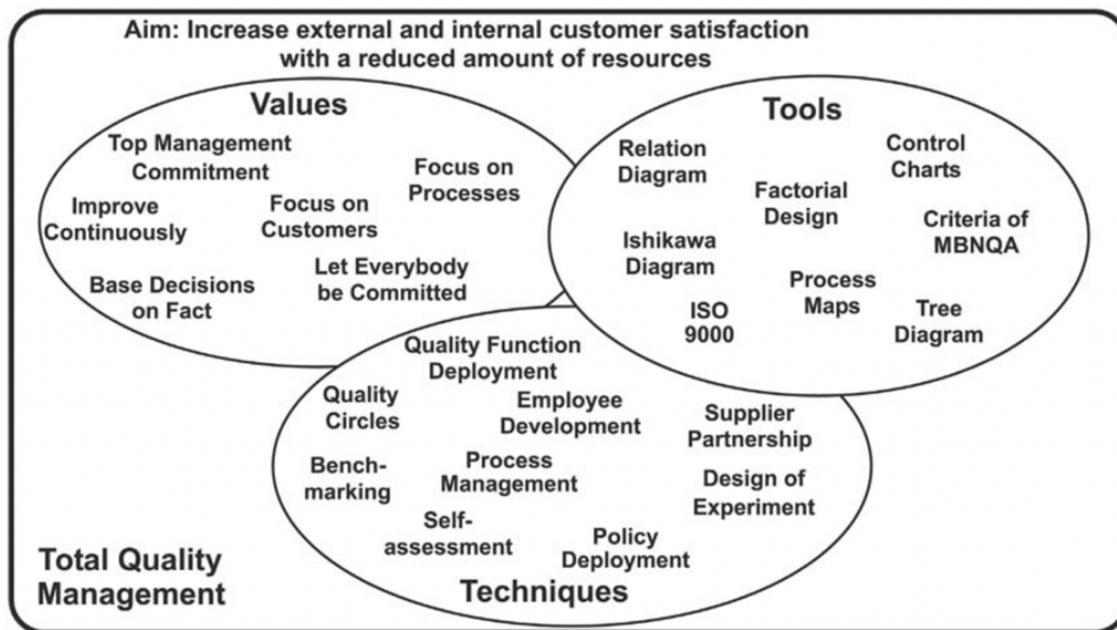
Figure 3. *Total quality management (TQM) seen as a continuously evolving management system consisting of values, techniques, and tools (Hellsten & Klefsjö, 2000).*

For this literature review, the author used a deductive content analysis approach to extract data into a categorization matrix using the three components of total quality management. The central idea here is that the basis for an organization's culture is the core values (Hellsten & Klefsjö, 2000). Within the technique unit, several activities exist that may be performed in a particular order. Total quality management should be viewed as a system. Hellsten & Klefsjo (2000) believe values are supported by techniques and tools to form a whole. "We have to start with the core values and ask: Which core values should characterize our organization?" When this is decided, techniques that are suitable for an organization need to be identified to use and support the values. From that decision, suitable tools have to be identified and used in an efficient way to support techniques (Jafari & Mostafa, 2010). The included articles were read and re-read as part of this deductive content analysis to obtain a good understanding of the literature. The data was then extracted into three different categorization matrixes.

3.   Results

The results collected from the identified PRISMA search process can be found in the following three tables. Table 1 displays a structured categorization matrix using total quality management core values, the author, year of publication, and title of each of the articles included in the systematic literature review and demonstrates where each publication connects to TQM. Table 2 demonstrates, within another categorization matrix, the specific TQM values, tools, and techniques found within the data. A literature

review should follow a clear structure that ties the studies together into key themes, characteristics, or subgroups (Rowley & Slack, 2004). These themes were determined by the research question and the specific area of focus within education. The content of each publication was analyzed and synthesized using the following themes: perceived quality, attractive quality, customer value, education, sustainability, and leadership, as can be seen in table 3.

Table 1. Structured categorization matrix using total quality management system.

Author	Year	Title	Values	Tools	Techniques
Adams et al.	2016	An Empirical Test of Oklahoma's A-F School Grades			X
Al Qubaisi et al.	2016	An Analytic Hierarchy Process for School Quality and Inspection: Model Development and Application	X	X	X
Åslund & Bäckström	2017	Management processes and management's role in customer value creation	X	X	
Baccarani & Cassia	2017	Evaluating the outcomes of service ecosystems	X		
Barrows et al.	2019	Do Charters Pose a Threat to Private Schools? Evidence from Nationally Representative Surveys of U.S. Parents	X		X
Bloemer et al.	1999	Linking perceived service quality and service loyalty: a multi-dimensional perspective			
Chen et al.	2020	Investigating pharmaceutical logistics service quality with refined Kano's model	X	X	X
Dubey et al.	2020	Entrepreneurial marketing: an analytical viewpoint on perceived quality and customer delight			
Eriksson & Ingelsson	2016	Building an organizational culture when delivering commercial experiences – the leaders' perspective	X	X	X
Frank et al.	2014	Affect versus Cognition in the Chain from Perceived Quality to Customer Loyalty: The Roles of Product Beliefs and Experience	X	X	X
Goldhaber & Walch	2014	Gains in Teacher Quality		X	
Gupta & Charu	2018	Understanding customer requirements of corrugated industry using Kano model	X		X
Gusc & Van Veen-Dirks	2017	Accounting for Sustainability: An Active Learning Assignment	X	X	X
Howat & Assaker	2013	The hierarchical effects of perceived quality on perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty		X	
Katz	2016	Growth Models and Teacher Evaluation: What Teachers Need to Know and Do	X	X	X
Kolster	2014	Academic Attractiveness of Countries; a Possible Benchmark Strategy Applied to the Netherlands			
Laplume et al.	2008	Stakeholder Theory: Reviewing a Theory That Moves Us	X		X
Lilja & Wiklund	2007	A Two-Dimensional Perspective on Attractive Quality	X	X	X
Löfgren& Witell	2008	Two Decades of Using Kano's Theory of Attractive Quality	X		X
Matzier	2000	Customer Value Management			X
Mikulić & Prebežac	2011	A critical review of techniques for classifying quality attributes in the Kano model	X	X	X
Niu	2019	Qualia: Touching the inner needs of consumers' hearts	X	X	X
Notgrass	2014	The relationship between followers' perceived quality of relationship and preferred leadership style	X		
Omar et al.	2009	Parents Perceived Service Quality, Satisfaction and Trust of a Childcare Centre: Implication on Loyalty	X	X	X
Palm	2014	Understanding Innovation as an Approach to Increasing Customer Value in the Context of the Public Sector	X	X	X
Phusavat et al.	2019	Integrating Design Thinking into Peer-Learning Community: Impacts on Professional Development and Learning	X	X	X
Pont	2014	School Leadership: From Practice to Policy			
Raelin	2018	What are you afraid of: Collective leadership and its learning implications	X	X	X
Rönnström	2015	Educating Competitive Teachers for a Competitive Nation?	X		X
Song	2013	An examination of customer satisfaction in an outsourcing relationship using Kanè s theory of attractive quality		X	X
Stylidis et al.	2017	Towards Overcoming the Boundaries between Manufacturing and Perceived Quality: An Example of Automotive Industry	X		X
Teleha et al.	2017	Library Space Redesign and Student Computing		X	X
Tetteh	2015	Improving Learning Outcome Using Six Sigma Methodology	X		
Willems et al.	2016	The impact of customer value types on customer outcomes for different retail formats		X	X

Table 2. Structured categorization matrix for total quality management values, tools, and techniques.

Author	Year	Values	Tools	Techniques
Adams et al.	2016			Benchmarking, Policy Deployment, Design of Experiment
Al Qubaisi et al.	2016	Focus on Processes	Tree Diagram, Process Maps	Benchmarking
Åslund & Bäckström	2017	Top Management Commitment, Focus on Processes	Relation Diagram, Process Maps	
Baccarani & Cassia	2017	Focus on Customers		Relation Diagram
Barrows et al.	2019	Focus on Customers		
Bloemer et al.	1999			
Chen et al.	2020	Focus on Customers, Top Management Commitment	Tree Diagram	Design of Experiment
Dubey et al.	2020			
Eriksson & Ingelsson	2016	Improve Continuously, Focus on Customers	Process Maps	Benchmarking, Policy Deployment, Design of Experiment
Frank et al.	2014	Improve Continuously, Focus on Customers		Design of Experiment
Goldhaber & Walch	2014		Relation Diagram	
Gupta & Charu	2018	Focus on Processes		Design of Experiment
Dirks	2017	Focus on Customers	Tree Diagram	Benchmarking
Howat & Assaker	2013		Relation Diagram, Process Maps	
Katz	2016	Focus on Customers, Top Management Commitment		Relation Diagram
Kolster	2014		Tree Diagram, Process Maps	
Laplume et al.	2008	Focus on Customers		Benchmarking, Policy Deployment, Design of Experiment
Lilja & Wiklund	2007	Base Decisions on Fact, Focus on Customers	Self Assessment	Relation Diagram
Löfgren & Witell	2008			Process Management
Matzler	2000	Focus on Customers, Top Management Commitment	Tree Diagram	Benchmarking
Mikulić & Prebežac	2011		Relation Diagram	Relation Diagram
Niu	2019	Focus on Customers		Design of Experiment
Notgrass	2014	Base Decisions on Fact, Focus on Customers		
Omar et al.	2009	Focus on Customers	Relation Diagram	Benchmarking, Policy Deployment, Design of Experiment
Palm	2014	Improve Continuously, Focus on Customers	Relation Diagram, Process Maps	Process Management
Phusavat et al.	2019	Focus on Customers	Relation Diagram, Process Maps	Design of Experiment
Pont	2014			Relation Diagram
Raelin	2018	Focus on Customers	Self Assessment	
Römström	2015	Focus on Customers		Process Management
Song	2013		Relation Diagram	Benchmarking, Policy Deployment, Design of Experiment
Stylidis et al.	2017	Base Decisions on Fact, Focus on Customers		Process Management
Teleha et al.	2017		Self Assessment	Benchmarking
Tetteh	2015	Focus on Customers, Top Management Commitment		
Willems et al.	2016		Tree Diagram, Process Maps	Design of Experiment

Table 3. Structured categorization matrix for perceived quality, attractive quality, customer value, education, sustainability, and leadership.

Author	Year	Perceived Quality	Attractive Quality	Customer Value	Education	Sustainability	Leadership
Adams et al.	2016				x		
Al Qubaisi et al.	2016	x	x	x	x	x	x
Åslund & Bäckström	2017			x		x	x
Baccarani & Cassia	2017		x	x			x
Barrows et al.	2019					x	x
Bloemer et al.	1999	x		x			
Chen et al.	2020	x	x	x			x
Dubey et al.	2020	x		x			
Eriksson & Ingelsson	2016	x	x	x			x
Frank et al.	2014	x		x			x
Goldhaber & Walch	2014				x		
Gupta & Charu	2018		x	x			
Dirks	2017				x	x	
Howat & Assaker	2013	x		x			
Katz	2016				x		
Kolster	2014						
Laplume et al.	2008			x			x
Lilja & Wiklund	2007		x	x			
Löfgren & Witell	2008		x	x			
Matzier	2000			x			x
Mikulić & Prebežac	2011		x				
Niu	2019	x		x			
Notgrass	2014		x				x
Omar et al.	2009	x		x	x		
Palm	2014	x		x			x
Phusavat et al.	2019				x		x
Pont	2014					x	x
Raelin	2018			x			x
Rönnström	2015				x		x
Song	2013	x	x	x			
Stylidis et al.	2017	x					
Teleha et al.	2017				x		
Tetteh	2015	x			x		
Willems et al.	2016	x		x		x	

Perceived Value & Perceived Quality

To understand the depth of perceived quality, we must first understand perceived value, as it has multiple definitions. Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived value as "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (Eriksson & Ingelsson, 2016; Zeithaml, 1988). Another definition claims perceived value is composed of all factors: qualitative and quantitative, objective and subjective, that jointly form a consumer's buying experience (Schechter, 1984; Snoj et al., 2004). Furthermore, Slater & Narver (2000) believe product value for a consumer is created when the benefits a consumer gets with a product are greater than the long-term costs a consumer is expected to have with a product. All three definitions are closely connected but add depth to the concept of perceived value. This helps us understand the concept of the perceived quality of a product or service.

The act of paying a school for education is, in itself, a complex version of a service, with the parent as the consumer. The unique challenges facing most service consumers are often explored in terms of the unique nature of services being received. However, within the service domain itself, there are a number of inherent differences between specific service types, and the consumer's experience can vary according to the extent to which they actively participate in the consumption of the service (Hirschman, 1987; Omar et al., 2009) This is further complicated by the nature in which parents of a school's students 'experience' the service they are paying for. Omar et al. (2009) make a case for the complex nature of paid private education:

> In the case of childcare, the parent is the payer of the service, but it is largely the child that uses the service. The decisions of parents regarding childcare are important, and not only does the problem of intangibility appear to increase the risk of pre-purchase evaluation but also post-purchase evaluation is difficult due to the parent being separated from the actual core service delivery or consumption experience (Omar et al. 2009).

Benefits are measured through a perceived level of quality (level of working superiority), a bundle of attributes in comparison with the consumer's expectations. This perspective went even so far, that some authors in the past somehow even equated the concepts of perceived quality with perceived value and that entailed that many practitioners failed to distinguish between the concepts of perceived quality and perceived value and often used the terms interchangeably (Caruana et al., 2000).

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI, 1999) developed a model of customer satisfaction to determine which drivers of satisfaction would have the most effect on customer loyalty. The ACSI model is a cause-and-effect model with indexes for drivers of satisfaction on the left side (customer expectations, perceived quality, and perceived value), satisfaction (ACSI) in the center, and outcomes of satisfaction on the right side (customer complaints and customer loyalty, including customer retention and price tolerance)(ACSI, 1999). Feng Cheng (2013) states that according to this model, there exists a positive association between perceived customer expectations and perceived quality, and perceived value and satisfaction. As shown in figure 4, customer satisfaction has three antecedents: Perceived quality, perceived value, and perceived expectations (Feng Cheng, 2013).
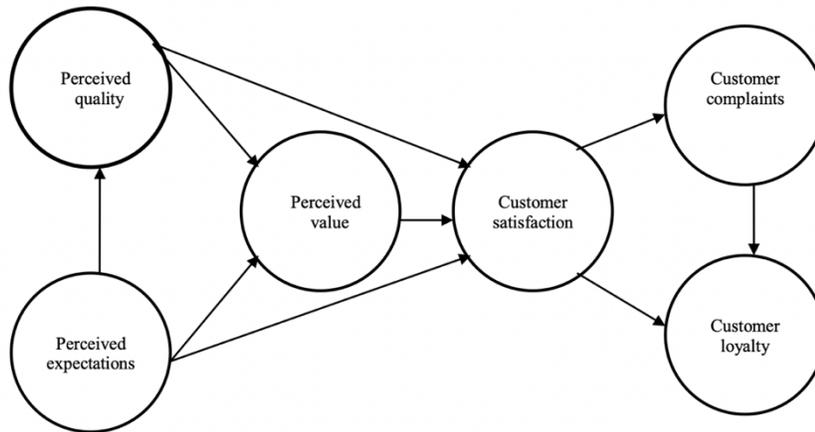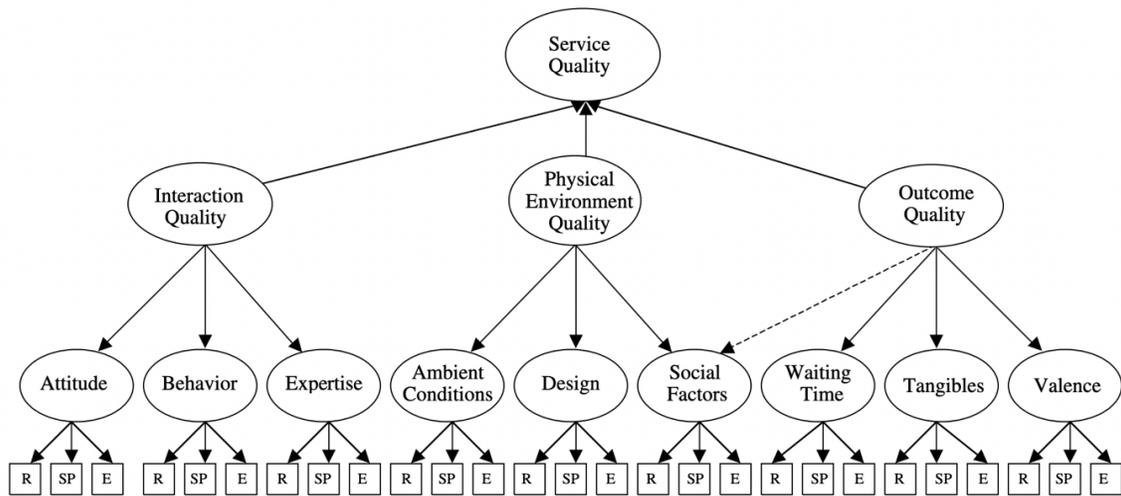
Figure 4. *The Customer Satisfaction Model (ACSI, 1999; Feng Cheng, 2013)*

Service quality is often conceptualized as the comparison of service expectation with actual performance perceptions (Bloemer et al., 1999). However, Brady & Cronin (2001) developed some new thoughts on conceptualizing perceived service quality. The hierarchical and multi-level conceptualization of the service quality model was adopted as the overall perception of service. (Figure 5)

Note: R = a reliability item, SP = a responsiveness item, E = an empathy item. The broken line indicates that the path was added as part of model respecification.

Figure 5. *The service quality research model proposed by Brady and Cronin (2001)*

There exist three dimensions of service quality: interaction, environment, and outcome. The model above has three subdimensions that customers also experience. Brady & Cronin's (2001) research shows that customers aggregate their evaluations of the subdimensions to form their perceptions of an organization's performance on each of the three primary dimensions. Those perceptions then lead to an overall service

quality perception. In other words, customers form their service quality perceptions based on an evaluation of performance at multiple levels and ultimately combine these evaluations to arrive at an overall service quality perception. Furthermore, it is understood that perceived service quality is positively related to satisfaction and trust (Omar et al., 2009).

Attractive Quality

The theory of attractive quality, often described as the surprise and delight attributes when purchasing a product or service, is a strong driver of loyalty, word-of-mouth, and saleability (Lilja & Wiklund, 2007). The theory of attractive quality (Kano et al., 1984) posits five dimensions of perceived quality; attractive quality, one-dimensional quality, must-be quality, indifferent quality, and reverse quality (Ingelsson, 2009; Kano et al., 1984). This model can be used to understand private school customer satisfaction and the overall perceived quality of a customer's purchase and can be seen in figure 6 below.
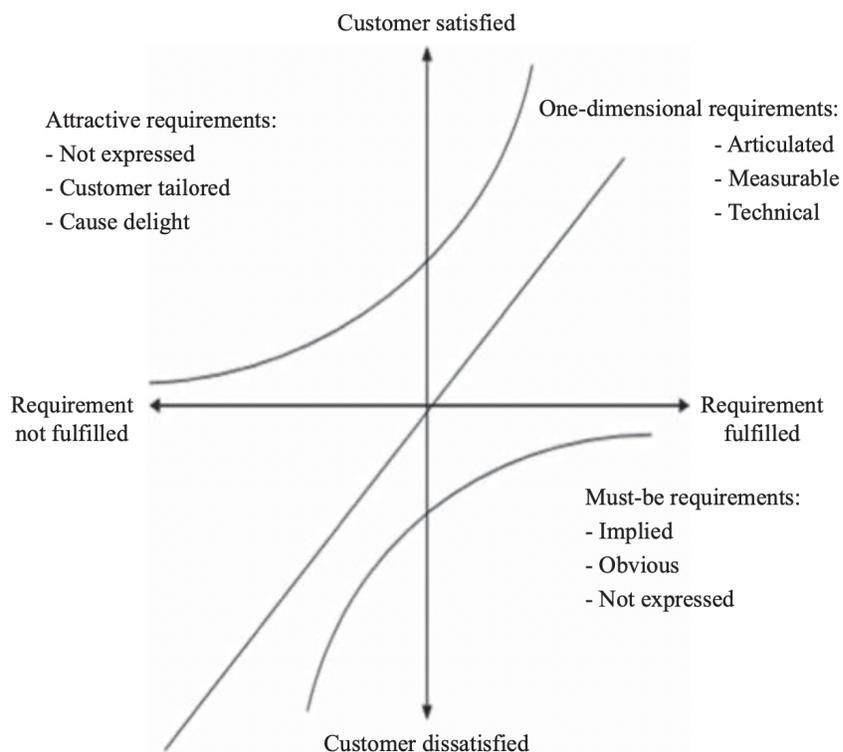

Figure 6. *Kano's model of quality attributes (Adapted from Kano's model) (Berger et al., 1993)*

Dahlgaard et al. (1998) describe attractive quality in most cases as having an enormous effect on customer satisfaction, while the costs are often minimal. The Kano model (Kano et al., 1984) is a popular approach in the areas of product and service design and improvement because it can consider many characteristics of products or services without causing a high expense in the design process (Baier & Rese, 2020). Interestingly, Yang (2005) modified Kano's original model to include quality factors that customers

perceive. Yang (2005) altered the quality elements of Kano's model into the following eight dimensions based on the degree of importance to the consumer: highly attractive and less attractive, high-value-added and low-value-added, critical and necessary, potential and care-free. In the refined model, if two product requirements cannot be met simultaneously, perhaps due to technical and financial constraints, the company will determine which is more crucial to customer satisfaction (Chen et al., 2020; Matzler & Hinterhuber, 1998). Yang's refined model of quality attributes can be seen in figure 7 below.
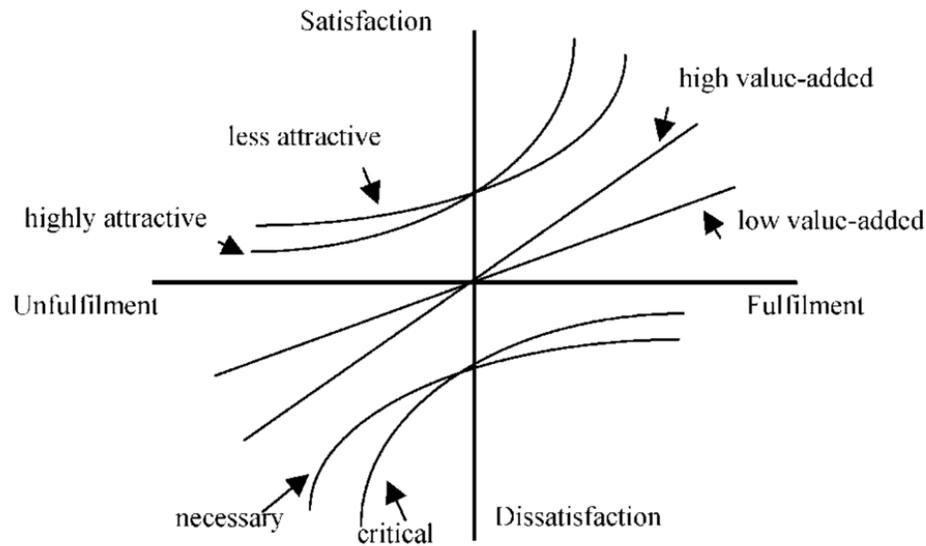

Figure 7. Refined Kano's model of quality attributes (Yang, 2005)

Customer Value

The concept of customer value is a cornerstone of quality management. The evolving roadmaps of TQM (i.e., Six Sigma and Lean Production) have reached a consensus that creating value for customers is the aim of quality management (Setijono, 2008). It is somewhat common for business owners or suppliers not to have the methods and tools required to create customer value. Although quality management has provided the fundamentals for creating value, further development is required in order to reduce or close the gap between the strategic and the tactical implications of customer value (Setijono, 2008). Measurements of customer value are not only an indication of the company's competitive advantage but also a driving factor to continuously improve product and process quality (Eriksson & Ingelsson, 2016; Setijono & Dahlgaard, 2007).

The agricultural, industrial, and post-industrial service economy consumption patterns of the late 19th and 20th centuries have given way to the experience economy. 'Qualia' addresses the inner needs of consumers' hearts by providing them with the value of happiness and being gratified, e.g., the frenzy for Apple products (Niu, 2019). Philosophers often use the term 'qualia' (singular 'quale') to refer to the introspectively

accessible, phenomenal aspects of our mental lives. In this broad sense of the term, it is difficult to deny that there are qualia (Tye, 2018). Only goods with "style" and "aesthetics" can outshine others; that is, generally so-called "taste" goods. It is also because design and aesthetics have gradually become an important element of the commodity itself, and matched with its own "quality" and the "brand" element that can enhance the added value, and then the "Qualia" is gradually focused and constructed (Bi et al., 2018).

Leadership

Leadership is defined by Yukl (2006) as the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Åslund & Bäckström, 2017). Many managers tend to see quality as a physical, objective, and utilitarian aspect of products and services (Homer, 2008). However, subjective consumer interpretations of quality include an important emotional dimension, which influences consumer behavior not only directly but also indirectly as consumers rationalize hedonic beliefs (Frank et al., 2014). The present research contributes to the literature by demonstrating that the provision of high-value-added and crucial quality attributes by leaders can give their business an edge in the market. In addition, when service providers understand their customers' attitudes toward innovative service, it can enable them to strengthen their tactics in a competitive market (Chen et al., 2020).

Discussion

Although there is plenty of research available on perceived and attractive quality, only seldomly is it connected explicitly and applied directly to education and the complex nature of schools. When a prospective family receives a high-quality admissions tour by a qualified admissions director, their perceived quality and attractive quality related to the experience should hopefully be at an all-time high. However, the school must deliver on these promises and experiences year over year to ensure a particular family's re-enrollment. The literature identified in this systematic review points to many essential capacities in which quality management concepts can be applied to improve customer value and increase sustainability.

The Kano model (1984) can be used to understand private school customer satisfaction and the overall perceived quality of the customer's experience. Threshold attributes (basics) are the basic features that customers expect a product or service to have. For example, parents expect their children to be safe at school and receive good math and language arts instruction. Performance attributes (satisfiers) are not absolutely necessary, but they increase a customer's enjoyment of the product or service. For example, as a parent, your child may love going to school and jumps out of bed and into the car in the morning, excited to see what the day brings. Excitement attributes (delighters) are the surprise elements that can boost a

product's competitive edge. They are the features that customers do not even know they want but are delighted with when they find them. For example, a child will miss two days of school because of a family emergency. The doorbell rings, and there stands the child's teacher with a smile on her face. The teacher hand delivers all the materials and work the child will need for these two days. This is a clearly an surprise element that delights the customer (parent) and adds to overall customer value and loyalty.

According to the research, attractive quality equates to higher customer retention and loyalty. If attractive quality becomes central to a school's organizational culture, it could also improve recruitment and retention of mission appropriate families and highly qualified faculty and staff. All of this contributes to the organizational sustainability of a school and the long-term sustainability of the private school industry in general.

4. Conclusions

This systematic literature review has given way to real-world implications connected directly to the original research question: How can school leaders leverage the concepts of perceived and attractive quality to create more customer value and contribute to the sustainability of private education in the United States? TQM offers insight into how independent schools can increase external and internal customer satisfaction with fewer resources. Creating a school culture that assures customer value creation is of great importance to the long-term sustainability of private education. Furthermore, the concept of perceived quality is vital for all faculty and staff to know and understand. With a firm grasp of this concept, faculty and staff will have new perspectives on how they impact the larger operation of a school. The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals also present an exciting opportunity for schools to impact the world in which they exist positively. Linking parts of the two UN goals identified in this paper, it may be possible for school leaders to better understand how they can both ensure high-quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities while also fostering innovation within their schools to adapt to this ever-increasingly complex world. Additionally, research points to the concept of global competence as a critical indicator of sustainability. This multi-dimensional construct requires students and educators to combine knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to understand and positively contribute to global issues and intercultural situations.

Independent schools have a pivotal role to play in advancing education for the public good. Educational innovations, prioritizing diversity as a core element of their missions, and the open sharing of these modernizations can benefit education for the entire United States. School leaders must find novel, creative, and innovative methods of attaining sustainable and successful high-quality independent schools to advance the future of education as a whole. The review of literature revealed how current research on these subjects has found positive results in the business and healthcare industries. Applied in the correct manner and

context, the theories of both perceived service quality and attractive quality could be found to have positive influences in education. It was also found that quality concepts in conjunction with a school culture that assures customer value creation, is of great importance to the short term and long-term sustainability of private education.

School culture and value co-creation need to be further researched within the unique independent school business model. Although customer value is a cornerstone of quality management, and there have been attempts to weave quality management tools, techniques, and values into education over the last thirty years, there exists a clear opportunity for TQM and education to reengage with one another. Education has evolved, as has the concept of quality, and future research into how one can inform the other is needed to ensure the sustainability of quality education, both public and private, for years to come.

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