2021

Continuous Improvement Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations

Juan Alberto Delduarte
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Juan Delduarte

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Janice Garfield, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Rocky Dwyer, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Denise Land, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

Continuous Improvement Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations

by

Juan Delduarte

MS, University of Maryland, 2016

BS, University of Maryland, 2012

Consulting Capstone Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

May 2021

Abstract

Many leaders of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) face challenges implementing a strategic plan to improve organizational performance and enhance the sustainability of their businesses. Grounded in Deming's total quality management theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the use of quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. The participants were three senior leaders from an NPO in the midwestern region of the United States. Data were collected from semistructured interviews, internal organizational documents, and public sources. The 5-step thematic analysis revealed the use of quality management standards in strategic planning, employee empowerment, and customer satisfaction as key themes that support NPO leaders' efforts to improve organizational performance. Key recommendations for business and NPO leaders include applying the principles of total quality management to empower the organization to improve performance, reach its strategic objectives, and become more competitive. Improving performance could result in positive social change by enhancing the organizational capabilities and capacities to continue to serve members of the community.

Continuous Improvement Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations

by

Juan A. Delduarte

MS, University of Maryland, 2016

BS, University of Maryland, 2012

Consulting Capstone Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

May 2021

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family for their sacrifice, love, patience, and support throughout my dissertation journey. To my mother, Ana Denis, and my aunt, Nidia Isabel Denis, who instilled in me the values and the self-belief that excellence is attainable through perseverance and hard work. To my son and daughter, Juan and Isabel, who provided a source of inspiration, encouragement, and love during my doctoral journey and throughout my life. To my love, Olga Irene, who served as my rock, my greatest supporter and champion, most constructive critic, and my best friend who loves me always—thank you!

Acknowledgments

I express my humble gratitude to God for his love, grace, mercy, and daily blessings, which became the source of strength and determination that allowed me to complete this dissertation. I am also grateful for this opportunity, which I recognize as a gift from my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. My expression of gratitude extends to my advisor and dissertation committee chair, Dr. Janice Garfield, for her guidance and encouragement throughout this dissertation process; Dr. Rocky Dwyer, for serving on my dissertation committee; and Dr. Denise Land for her support and mentorship as the university research reviewer for my dissertation. I thank my friends, fellow scholars, and professional colleagues for their encouragement, insights, and help throughout my doctoral study journey. Finally, I thank the leaders of my client organization for their professionalism and for committing to participate in the study.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In this study, I explored the strategies that senior leaders of a nonprofit organization (NPO) have used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. I used the 2019-2020 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework to assess the client NPO. As a requirement of Walden University's consulting capstone, I served in the capacity of both researcher and scholar-consultant.

Background of the Problem

NPOs employ over 10% of the U.S. workforce and contribute more than $11 billion (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2018) to the advancement of the U.S. economy. However, social and political change threatens nonprofits' ability to provide relief for communities in need (Laforest & Smith, 2017). Moreover, the ability to generate income remains an issue that affects the survivability of nonprofits and minimizes opportunities to assist citizens with services and goods (Hu & Kapucu, 2017). Andersson (2018) recognized that many nonprofits fail to maintain adequate funding streams and struggle to attract new donors.

Strategic management is another area of concern limiting nonprofits' abilities to attain organizational objectives (English, 2019). Commonly, NPOs lack the resources, personnel, and insight to adopt organizational changes in response to evolving environmental conditions (Miller, 2018). A study on the strategic management of NPOs is relevant because the survivability of these organizations has a direct effect on the U.S. economy and society.

Problem Statement

In the United States, leaders of NPOs employ 12.3 million people, provide over $826 million in salaries and benefits, and add $1 trillion to the national economy (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). However, many leaders of NPOs fail to develop strategic plans to address challenges associated with organizational growth, leadership engagement, limited financial management, and organizational responsiveness (Strang, 2018). The general business problem is that some leaders of NPOs fail to recognize the value of strategic planning to help ensure the effectiveness of organizational efforts to achieve sustainability. The specific business problem is that some leaders of NPOs lack strategies to integrate quality management standards into strategic planning to improve organizational performance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that leaders of NPOs have used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. The target population for this study consisted of three leaders of a single NPO located in the midwestern region of the United States. This population was appropriate for the study because the leaders selected were responsible for and successful in providing leadership, developing strategic direction, and managing operations for the organization. The implications for social change are that the findings from this study could help nonprofit leaders develop sustainability and provide employment and services for the benefit of communities.

Nature of the Study

Researchers choose from among qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods to explore and examine the topics of their studies (Yin, 2018). Researchers employ the qualitative methodology to gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations, develop generalizations about the researched phenomena, uncover trends in thought and opinion, and obtain rich descriptions of complex phenomena (Gioia, 2021; Park & Park, 2016). I chose the qualitative method for this study because my purpose was to explore a research phenomenon related to leaders' successful use of quality management standards in strategic planning. Researchers use the quantitative research method to examine the characteristics of variables or the relationships among variables to test hypotheses about a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2015). In this study, I did not examine relationships among variables; therefore, I did not use the quantitative research method. Researchers use the mixed method to collect and analyze data, integrate the findings, and draw inferences and conclusions combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study to answer the research questions (Yin, 2018). Türkoğlu (2019) added that the mixed research methodology includes the collection of statistical and numerical data. I did not select the mixed method because the focus of my research was not to examine statistical or numerical data. Researchers employ the qualitative research methodology to explain, understand underlying reasons, and provide a detailed description of the phenomenon studied (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). Therefore, the qualitative method was appropriate for my study.

Case study, phenomenology, and ethnography are among the qualitative research designs that researchers use to study events, gain insight, understand the essence of experiences, and describe and explore phenomena (Yin, 2018). Researchers use the case study research design to investigate and analyze real-life cases (Hyett et al., 2014). Researchers use a case study to gain in-depth insight into a phenomenon within its context and control the scope of the research (Saunders et al., 2015). I used the case study design to explore a phenomenon related to the strategies and processes that leaders employ to embed quality management standards into strategic planning to help improve organizational performance. Researchers use the phenomenology research design to describe and understand the personal meanings of social and lived experiences from the perspectives of the people involved (Groenewald, 2004). I did not seek to describe individuals' meanings and perspectives; therefore, phenomenology was not an appropriate research design for this study. Researchers employ the ethnographic design to study the beliefs, social interactions, and behaviors of cultures or social groups (vom Lehn, 2019). I did not choose an ethnographic design because I did not seek to understand the culture of a social group. Researchers use the single case study design to complete and develop an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon and the multiple-case study design to study multiple cases for identifying and understanding differences and similarities between the cases (Yin, 2018). I collected and analyzed data from a single organization to help answer the research questions; therefore, the single case study design was appropriate for this qualitative study.

Research Question

The primary research question for this study was: What strategies do leaders of NPOs use to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance?

Interview Questions

1. How are quality management standards integrated into your organization's strategic planning process?

2. What are the responsibilities of board members, leaders, and managers in assuring quality management practices are integrated with your organization's strategic planning process?

3. How do you facilitate the implementation of quality management standards and practices in strategies to achieve short- and longer-term objectives identified in the strategic planning process?

4. What strategies for strategic planning have proven successful for the implementation of quality management standards?

5. How do you prepare and foster conditions for present and future evaluations of the effect that implementing quality management standards has on organizational performance?

6. What are your strategic short- and long-term action plans to ensure quality management standards are met?

7. What were the key barriers to integrating and implementing quality management standards in your organization's strategic planning process?

8. How did you address the key barriers to integrate and implement quality management standards in your organization's strategic planning process?

9. Based on your experience, what insights can you provide to help me understand how to integrate quality management into the business strategy?

10. What more do you want to tell me about implementing quality management standards in your organization to improve its performance?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was Deming's (1982) total quality management (TQM) theory for continuous improvement. Deming postulated a management method used for the enhancement of quality and productivity in business organizations (Khan et al., 2020). Nonprofit leaders can use TQM principles to facilitate the adoption of a quality management program to improve organizational performance and increase sustainability, profitability, efficiency, and corporate social responsibility (Jean-Francois, 2014; Pojasek & Hollist, 2011).

Dale et al. (2016) identified Deming (1982) as a quality management expert who influenced the development of TQM in organizations throughout the world. Deming (1982) posited that removing defects improves productivity, enables continuous quality improvement, and helps leaders attain a competitive position. TQM can help nonprofit leaders implement quality management standards to control processes and increase productivity to establish and improve competitive advantages (Savov et al., 2017). As applied to this study, I will use TQM as a lens to help understand how nonprofit leaders

implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance.

Operational Definitions

Board of directors: An elected group of individuals legally accountable for the governance of an organization and responsible for ensuring that operations align with bylaws, articles of incorporation, organizational mission, and local, state, and federal laws (Maurer, 2016; Olinske & Hellman, 2017).

Hoshin Kanri: A seven-step process used in strategic planning to communicate and put into action strategic goals throughout an organization (Melander et al., 2016).

Total quality management (TQM): A management system focused on long-term success through the continuous improvement of processes, services, and products to satisfy and exceed customer expectations (Bhatia & Awasthi, 2018).

Zero defects: A business method that includes an approach to eliminate waste and reduce defects to ensure the highest quality standards in projects, manufacturing, or services (Agrawal, 2019).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions in qualitative research refer to recognized truths and beliefs about the characteristics of a study that have not been proven (Saunders et al., 2015; Sim et al., 2018). In this study, I made several assumptions. The first assumption was that participants would answer interview questions honestly and provide detailed information in their responses. The second assumption was that using the Baldrige Excellence

Framework and criteria as a tool could facilitate a holistic evaluation of the client organization. The third assumption was that the organization's senior leaders would grant access to supporting documents and data. The fourth and final assumption in this study was that the senior leaders participating in this study could implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance.

Limitations

Limitations are constraints and weaknesses that may affect the outcome of a research study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). A limitation of this research study was that the participants were selected among senior leaders from a single NPO located in the midwestern region of the United States; senior leaders from other geographical regions of the United States were not included. The experiences of senior leaders of this single NPO might have yielded data that reflect the conditions of their environment; therefore, their contributions might not be representative of other NPOs in the midwestern region or elsewhere in the country. Another limitation of this study was that participants may have not recalled all important aspects of their past experiences, which may have limited the depth of information obtained. The final limitation of this study was that participants may have inadvertently failed to share financial or sensitive information about their organization.

Delimitations

Delimitations denote the conscious choices researchers make to establish boundaries about the scope and spatial and temporal boundaries to frame the research study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Marshall and Rossman (2016) described

delimitations as what researchers willingly exclude from the study given the research purpose. The focus of this research study was to understand how nonprofit leaders have implemented quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. Exemplifying one delimitation of this study, the interview questions used were designed to obtain information about the critical elements that facilitated the implementation of quality standards in organizational strategic planning because of the focus of this study. Lastly, the spatial delimitation for this study included the location of the NPO in the U.S. midwestern region and the specific customer segment the organizational leaders focus on.

Significance of the Study

Considering the role of NPOs, the strategic decisions that leaders implement may have a direct effect on the U.S. economy, the workforce, and public services (Alston, 2018; Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2018). Complications securing donations, grants, and income streams (Lee & Nowell, 2015); internal and external pressures to evaluate organizational effectiveness (Shumate et al., 2017); and constant accountability demands (Becker, 2018) are challenges for nonprofit leaders who want to develop strategic solutions that address those concerns and help their organizations continue to provide their customers with quality products and services. I sought to explore strategies that may provide business leaders with a practical strategic model that can help them improve organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and culture. The findings of my study may aid in the advancement of scholarly and practical understandings of how to strategically integrate and implement quality management standards to facilitate continuous

improvement, achieve performance excellence, and attain a competitive advantage through strategic planning. The implications for positive social change include the potential to provide knowledge that leaders of NPOs can use to help their organizations to provide and enhance services to the communities where they operate.

Contribution to Business Practice

TQM provided the framework used to comprehensively evaluate the performance of a nonprofit to identify existing challenges preventing the organization from achieving its strategic goals. In using the tenets of the theory, business leaders can identify NPO effectiveness and opportunities to implement changes to increase productivity (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016). The ability to measure organizational performance effectively remains an issue for nonprofit leaders (Soysa et al., 2016). The continuous improvement approach enables nonprofits leaders to recognize the strategic importance of TQM to overcome resource constraints, improve performance, and implement innovation to increase the survivability of the business (Andersson, 2018; Liao et al., 2014). Comprehensively improving performance facilitates nonprofit leaders' strategic goals to satisfy organizational obligations to stakeholders, donors, customers, and communities (Dobrai & Farkas, 2016).

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study might have implications for social change. One implication for positive social change is that the findings of this study can provide NPO senior leaders with effective strategies to adopt quality management standards to help improve organizational performance. The results could also provide valuable insight into

how to implement organizational changes focused on increasing organizational sustainability, thereby increasing senior leaders' capacity to provide better services or products to members of the communities within the organization's service areas.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that nonprofit leaders have used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. In this literature review, my focus was to identify and provide a comprehensive summary of scholarly and peer-reviewed journal articles, seminal literature, dissertations, and reports relevant to the research topic. The literature review was the foundation for answering the main research question regarding leaders' strategic use of the TQM approach to design a strategic planning process to help achieve improved organizational performance in NPOs.

TQM is an approach that leaders can use to improve processes to help their organizations improve service quality continuously. Aveyard and Bradbury-Jones (2019) asserted that conducting a systematic literature review helps researchers identify existing and relevant evidence to help answer the research question. Consequently, this review of scholarly and peer-reviewed journal articles, seminal literature, and reports helped explain the conceptual framework and the phenomenon regarding how leaders of NPOs leveraged TQM principles to help improve customer service, employee engagement, and overall organizational performance. I organized the literature review according to the following topic categories: (a) TQM theory; (b) critiques of the TQM theory; (c) quality management standards; (c) strategic planning; and (d) strategic planning implementation,

including its potential impact on the efforts of leaders of nonprofits to improve

performance, increase sustainability, and attain a competitive advantage. I present the

literature review in this order to provide a comprehensive examination of scholarly works

related to the application of the TQM theory to the business problem. I also include in

this literature review exploratory scholarly research about the effectiveness of the Hoshin

Kanri strategic process as a quality management method that leaders can use in support of

their strategic plan to continuously improve processes.

Several academic, governmental, and independent research databases were used

to complete a comprehensive literature review in support of this study. The databases I

used to find peer-reviewed sources included ABI/Inform; Academic Search Complete,

Business Market Research Collection, Business Source Complete, Child Care and Early

Education Research Connections, Google Scholar, Emerald Management, ERIC, and

Education Source Combined Search, and the SAGE Premier. The keywords used for

locating relevant sources in these databases included *nonprofit organizations, total*

quality management, quality management standards, strategic planning, strategic

management, and *tax-exempted organizations.*

The chosen keywords generated an initial collective sample of 73,526 articles.

Subsequent database investigation and review focused on material relevant to using

quality management standards in strategic planning to help improve organization

performance yielded 223 journal articles. I also considered the reference list section of

the articles extracted to identify additional relevant sources excluded from the initial

database searches. The effort yielded an additional 35 articles that I evaluated and

included in the literature review. I repeated the approach to exhaustively include all published articles relevant to the topic. When accessing databases, I limited my search to peer-reviewed articles published between 2017 and 2021 to ensure the relevancy of the material. One hundred eighty-six of the 204 literature review sources were peer-reviewed journals, and 90% were published between 2017 and 2021.

Total Quality Management Theory

An objective of this literature review was to explore strategic planning through the lens of Deming's TQM theory. Deming (1982) posited that organizational leaders use TQM to improve planning, production, and services comprehensively. Deming (1986) postulated that implementing a management system based on research to identify and understand customer needs becomes the cornerstone for the design or redesign of a plan of the service to improve customer satisfaction. In that context, the overarching principle of TQM is that implementing quality management standards focuses the organization on a systematic approach for improving performance and meeting customer requirements (Deming, 1982). Consequently, leaders of nonprofits can focus and emphasize customer research to help develop organizational strategies for the continuous improvement of performance and the services offered.

In TQM theory, Deming (1986) described the importance of analyzing the organizational performance to identify and break down barriers between the staff. Senior leaders can measure and examine key performance characteristics to identify opportunities to increase synergy within the workforce. The discovery of individual nuances or group behavior common within the organization can facilitate leaders' efforts

to help build and improve competitive advantages (Savov et al., 2017). In that context, leaders of NPOs can use the TQM theory to assess the degree or lack of information sharing, collaboration, and existent unity of effort within their organization and operationalize quality management standards to help enhance organizational productivity and increase the survivability of the organizations (Khan et al., 2020). TQM is a suitable framework for leaders to remove barriers and facilitate constant improvement through the adoption of a periodic assessment of organizational operations, enhanced staff collaboration, and resource maximization to improve the overall organizational environment to attain strategic objectives.

Organizational leaders can use TQM to create constancy of purpose regarding efforts to improve services, reduce costs, foster innovative performance, and help improve employee and customer satisfaction. Khan et al. (2020) assessed the effectiveness of the TQM theory by examining the relationships between leadership management, systematic management approaches, customer focus, innovation, and quality performance. Melão et al. (2017) examined the specific adoption of quality management practices in European NPOs. Although the researchers focused on different aspects of TQM, the researchers' findings determined that leaders who strategically implemented a quality management plan helped their organizations create operational synergies, maximize resources, and improve the quality of their products and services while increasing customer satisfaction (Melão et al., 2017).

As an evolving system of practice, TQM includes approaches, tools, and training methods that senior leaders can use to establish an organizational culture of operational

excellence. Among the approaches that business leaders can use to help identify organizational gaps and inefficiencies, Deming (1982) suggested relying on performance analysis to identify and address organizational gaps and challenges that reduce opportunities to meet customer needs and achieve strategic goals. Assessing and evaluating performance helps business leaders determine the efficacy of the organizational methods or business rules the same as determining the need for additional change, training, or education (Alauddin & Yamada, 2019). Nonprofit leaders can use TQM processes as tools and help focus the organizational philosophy toward finding efficient ways to perform organizational tasks, processes, and activities.

The critical analysis using TQM enables business leaders to recognize the training and education needed to obtain the necessary qualifications to perform certain jobs to prevent defects and improve services offered to customers (Mihaela-Lavinia, 2019). The TQM approach supports business leaders' efforts to improve the quality of outputs generated by the organization. Controlling standards generates opportunities for business leaders to modify or improve processes, implement economies of scale, and consistently achieve expected outcomes (Sak-Colareza & Hammami, 2017). Nonprofit leaders can establish operational standards to help improve performance and offer quality products or services to their customers.

Deming (1986) noted that it is vital for business leaders to develop organizational processes to generate products or provide services based on the known requirements, needs, and expectations of internal and external customers. This approach helps business leaders correlate organizational capabilities, generate a climate of open collaboration, and

maintain the organizational emphasis on offering value propositions within the workforce, customers, stakeholders, and partners (Diamandescu, 2016a). Coordinating activities facilitates business leaders' efforts to involve the workforce on the collective aim to improve processes and services throughout the organization.

According to Deming (1982), the TQM principles to detect, reduce, and eliminate errors at every level of an organization become a catalyst for organizational success. As business leaders and managers align their focus to the pursuit of improved products and services, the organization's climate becomes focused on quality throughout the organization. Creating, implementing, and working following an organizational system supportive in nature and engaged in learning enables business leaders to identify problems and potential solutions (Hales & Chakravorty, 2006). In that context, nonprofit leaders can facilitate a cooperative organizational environment that supports process improvement initiatives and helps remove barriers among members of the workforce.

Improved customer satisfaction by providing a higher quality of products and services is another cornerstone of the TQM philosophy (Deming, 1986). As customers determine that the organization satisfies their needs and expectations, the organization's reputation and customers' brand loyalty improve. According to Rohit and Rengamani (2018), customers' purchase decisions are commonly not fixed or absolute. Hence, business leaders who devote time to systematically analyze all aspects of production and performance can increase opportunities to meet or surpass customers' expectations.

According to Deming (1986), identifying and gaining insight into customers' needs or wants can help leaders to design strategies to promote organizational growth.

The information obtained facilitates business leaders' efforts to modify processes, services, or products to meet or surpass customers' expectations. Anil and Satish (2019b) noted that organization leaders who implement strategies that focus on producing or offering goods and services that meet customers' expectations help improve financial performance at the firm level. Hence, focusing on improving customer service supports the leaders' aim to help their organizations advance.

Understanding customer wants, needs, and expectations enable business leaders to determine the proper strategic plan, action, and implementation to fulfill consumers' demands. Assessing customer's needs and measuring the organizational customer-related performance helps business leaders to determine areas in need of improvement (Deming, 1982). The information can help business leaders improve the quality of the services provided, which can attract new customers, retain existing ones, and potentially entice customers from competitors (Nguyen & Nagase, 2019). Anil and Satish (2019a) also noted that gaining insight into customers' needs and expectations helps business leaders to identify the path for the holistic implementation of TQM practices that may help the organization gain a competitive edge. Hence, by identifying customers' demands and expectations, and measuring the organizational efficacy to satisfy those needs, nonprofit leaders can help their organization improve their customer-related performance.

Deming (1986) postulated that combining leadership and management skills with TQM principles helps set conditions to increase productivity and offer better services. Business leaders' and managers' efforts and commitment to change for the sake of improvement require engaged employees. Business leaders who actively participate in

the implementation and pursuit of performance improvement, facilitate training, define

and standardize processes, and adopt an organizational alignment to eliminate barriers,

remove uncertainty, and develop an enthusiasm for quality (Diamandescu, 2016b).

Therefore, NPO leaders who actively involve themselves, support, facilitate resources,

and shape the direction and organizational priorities help set conditions for the

achievement of the organizational priorities.

According to Krajcsák (2019), failing to obtain employee commitment and

engagement through participation and ownership may derail business leaders' efforts to

improve quality through the organization. As business leaders develop the strategy to

improve performance, the need for leadership ability to inspire, motivate, and stimulate

becomes a necessity. Teoman and Ulengin (2018) noted that business leaders able to

involve and motivate employees to serve as active agents supporting the initiative help

set conditions for the collective acceptance of quality standards needed to improve

products and services. Hence, business leaders who communicate the plan, clearly

articulate the vision, encourage participation, and promote employee empowerment and

engagement help drive the organization toward quality improvement.

Unlike other quality management methods that emphasize systems controls

(Bradford & Miranti, 2019), Deming's TQM refers to a comprehensive management

approach that involves all departments and employees of an organization, includes both

suppliers and collaborators to help leaders improve the organizational quality and

productivity ((Mihaela-Lavinia, 2019). Expanding from statistical quality control,

Deming's approach to incorporate technical, operational, and managerial concepts helped

establish a blueprint that business leaders can use to enhance productivity and customer service (Shafiq et al., 2019). The approach to improve quality can help leaders to foster conditions where the company gains the ability to offer customers a value proposition distinct from competitors. As many organizations' leaders have experienced, the application of TQM principles enables efforts to gain a competitive advantage.

As Shafiq et al. (2019) described, leaders can implement TQM practices to help improve organizational performance, raise customer allegiance, and gain a competitive advantage over rivals. The proposed TQM method to improve education, training, and teamwork can help leaders improve organizational competencies needed to manufacture better products and offer better services. Adopting a customer-oriented culture focused on offering quality products and rendering unparalleled service helps organizations improve customer satisfaction (Mas'udin & Kamara, 2018). Using TQM standards, leaders can develop and sustain core competencies that separate the organization from its competitors.

According to Samawi et al. (2018), using TQM practices, leaders increased employee participation and empowerment, which positively affected organizational performance. Implementing TQM, leaders can focus on enhancing the workforce perception of the business, which can help improve the quality of organizational performance. Abu-Rumman et al. (2020) also expressed that leaders that implement the TQM customer-centric quality management method enhance the organizational ability to deliver quality services. Using the TQM method, leaders can identify service gaps, listen, and address customer needs providing quality services and products.

Androniceanu (2017) found that TQM represents a feasible and sustainable option for leaders to achieve higher levels of organizational performance and business excellence. Using TQM, leaders can focus on the human resource to produce quality products or deliver quality services to customers. Androniceanu also stated that the TQM dimension of customer focus is vital for business leaders to establish and maintain relationships with traditional and new customers. According to Breja et al. (2016), maintaining a strategic focus on satisfying customers improves opportunities to increase the sustainability of an organization. Business leaders can leverage relationships to obtain customer data that can be analyzed to make decisions and structure the organization to satisfy and potentially exceed customers' expectations to help improve organizational sustainability.

Agus and Selvaraj (2020) found that the people-oriented TQM dimension of employee focus can help leaders to motivate and prepare the workforce to support organizational improvement. In that context, leaders can facilitate training and education to improve employee proficiency and motivate the workforce to perform at optimal levels to enhance productivity. Anil and Satish (2019b) also noted that when leaders implement TQM practices such as adopting knowledge-sharing mechanisms, providing adequate education, and providing training, the overall organizational performance improves. As leaders and managers adopt a method for organizational learning, the culture of continuous improvement becomes the standard and facilitates the establishment of internal quality assurance mechanisms.

Organizational quality standards enable business leaders to establish a culture of quality (Jimoh et al., 2019). An organizational culture focused on developing or delivering quality services or products can help leaders attain a competitive advantage. Jimoh et al. (2019) found that when leaders emphasize continuous improvement to meet customers' needs, then performance tends to improve. The findings are in parallel with Deming's (1982) recommendation to create an overarching business environment where improvement of products and services is prioritized over short-term financial goals.

Kumar et al. (2018) described TQM as a holistic management philosophy that can lead to business excellence and enhance the firm's performance. However, the authors expressed the need for leaders to consider the mediating effect of long-term orientation, professional development, and organizational alignment on the successful implementation of TQM (Kumar et al., 2018). Hence, it becomes necessary for business leaders to develop a strategy and improve professional competencies to lessen resistance or eliminate barriers to implementing TQM practices. According to Bouranta et al. (2019), leaders must focus on orienting leadership and management toward a culture of quality, emphasize process management, and make employee quality management an imperative. As some authors of empirical studies found, addressing potential barriers to the TQM implementation facilitates the adoption of quality management practices that can help business leaders to affect organizational performance positively.

According to Jimoh et al. (2019), TQM practices help leaders to set conditions within their organizations to implement strategies aimed at continuous improvement to improve performance processes and products to increase customer satisfaction (Jimoh et

al., 2019). Fostering an organizational environment focused on delivering the highest quality of products and services can help leaders to influence customers to come back. Rafailidis et al. (2017) found that through the development of the organization's quality competencies leaders can help the organization to improve delivery, flexibility, and overall performance. The approach can help businesses to offer customers propositions distinct from competitors, thus helping create a competitive advantage.

Rafailidis et al. (2017) also noted that enhancing quality competencies helps leaders facilitate learning at the individual and organizational levels leading to improved performance and innovation. Enhancing the learning capacities helps leaders to improve flexibility and the organizational capacity to manage environmental changes affecting the business. Hsu (2019) found that TQM enables organizational learning and the effective use of internal and external resources. Improving organizational learning facilitates leaders' efforts to offer quality products and services to gain customer trust and potentially increase customer retention. Bhatia and Awasthi (2018) determined that implementing the TQM recommended approach to improve information quality and availability directly affects operating performance and delivery within an organization. Hence, adopting TQM can help leaders to improve organizational competencies and thereby productivity and customer satisfaction.

According to Bhatia and Awasthi (2018), adopting TQM enables leaders to facilitate collaborative and cooperative behavior needed to enhance employee's contributions. Promoting collaboration among the workforce facilitates the sharing of skills and wisdom needed to improve business processes to enhance the organization's

ability to raise its competitiveness. Ferdousi et al. (2018) discovered that TQM practices help managers to focus organizational efforts to enhance relationships with suppliers and to improve quality data, products, services, and reduce process complexities. Elevating the level of internal collaboration, enhancing relationships, and improving quality facilitate the opportunity to raise the organizational competitive advantage.

Ershadi et al. (2019) found that TQM factors such as innovation, and continuous improvement have a positive effect on customer behavior. Implementing organizational changes to improve the customer experience, helps leaders to satisfy customers, and gain their loyalty. According to Kharub et al. (2019), developing the capacity to continuously modify products and services helps organizations to present higher values or provide more benefits to customers. The added capacity helps leaders to help their organizations to attain a competitive advantage.

Kowo et al. (2019) found that the implementation of TQM principles can help improve strategy development and organizational functions. Leaders can use TQM principles to help pursue efficiencies and enhanced revenue generation. However, de Las Casas and Alecchi (2020) recognized that leaders must carefully control and improve quality standards to help raise the competitiveness of their organizations. The approach facilitates leaders' efforts to identify, track, and manage issues or deficiencies affecting the organizational capacity to offer high-quality products or services.

Talib and Faisal (2020) determined that using TQM principles leaders can increase teamwork, communication, and elevate the focus on customers to help improve organizational performance. Improving communication within teams can help leaders to

foster conditions that support improved productivity. Shafiq et al. (2019) found that

improving quality within an organization positively influences organizational

performance. Leaders able to establish an organizational culture focused on enhancing

interdependent elements to include leadership, strategic planning, employee engagement,

and customer focus help set conditions to improve the overall organizational

performance.

Toma and Naruo (2017) found that leaders that actively contribute to the

collective goal to continuously improve and involve employees in efforts to discuss

problems and identify potential solutions can positively influence organizational

productivity. Leaders that assume their responsibilities can gain the respect of their

subordinates and help raise employees' commitment to the achievement of the

organizational objectives. Andreeva et al. (2018) found that using TQM principles can

help leaders to develop and implement strategies focused on supporting the long-term

growth of their organization. Leaders can align quality management with strategic

objectives to help support the continuous improvement of products or services.

Quality Management Standards

Deming (1982) highlighted that the establishment of quality management

standards (QMS) can help leaders improve organizational performance and reduce costs.

Implementing detailed requirements, specifications, and guidelines for products and

services helps business leaders establish an organizational culture focused on

performance excellence. Organizational leaders can use quality standards as the

framework for managing key business activities while simultaneously increase customer

loyalty (Deming, 1986). By establishing quality standards, leaders can help the organization consistently improve the quality of services and products to deliver value propositions to customers.

The use of quality management standards can help business leaders to establish a framework to manage key processes, activities, and satisfy customer's quality requirements. Wilson and Campbell (2020) agreed with Deming's position that introducing, adhering to, and maintaining quality standards helps leaders improve the overall quality of an organization leading to a competitive advantage. Jimoh et al. (2019) also agreed that formalizing quality behaviors through standardization supports the organizational goal to improve performance. Androniceanu (2017) noted that quality is a major factor influencing customers' decisions to purchase products or services. Hence, leaders able to implement quality standards can help their organizations increase their competitiveness and outperform rivals.

According to Dudin et al. (2017), leaders can use standards to satisfy customer's quality requirements and to ensure the safety and reliability of the product or services offered to consumers. Improving the reliability and safety of offerings can influence customer behavior and make the business propositions more attractive to a larger customer segment. Al-Omari et al. (2020) recognized that improving the quality of services helps to improve how a company or organization is perceived on the market. Leaders able to improve the organization's image help attain a competitive advantage.

Establishing quality benchmarks helps leaders to improve organizational knowledge needed to facilitate conformity to standards (Wilson & Campbell, 2020).

Improving conformity helps leaders to increase buyers' confidence. Defining, standardizing, and controlling internal processes using quality standards, helps leaders to reduce the cost of work, and increase productivity (Jimoh et al., 2019). Compliance with quality standards helps elevate health and safety conditions, which in turn helps increase employee engagement needed to create better products and provide high-quality services (Dudin et al., 2017). Collectively, leaders' efforts to raise consumers' confidence and reduce the cost of work promote business growth.

Business leaders can use quality standards to describe, share, and publish quality principles governing operational standards to help improve performance, reduce, or correct problems related to the manufacturing of products or delivery of services to customers. The approach helps business leaders implement quality standards to attain higher levels of customer satisfaction. Ladewski and Al-Bayati (2019) recognized that implementing quality standards also helps leaders to manage resources to address product safety and quality concerns to improve client satisfaction. Leaders' efforts to meet or surpass customer's expectations, facilitate the improvement of organizational financial sustainability.

Lasrado and Nyadzayo's (2019) findings suggest that adopting QMS helps leaders to establish a holistic approach to quality management. Establishing comprehensive strategies that include quality standards helps leaders to improve internal procedures, raise employee morale, and increase customer satisfaction to generate financial benefits (Lasrado & Nyadzayo, 2019). Androniceanu (2017) noted that implementing QMS facilitates leaders' efforts to increase the organizational capacity to provide quality goods

and services to customers. Improving the quality of products or services can help

business leaders to attract customers or outperform competitors within the same market

segment.

According to Chiarini (2020), the use of QMS facilitates efforts to establish a

framework for managing key business activities. Establishing quality standards helps

leaders formalize procedures and processes, the same as roles and responsibilities

facilitate the alignment of resources to meet customer's requirements. Lo and Yeung

(2018) found that institutionalizing QMS principles can help leaders to establish an

organizational culture focused on continuous improvement and the attainment of goals.

Adopting quality management principles enables leaders to establish an organizational

philosophy focused on producing and offering products or services that satisfy

customers' needs.

According to findings from Sumardi and Fernandes (2020), implementing and

adhering to QMS supports leaders' efforts to improve quality and company performance.

Establishing operational strategies focused on improving operational conditions helps

leaders to motivate the workforce to perform at a higher level. Beard-Gunter et al. (2019)

found that implementing quality standards such as adopting organizational changes to

processes and systems based on customer feedback can help increase organizational

competitiveness. Leaders focused on helping their organizations attain a competitive edge

can use quality standards to create unique organizational value.

According to Jimoh et al. (2019), strategically implementing QMS enables leaders

to influence employees to raise their performance level, consequently improving

productivity. In increasing the operational capacity, leaders help to set conditions for their

organizations to reach a larger market segment potentially. Yadav et al. (2020)

discovered that combining QMS and other quality management practices positively

influences performance, inventory, and sales turnover. Business leaders can leverage

quality standards as an organizational framework to help promote a continual

improvement culture within their organizations.

Majstorovic and Sibalija (2015) noted that QMS facilitates the systematic

integration of organizational capabilities to achieve strategic goals. Sahoo (2019) found

that the strategic utilization of quality standards can help leaders to modify social and

technical organizational dimensions such as training, education, data analysis, and

problem-solving to achieve superior performance. Demonstrable actions focused on

professional growth can help leaders to motivate the workforce to actively participate in

efforts to attain strategic organizational objectives. Sumardi and Fernandes (2020)

determined that applying QMS factors such as process management, teamwork, and

empowerment helps leaders to improve performance and raise the quality of

organizational offerings to customers. Improving performance can provide opportunities

to reduce waste and increase organizational capacity and capability, which can help

differentiate an organization from its competitors.

According to Kaur et al. (2019), the strategic adoption of quality standards can

help leaders to generate or increase synergy within the organization to help increase

employee involvement, customer focus, and process management. The approach enables

leaders to increase operational and business performance. Hamzeh et al. (2019) added

that QMS can help leaders to establish performance indicators, which can help evaluate the effectiveness of functions, processes, and solutions. The information obtained through the assessment of key performance indicators facilitates the development of a strategic plan focused on improving performance.

Andreeva et al. (2018) found that strategically integrating QMS enables leaders to formulate and implement long-term plans to meet strategic goals. Implementing QMS offers opportunities for leaders to prepare the organization to maximize opportunities and respond to environmental threats. Paquibut (2017) also noted that integrating quality standards supports leaders' efforts to develop a long-term view that can help the organization to achieve its mission, vision, and future objectives. Strategically implementing QMS can help leaders establish quality-driven operations that can help improve brand valuation and potentially the survivability of the organization.

According to Shin et al. (2016), strategically integrating quality standards, can help improve the overall firm quality level, which ultimately leads to profitability. Husaković and Mujčinović (2019) also noted that leaders can use quality standards to improve the organization's market competitiveness. Business leaders can implement quality standards to help organizational efforts focus on satisfying customers and responding to their fluctuating needs or expectations.

Alternative Theories to TQM

My decision to use TQM as the conceptual framework for this study was made after reviewing other quality management theories. The quality management theories I

reviewed included Juran's quality trilogy theory and Crosby's 14 steps to continuous quality improvement and zero defects concept.

Supporting Theory: Juran's Theory

Juran's organizational-level approach to quality management is recognized by scholars as an effective method to achieve organizational improvement. Juran (1986) posited that improving the human dimension of organizations is a key factor in efforts to improve organizational performance. Implementing a competency development that includes educating and training the workforce can help leaders to set conditions to manage quality within the organization.

Similar to Deming, Juran, and Godfrey (1999) recognized that efforts to improve organizations require the active involvement of the entire workforce, from management to ordinary employees. The involvement of the entire human dimension within an organization improves opportunities to ensure all employees who have an impact on quality can contribute to the attainment of the strategic goal to enhance performance. Hamid et al. (2019) noted that complete and sequential implementation of Juran's quality management principles can help organizations to raise internal competencies and offer better products and services to customers. The researchers also recognized that implementing Juran's theory focused on planning, controlling, and improving quality can help organizational leaders to set conditions to enhance process capabilities and increase customer satisfaction (Hamid et al., 2019). Improving and enhancing process capabilities facilitates the leader's efforts to enhance the organizational capacity to innovate or respond to changing customer needs.

Juran (1986) also postulated that managing quality with an organization requires implementing holistic strategic solutions to identify customer needs, establish standards of performance, and provide solutions to overcome manufacturing issues or improve services. Adopting holistic solutions offers leaders opportunities to discover and resolve multiple issues or barriers preventing the organization from attaining a competitive advantage. Tejaningrum (2019) noted that implementing the principles of Juran's quality management theory facilitates the development of products or services with features that meet customer needs. Attaining the organizational competency to manufacture products or render services that meet or surpass customer needs enables leaders to help their organizations to increase their sustainability and competitiveness.

Supporting Theory: Crosby's Theory

My decision to use TQM as the conceptual framework for this study was made after reviewing other quality management theories. The quality management theories I reviewed included Juran's quality trilogy theory and Crosby's 14 steps to continuous quality improvement and zero defects concept. Crosby's recommended methodology to achieve continuous quality improvement is highly regarded in the field of business management. According to Crosby (1979), establishing a culture focused on improving quality within an organization helps reduce unnecessary costs associated with product defects, wasted resources, or poor services. Leaders able to influence employees to accept and support the strategic goals to minimize defects and improve processes set the tone to help reduce wasted resources and time spent creating goods or offering services that customers do not want.

Similar to Deming, Crosby (2005) recognized that implementing a management system based on identified customers' needs can help leaders to set conditions to improve customer satisfaction. Using a systematic approach helps leaders to establish the organizational cultural changes necessary to implement strategic changes to improve performance throughout the entire organization. Agrawal (2019) noted that implementing Crosby's quality principles can help improve organizational performance. The author also recognized that management commitment is vital to strategically implement a systematic approach to improve quality in processes and systems (Agrawal, 2019). Leaders that demonstrate a commitment to implement quality can influence the workforce to accept and engage in strategic efforts to improve the organization. Crosby proposed 14 steps to achieve quality improvement that can be used to implement a holistic approach to manage quality within an organization. Hamid et al. (2019) noted that following Crosby's recommendations to focus organizational efforts and resources to satisfy the needs of consumers helped several organizations to improve the overall quality of their products. Leaders can follow the approach to help their organization to raise the level of customer satisfaction. Sansalvador and Brotons (2017) noted that studying the behavior and influence that quality cost has on organizations, can help leaders identify what to change to improve productivity. Leaders can influence the workforce to accept quality as an essential part of the organization, help reduce mistakes, lower costs, and improve performance.

According to Crosby (2005), promoting quality awareness and establishing the standards of quality are vital principles needed to improve organizational performance.

De Las Casas and Alecchi (2020), noted that establishing standards to achieve high levels of conformity facilitates leaders' efforts to improve the quality of products or services offered to customers. Elevating the quality of products or services offered to consumers, helps leaders to increase the competitiveness of their organizations. Kowo et al. (2019) noted that implementing a strategy that integrates quality management principles into organizational functions can help leaders in their pursuit of efficiencies. The approach to promote quality awareness within the organization can help leaders to establish an organizational culture focused on improving performance.

Critiques of Total Quality Management Theory

Several researchers have critiqued the effectiveness of TQM. Some researchers found that failing to successfully implement TQM can negatively affect overall organizational performance (Abu-Rumman et al., 2020; Lenning, 2018; Rybski et al., 2017). According to Diamandescu (2016b), the costs associated with controlling and improving quality might not enhance financial performance. TQM may not improve organizational performance, and the benefits associated with a high degree of quality may not help attain a competitive advantage.

Nienaber and Martins (2020) found that strategically implementing TQM principles is a difficult process that demands interpersonal interaction. The researchers also noted that a participative management style and a two-way communication approach are vital to driving TQM implementation and organizational effectiveness. Hence, leaders must motivate and influence employees to become active participants and supporters of TQM implementation to prevent waste resulting from the strategy implementation

failures due to disengaged employees. Implementing all aspects of TQM may be too complicated for some organizations and it may increase operational costs over time (Talapatra & Uddin, 2019). Adopting TQM may not enhance organizational performance due to the additional costs of implementation and training required to increase workforce competencies.

According to Hamja et al. (2019), implementing quality management principles to increase productivity without considering occupational health and safety may be harmful to the workforce. Failing to adjust processes or establish policies to protect the workforce can harm organizational performance in the longer term (Hamja et al., 2019). Failing to maintain a balance between increasing productivity and protecting employees may erode the organizational competitiveness over time. Talapatra and Uddin (2019) recognized as a viable option the possibility to implement only TQM practices that can have a direct impact on a business's overall performance. The approach may help leaders to facilitate conditions to improve profitability while increasing the quality of products or services offered to customers.

Leaders can conduct a holistic evaluation to gain insights into the way the organization works, and then use the information to identify and decide which areas of the business to strategically modify to improve performance. Zrymiak (2016) found that greater opportunities for improving performance and increasing profitability require finding the point of pricing equilibrium between implementing quality and creating better products or offering better services. Young et al. (2018) found that measuring and reporting quality standards without adjusting standards to ensure products or services

continue to satisfy customer needs, can lessen opportunities to attain or sustain a competitive advantage. Leaders who are unable to anticipate the stochastic nature of consumers' interests or needs may put the sustainability of their organizations at risk.

Abu-Rumman et al. (2020) recognized the leaders must guide employee involvement to strategically implement quality management standards to influence continual improvement. Leaders can use effective communication to influence employee engagement to facilitate organizational change to elevate the overall performance of the business. Elshaer and Augustyn (2016) found that only the TQM factors leadership and supplier management can positively affect competitive advantage. Therefore, the researchers noted the importance for leaders to focus on developing capabilities to help generate competitive advantage (Elshaer & Augustyn, 2016). Focusing and investing in increasing capability may help leaders to help improve productivity, improve quality, and increase the competitiveness of the organization.

Strategic Planning

Described as the process of establishing a direction for a business or organization, strategic planning includes identifying objectives, goals, and defining how a plan will be executed (Dyer et al., 2016). Liao and Huang (2016) noted that NPO leaders who build a strategy focused on achieving the vision, facilitate opportunities to enhance organizational performance. Neis et al. (2017) noted that business leaders use strategic planning to establish conditions to respond to changing external conditions through the alignment of resources and the establishment of benchmarks that facilitated the achievement of intended strategic objectives. Hence, it becomes imperative for business

and NPO leaders to complete a thorough evaluation of internal and existing conditions, factors, resources, and capabilities that affect the organization. The analysis helps business leaders to identify opportunities, threats, and set conditions to improve competencies, processes, and services.

Mensah (2020) defined strategic planning as the overall process of developing, executing, adjusting, implementing, and evaluating a plan focused on meeting current and future organizational goals and objectives. Establishing a strategic agenda enables leaders to prepare their organizations to respond to internal and external changes that affect the company in particular situations. Shumate et al. (2018) noted that strategic planning is a management tool that supports leaders' efforts to enable organizations to become more efficient to cope with changes. Leaders can use strategic planning to establish and develop organizational competencies that facilitate the ability to maximize opportunities and respond to threats by becoming intentionally proactive rather than reactive.

According to Bryson et al. (2018), strategic planning is a management process available to business leaders that can help them achieve and sustain a competitive advantage. Wolf and Floyd (2017) recognized that as a systematic logical and analytical process, strategic planning facilitates leaders' efforts to develop and implement a strategy focused on achieving the organizational mission, vision, and goals in changing environments. Leaders can use strategic planning to set realistic visions of the future and identify how the organization will achieve short- and long-term goals. Meyerowitz et al. (2018) noted that the increasing complexity of the business environment requires decision-makers to develop and adopt strategies to help organizations become more agile,

efficient, and responsive to market changes. The approach helps leaders to increase the organizational capacity to manage risks and raise the survivability of the organization.

Leaders can use strategic planning to identify risks, threats, and opportunities to modify internal processes and set conditions to achieve organizational objectives (Bahadori et al., 2018). Using strategic planning tools such as the balanced scorecard and Porter's five forces, leaders can facilitate the development of a based-evidence strategy to guide the organization towards the achievement of strategic objectives. According to Ali (2018), strategic planning helps leaders to define how the organization will transform to manage risks, respond to threats, and maximize existing opportunities to realize organizational growth and success. Business or nonprofit leaders can use strategic planning to articulate their plan regarding how to implement organizational changes focused on improvement and achieving long-term growth.

Strategic planning includes market analysis, which helps leaders gain insight into the conditions that prevent their organizations from achieving strategic goals (Bahadori et al., 2018). Understanding market conditions facilitates leaders' efforts to develop a strategic approach to realign resources or efforts to enable their organizations to become segment leaders. Neis et al. (2017) noted that it is vital for NPOs to coordinate and integrate their organizational structure to synchronize operational efforts and to ensure the achievement of strategic goals. In great part, what accentuates the need for leaders of NPOs to improve performance is the constant demand from donors to see results.

According to Wolf and Floyd (2017), developing and implementing an evidence-based strategy helps leaders to establish a framework that supports strategic

differentiation and adaptation to increase the capacity to compete and possibly outperform rivals. Evidence-based plans help leaders to develop and implement an approach that maximizes opportunities for the attainment of strategic objectives and the achievement of long-term success. According to Meyerowitz et al. (2018), by increasing the strategic agility and decision-making competencies of an organization, leaders help sets conditions to attain a competitive advantage. As a systematic and ongoing process, strategic planning enables leaders to establish a plan and define the organizational strategy to outperform competitors.

According to Grover et al. (2016), strategically integrating quality standards can help increase the opportunity to meet customers' needs and minimize resource use. Hence, leaders can implement quality standards to increase productivity and attain a competitive advantage. In that context, Dawson (2019) noted that the application of quality methodologies supports the aim to improve organizational performance. Dawson also specified that measuring, analyzing, and controlling processes results in overall performance improvement. Leaders can strategically use quality methodologies and tools to raise the quality of products or services offered to customers.

Efforts to improve the product or service quality, Rodriguez (2018) noted, include building alliances to improve organizational capacity and productivity. The approach enables leaders to support strategic organizational goals and objectives. Thompson et al. (2018) found that fostering and developing relationships with customers can help elevate brand identity, image, and perception. Consequently, the approach can help business leaders to attract more customers and increase profitability.

According to Dawson (2019), gaining insight into the customer's perspective is vital to efforts to improve organizational tasks or activities to raise the quality of products or services offered. Using QMS methods and techniques, leaders can obtain information to understand customers' current and future needs and expectations. Mihalciuc and Grosu (2019) determined that the monitoring of the organization's external and internal communications is useful for obtaining customer' information needed to make substantiated and corrected decisions. Learning the reason that customers purchased a product or service helps leaders to match customers' needs with business offerings, potentially increasing the change to increase sales and outcompete rivals.

Valjevac et al. (2018) found that developing and implementing a strategic plan helps leaders to guide the organization toward the path that would be followed to achieve strategic goals. The authors also recognized that the effort helps organizational leaders to respond to changeable environmental conditions, improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Valjevac et al., 2018). Attaining the capacity to counter adverse factors, helps leaders to elevate the sustainability level of their organizations. Equally, as Esfahani et al. (2018) noted, including in the plan a strategic method for leaders to communicate their vision, inspire excellence, and articulate strategic goals, increases the possibility to influence employees to accept and support changes aimed to improve performance. Leaders can gain the capacity to positively influence employee engagement.

Thompson et al. (2018) noted that integrating marketing and brand management in the strategic plan enables leaders to set conditions to support organizational growth.

The approach facilitates leaders' efforts to enter, compete, or expand their product or servings offerings to a larger customer audience. Chung and Kong (2016) determined that creating and implementing strategic solutions enables leaders to prepare their organizations to introduce new ideas, processes, and products to respond to external or internal opportunities. Increasing the organizational capacity to introduce innovations can help maximize the potential for business growth.

Elsasser et al. (2018) noted that quality methods and standards facilitate leaders' efforts to develop strategies that support and promote continuous improvement. Mihalciuc and Grosu (2019) asserted that strategically managing organizations using methods that facilitate continuous improvement, helps leaders improve organizational performance. Hence, leaders can leverage quality standards to establish an organizational culture of continuous improvement to improve performance.

Establishing a roadmap that defines how to adjust in response to a changing environment can help leaders increase the organizational capacity to meet new and emerging customers' needs (Valjevac et al., 2018). Developing and implementing a strategic plan enables leaders to timely modify processes to satisfy fluctuation buyers' demands with quality products and services. Kachaner et al. (2016) recommended the development of a strategy that aligns resources to maximize capabilities in anticipation of future challenges including disruptive new competitors. Designing a strategy that promotes organizational participation helps leaders to develop the internal collaboration needed to overcome potential disruptive changes.

Efforts to improve the product or service quality, Rodriguez (2018) noted, include building alliances to improve organizational capacity and productivity. The approach enables leaders to support strategic organizational goals and objectives. Thompson et al. (2018) found that fostering and developing relationships with customers can help elevate brand identity, image, and perception. Consequently, the approach can help business leaders to attract more customers and increase profitability.

According to Dawson (2019), gaining insight into the customer's perspective is vital to efforts to improve organizational tasks or activities to raise the quality of products or services offered. Using QMS methods and techniques, leaders can obtain information to understand customers' current and future needs and expectations. Mihalciuc and Grosu (2019) suggested that through the improvement of monitoring, external and internal communication leaders can gather insight from customers' that can be used to modify processes to improve organizational outcomes. Knowing why customers purchase a product or service helps leaders match their needs with business offerings, potentially increasing the change to increase sales and outcompete rivals.

Valjevac et al. (2018) found that developing and implementing a strategic plan helps leaders to guide the organization toward the path that would be followed to achieve strategic goals. The authors also recognized that the effort helps organizational leaders respond to changeable environmental conditions and improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Valjevac et al., 2018). Attaining the capacity to counter adverse factors helps leaders to elevate the sustainability level of their organizations. Esfahani et al. (2018) also noted, that including in the plan a strategic method for leaders to

communicate their vision, inspire excellence, and articulate strategic goals, increases the possibility to influence employees to accept and support changes aimed to improve performance. Leaders can gain the capacity to positively influence employee engagement.

Thompson et al. (2018) noted that integrating marketing and brand management in the strategic plan enables leaders to set conditions to support organizational growth. The approach facilitates leaders' efforts to enter, compete, or expand their product or servings offerings to a larger customer audience. Chung and Kong (2016) determined that creating and implementing strategic solutions enables leaders to prepare their organizations to introduce new ideas, processes, and products to respond to external or internal opportunities. Increasing the organizational capacity to introduce innovations can help maximize the potential for business growth.

Elsasser et al. (2018) noted that quality methods and standards facilitate leaders' efforts to develop strategies that support and promote continuous improvement. Mihalciuc and Grosu (2019) asserted that strategically managing organizations using methods that facilitate continuous improvement, helps leaders improve organizational performance. Hence, leaders can leverage quality standards to establish an organizational culture of continuous improvement to improve performance.

Strategic Planning Implementation

Talapatra and Uddin (2019) recognize that operationalizing a strategic plan is difficult and requires deliberate leader actions including communication, guidance, and standardization. Tawse et al. (2019) noted that implementing and operationalizing a

strategic plan requires communicating, training, motivating, and developing teamwork needed to implement the strategy. During the implementation phase, leaders help and guide others to establish a connection between the strategic plan and the sequential completion of actions required to achieve the strategic objectives and goals (Elbanna et al., 2016). Gaining employee support and commitment to implement the strategy to help advance the organization's vision and general business strategy, help leader to successfully turn strategies and plans into actions.

Active leader participation facilitates employee acceptance, helps with the adoption of the new philosophy, and minimizes potential fear associated with the proposed changes. Bahadori et al. (2018) noted that the active participation of leaders and managers, employee participation, and effective communication are factors that affect strategic plan implementation. Fernandes et al. (2017) noted that by establishing policies, principles, and practices that promoted quality standards throughout the organization, business leaders helped establish a culture of continuous improvements that facilitated the implementation of a strategic plan. The approach allowed the leaders to formally integrate the entire workforce, align resources, and obtain the necessary support to implement the strategy.

Communicating the strategy denotes the need to answer why the organization might want to follow a specific direction (Deming, 1986; Elbanna et al., 2016). The effort helps employees understand the mission, vision, and create opportunities for increased employee engagement. Smith et al. (2020) noted that communicating the strategy enables

leaders to describe how to turn strategies and plans into actions. The leader's action and involvement help guide collective efforts to achieve strategic objectives and goals.

According to Brophy et al. (2020), successful strategic implementation efforts are characterized by the adequate aligning of resources and personnel to support the proposed changes. Nicholas (2016) added that leaders must align resources, obtain employee involvement, orient processes, and eliminate waste to successfully implement the strategy. Orienting resources and personnel can help create synergies and unity of effort needed to increase collaborative planning across the organization. Leaders' commitment to implement organizational efficiencies helps set conditions to raise personnel commitment (Brophy et al., 2020). Soliman (2018) noted that the collective participation of organizational leaders and the workforce is key for the operationalization of the strategy. As a resource in support of strategic implementation, the workforce becomes vital to accomplish actual operations and activities contained in the strategy.

Mondragón-Ixtlahuac et al. (2017) recognized that a holistic approach to ensure that interrelated elements and system are accomplished, increase the organizational capacity to successfully implement the strategy. Leaders can align activities to coordinate efforts among individuals, teams, and as necessary businesses, to obtain optimal support for the accomplishment of tasks, operations, and processes. Soliman (2018) discovered that the rearrangement of tasks and activities contributes to the modification of operational processes or systems in support of strategic goals. Adopting a holistic perspective can help leaders systematically implement changes for the benefit of the entire organization.

According to Paraschivescu (2018), aligning resources and communicating the reason the change is necessary to improve performance facilitates the implementation of quality principles to improve performance. Aligning resources and communicating strategic objectives can ease the accomplishment of collective goals and helps establish guidelines in support of business growth. Caska and Indrawati (2017) found that understanding the strategic vision can help unite and facilitates employee collaboration required to achieve the organizational objectives. Leaders that communicate their vision help to motivate their employees to team up to work together to collectively participate in the approach or effort to take the company forward.

Gonzalez (2019) determined that communication and effective information sharing throughout the strategy implementation phase enables the coordination of strategic and tactical efforts required to realize the critical tasks, actions, and operations to achieve organizational aims and objectives. Leaders can disseminate the plan to help create a shared vision needed to involve all individuals within the organization to accomplish strategic goals. Conversely, Dharyanti et al. (2019) found that ineffective communication increases opportunities for the implementation to fail. Leaders can help increase the probability for the organization to reach its strategic objectives by sharing and disseminating strategic information.

According to Uzarski and Broome (2019), leadership participation, involvement, and accountability are imperatives for the successful implementation of a strategy. Leaders that demonstrate legitimate interest and responsibility for the accomplishment of strategic goals help inspire the workforce to adopt the same regard for the organization's

future. Williams et al. (2020) found that using specific behaviors leaders can influence the workforce to support and remain focused on implementing the strategy. Hence, it can be understood that leadership contribution helps implement strategic changes for the betterment of the organization.

Kabeyi (2019) noted that focusing organizational resources and efforts toward specific goals helps leaders to clarify to the workforce the direction they are expected to move to accomplish the strategic objectives. Creating strategic focus helps leaders to align and maintain employees' emphasis on achieving specific goals vital to the attainment of strategic goals. Mitchell (2019) recognized the importance for leaders to pursue a strategy focused on resolving potential challenges due to the complexity of the implementation. The approach helps set conditions to resolve and overcome potential barriers to the implementation of the strategy.

Ramu (2016) noted that establishing an action-oriented plan helps leaders to define the standards required to successfully implement the strategy. Creating and adopting a result-driven plan enables leaders to identify the specific tasks and actions that must be completed to reach the desired goals. Converting written plans into execution facilitates leaders' efforts to motivate and guide the workforce to the accomplishment of organizational objectives (Brophy et al., 2020). Setting clear and measurable goals helps leaders to describe how the workforce can achieve objectives and contribute to the advancement of the organization.

According to Conbere and Heorhiadi (2017), establishing a support structure along with procedures, policies, training, and feedback loops facilitate leaders' efforts to

monitor and implement changes. The approach to ensure that all components are available to support the strategic implementation helps leaders to mitigate potential issues associated with the proposed changes. Rusch et al. (2019) found that leaders that empower employees, assign ownership, and align resources can avoid strategic implementation issues. Leaders that prepare their workforce, share their authority and responsibility help mitigate potential reasons preventing the organization from implementing the strategy and achieving organizational objectives.

Literature Summary

The purpose of the review of the literature was to explore the strategies NPO leaders can use to adopt quality management standards strategically to improve organizational performance. The body of literature on quality management is extensive, and there is a consensus among researchers that the holistic integration of quality principles in the strategic planning process can help improve organizational performance. Understanding how to apply quality principles can help leaders to create synergy, maximize resources, and improve organizational performance (Melão et al., 2017). Deming's (1982) TQM is an appropriate framework that can help leaders strategically manage quality. The literature also supports the notion that the strategic use of the TQM approach can help leaders to facilitate conditions for improved performance in support of the overarching goal to attain a competitive advantage. However, as indicated in the critique of the theoretical and empirical literature questions remain about the success achieved using TQM to improve performance.

NPO leaders can strategically incorporate quality management standards to develop an organizational culture focused on continuously improving performance. Developing and implementing strategies focused on improving the operational capacity to deliver value to customers, helps leaders established an organizational culture of continuous improvement (Liao & Huang, 2016). Hence, it becomes critical for leaders to create and execute a strategy that facilitates the systematic implementation of actions to improve processes, systems, and facilitates organizational learning to improve competencies (Wolf & Floyd, 2017). The approach enables leaders to help their organizations to attain a competitive advantage.

Transition

In Section 1, I discussed the foundation of the study, the conceptual framework, and I conducted a review of the professional and academic literature. The purpose of the literature review was to explore the strategies that nonprofit leaders used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. Researchers have found that integrating TQM principles into the strategic plan can help leaders to improve the overall organizational performance. Using TQM principles, leaders can influence and motivate the workforce to actively engage in efforts to improve processes, systems, or services to increase customer satisfaction and attain a competitive advantage.

Section 2 contains an in-depth explanation of the research process beginning with the Purpose of the Study. The section includes information on the Role of the Researcher, the Research Method, the Data Collection Instruments and Techniques, Data

Organization Techniques and Analysis, the Reliability and Validity of the Study, the research question, the study population, and the data collection method. I included information regarding the techniques and strategies used to adhere to ethical research standards and to support the reliability and validity of the study.

Section 3 contains a comprehensive account of the research conducted for the DBA consulting capstone. In support of this case study and to research my client organization, I used the 2019–2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework (see Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019) and its criteria for performance excellence to assess my client organization. The demonstration of research conducted for Section 3 begins with the organizational profile and includes the following key areas: leadership; strategy; customers; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce; operations; and results.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that leaders of NPOs have used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. The target population for this study consisted of three leaders of a single NPO located in the midwestern region of the United States. This population is appropriate for the study because the leaders selected were responsible for and successful in providing leadership, developing strategic direction, and managing operations for the organization. The implications for social change are that the findings from this study could help nonprofit leaders develop sustainability and provide employment and services for the benefit of communities.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research includes exploring, describing, and explaining the meaning of the information gathered about the phenomenon studied (Hamilton & Finley, 2020). Researchers are the primary instrument for data collection in qualitative research when they conduct semistructured interviews (Saunders et al., 2015; van den Berg & Struwig, 2017; Yin, 2018). During this qualitative single case study, I served as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Assuming the role of the primary data collector helps researchers discover content-rich information and gain in-depth insight into the topic researched (Yin, 2018). I conducted semistructured interviews, reviewed internal and public documents, and completed a peer-reviewed literature analysis to collect content-rich information for this exploratory study, ensured

accurate data reporting, and adhered to ethical research guidelines throughout my

exploration of the use of TQM standards in strategic planning.

As the researcher, I collected and analyzed data to help organizational senior

leaders of the client NPO improve performance. I had no previous experience working in

the nonprofit sector. I did not previously work as a consultant with the leaders of my

client organization, any other NPOs, or with the participants included in the study. In

some previous professional roles, I implemented quality standards and developed

strategic plans, which provided familiarity with some of the information the senior leader

shared during the interviews. Considering the potential for researcher bias, I applied

appropriate methods and techniques to mitigate the possibility of transcribing the

information shared incorrectly or influencing participants' responses.

Researchers must adhere to three basic ethical principles described in the Belmont

Report to protect subjects and human participants: (a) beneficence, (b) justice, and (c)

respect for persons (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of

Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Lapid et al. (2019) noted that the members

of an institutional review board (IRB) play a pivotal role in helping to ensure that

research involving humans is conducted in a safe, ethical, and standardized manner to

protect the rights and welfare of research participants. Aiming to protect participants,

behave ethically, and subscribe to the Belmont report, I obtained IRB approval (#07-19-

19-0979148) before collecting data for this study. Additionally, I ensured that each

participant in the study signed a consent form indicating that they were participating

voluntarily and they understood their right to cease participating at any time.

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary data collection instrument and must take necessary actions to mitigate bias during the process (Yates & Leggett, 2016). Chamberlain (2016) noted that the bias of the researcher might confuse the findings of a study. Saunders et al. (2015) recommended that researchers use open-ended questions and avoid leading the interviewee during interviews. Yin (2018) advised researchers to use member checking and transcript validation to mitigate bias, avoid misinterpretations, and personal perspectives. I used member checking and transcript validation to reduce personal bias and validate and increase the credibility of the data collected.

Researchers can use semistructured interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of or to explore a phenomenon (Hamilton & Finley, 2020; Wilson, 2016). Patton (2015) recognized that interview protocols allow researchers to obtain rich quality data from various groups of people systematically and consistently. Researchers can use the interview protocol to enhance their ability to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and help explain the subject studied (Yeong et al., 2018). In support of this study, I developed and used an interview protocol (see Appendix) that included questions aligned with my research topic on strategies to implement quality management standards to improve organizational performance.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of three leaders of a single NPO located in the midwestern region of the United States. I used a purposeful sampling method, which Benoot et al. (2016) described as an approach that researchers can use to select a specific

target group that can provide information to answer the research question. I selected

participants who possessed knowledge of the phenomenon under research and could

provide information to help answer the research question. I chose participants who were

engaged in leadership actions specific to strategic planning and quality management. I

used this approach intending to achieve data saturation, which Moser and Korstjens

(2018) described as a condition in which the collection of data yields redundant

information.

       Lapid et al. (2019) noted that research involving human participants requires IRB

approval. Once I obtained IRB approval and received the signed Walden Doctor of

Business Administration Research Agreement, I gained access to the target participants

via email. According to Saunders et al. (2015), researchers increase opportunities to

collect information relevant to the study by providing information and the purpose of the

research before conducting the interview. During the initial interactions through emails

with potential participants, I explained the purpose of the study and included senior

leader consent forms. I also contacted the participants via telephone and clarified the

content of the emails. Creswell (2017) noted that voluntary participation enhances

research validity and reliability. I informed all participants that their consent was

voluntary and that they had the right to decline consent to participate at any time during

the study.

       I scheduled and conducted the interviews once I obtained a signed informed

consent for each participant in the study. Researchers must overcome obstacles

preventing participants from sharing information, such as a lack of trust (Elmir et al.,

2011). During the interactions, I established rapport and focused on maintaining an amicable tone in my voice focused on maintaining a power balance with participants to gain their trust and obtain access to their real-life perspectives. Harvey (2011) noted that such an approach helps researchers to increase participants' willingness to share information openly. During the interviews, participants candidly provided information about the inner workings of their organization and shared previous experiences as organizational leaders responsible for making strategic decisions.

<div align="center">**Research Method and Design**</div>

Research Method

I employed a qualitative research method to explore the strategies that some senior leaders of an NPO used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning for the improvement of their organization. Researchers use the qualitative research methodology to understand and explain the underlying reasons the phenomenon under study occurs, discover new insights, and obtain a detailed degree of information about the topic being researched (Lenger, 2019; Park & Park, 2016). Matta (2019) noted that researchers use qualitative research methods to collect information and explanations from participants who have experienced or observed a phenomenon. The use of qualitative methods facilitates the collection of data from participants who have experienced the phenomenon being studied and helps researchers to identify emerging themes from participants' responses (Mohajan, 2018). A qualitative methodology was suitable for this study because I sought to explore the strategies that senior leaders of

NPOs have used to implement quality management standards that may help advance or improve their organizations.

Researchers use the quantitative method to examine relationships among variables and to test and validate hypotheses (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) noted that researchers use a quantitative method to describe and examine cause-and-effect associations between variables. I did not use a quantitative method for this study because I was not examining relationships among variables or testing hypotheses. Researchers can use the mixed method to integrate the quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study to develop conceptual and theoretical frameworks (Johnson, 2019). Piccioli (2019) noted that researchers use the mixed-methods approach to explore and examine hypotheses. The mixed method was not suitable for this study because I did not seek to develop conceptual or theoretical frameworks to address the specific business problem.

Research Design

I employed a single case study design to explore participants' behavior in their natural work environment and observe the strategies that senior leaders of the NPO have used to implement quality management standards to improve organizational performance. Harrison et al. (2017) noted that researchers use a single case study research design to investigate and understand complex issues in real-world settings. The use of the case study design approach enables researchers to collect in-depth data used to explore real-life phenomena and explain the underlying reason it occurs (Alpi & Evans, 2019). Researchers using a case study design can answer *how, what,* and *why* research questions

about the phenomenon under study and gain an in-depth understanding of the issue

(Harrison et al., 2017; Yin, 2018).

Researchers seeking to understand the nature of a phenomenon can use the

phenomenological approach to understand the meaning of the research participants' life

experiences (Alase, 2017). Researchers use the phenomenology design to understand a

phenomenon experienced by more than one individual and understand how people make

sense of their experiences (Mohajan, 2018). The phenomenological research design was

not appropriate for this study because I did not seek to understand the research

participants' meanings or how they rationalized their experiences. The ethnographic

research design is useful for researchers to study people in their environment to gain

insight into the organizational culture and its effect on the organization (Hammersley,

2018). Researchers use an ethnographical research approach to collect data from people's

experiential and embodied experiences to understand the organizational culture (vom

Lehn, 2019). In this study, I did not seek to research the organizational culture; therefore,

the ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study.

Researchers use the case study design to collect data from various forms and

sources, achieve data saturation, and enhance the reliability and validity of the study

(Gentles et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2015). I collected data through the review of

internal and public organizational documents and interviews, using the same questions

for different participants. Fusch and Ness (2015) noted that researchers who design and

conduct interviews that ask multiple participants the same questions increase

opportunities to achieve data saturation. I also relied on member validation and data

triangulation to reach data saturation, enhance the credibility of the data analysis, and increase the validity and reliability of the research (Varpio et al., 2017).

Population and Sampling

The population for this qualitative study included leaders of NPOs in the midwestern region in the United States who have demonstrated the ability to use the skills, knowledge, and strategies to integrate quality management standards to help their organizations improve performance and attain a competitive advantage. Researchers can use the purposive sampling method to understand a phenomenon in greater detail to answer the research question (Setia, 2016). Ames et al. (2019) noted that using purposive sampling, researchers can obtain representative rich data that strengthen the quality and relevance of the study. Therefore, I deliberatively chose three participants that served in leadership roles within the organization and were responsible for making strategic decisions directly related to improving organizational performance.

In support of this study, I selected three senior leaders of a single NPO who had experience providing leadership and using quality management standards to achieve strategic goals. Korstjens and Moser (2018) noted that, in qualitative research, selecting experienced participants as representative of the population of the study increases the transferability of the data collected. When using purposive sampling, researchers can select experts who possess relevant experience about the topic of the research (van Rijnsoever, 2017). The three senior leaders selected for this case study had demonstrated experience using quality management standards to implement strategic direction for the continuous advancement of their organization.

The decision to use a purposive sample consisting of participants with experience about the phenomenon being studied was predicated on my intent to achieve data saturation. Selecting experienced participants helps researchers to obtain information that facilitates exhaustive exploration and thoroughly examine a researched phenomenon (van Rijnsoever, 2017). Vasileiou et al. (2018) noted that researchers should think about selecting a population size focused on attaining an in-depth understanding of the topic studied to achieve data saturation. Hence, focused on gaining insight into the nature of the phenomenon researched, I considered a sample size of three senior leaders as appropriate for contributing to achieving data saturation. Data saturation occurs when no new information or ideas emerge from the data (Hancock et al., 2016). Focused on achieving data saturation, I collected information from three senior leaders from the client organization and used member checking, transcript evaluation, and methodological triangulation. I was able to achieve data saturation after 18 interviews.

Ethical Research

Researchers must maintain ethical responsibility when conducting academic research. Sawicki (2017) noted that obtaining informed consent is useful for the researcher to demonstrate a genuine interest in protecting participants' right to make choices without interference or coercion. Adherence to ethical standards also includes that researchers obtain participants' consent before collecting data, inform potential respondents of the benefits and risks of the research, and their right to elect not to participate or end their participation (van Nuil et al., 2018). I conducted interviews and collected data after receiving official informed consent from all participants. Participants

of research studies must be informed, notified, and advised of their right to withdraw

their consent to participate in the study at any time without any repercussion (Oye et al.,

2016; van den Berg & Struwig, 2017). I obtained written consent from participants and

reiterated their right to withdraw their participation at any time, before, during, or after

conducting the interview. All participants willingly signed a consent form indicating that

their participation in the study was voluntary.

Abshire et al. (2017) noted that researchers increase their opportunities to

strengthen the internal validity of the research by obtaining contribution and optimizing

participant involvement. My efforts to incentivize participation in the study included

explaining to participants that contributions to the study could help advance the

organization's interest and their interest as well. I did not offer or provide any monetary

incentives. I used coding such as P1, P2, P3 to protect the confidentiality of participants,

and a pseudonym to mask the name of the client organization. The information obtained

from participants will be stored in a password-protected external hard drive that I kept in

a safe at my home. The external hard drive will be destroyed after 5 years.

The role of the Walden University IRB is to ensure all doctoral proposals are

evaluated to validated adherence to institutional regulations and professional ethical

conduct appropriate for the study. Per the Walden IRB approval (Approval # 07-19-19-

0979148), I was required to comply with ethical standards in research. As described by

the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and

Behavioral Research (1979), ethical risks required mitigation to protect human

participants. Therefore, I maintained the promise of confidentiality ensuring that all

information the participants shared remained confidential, and I shared my findings with participants to demonstrate objectivity and to help confirm that identifiable information about the organization and participants was not disclosed in this research study.

Data Collection Instruments

For this single case study, I was the primary data collection instrument. The data collection process for this case study was semistructured interviews and document reviews. Researchers can use semistructured interviews and documents review to collect in-depth evidence about a phenomenon (Hamilton & Finley, 2020; van den Berg & Struwig, 2017; Yin, 2018). Interviewers use semistructured interviews to ask open-ended questions allowing for a discussion and the discovery of rich qualitative data about a phenomenon while adhering to a script (Hamilton & Finley, 2020; Oye et al., 2016). Document review describes the process whereby the researchers examine past data such as company records, organizational charts and graphs, and public records. Researchers can use document reviews to validate the data collected and obtain additional insight into the phenomena studied (Bleiker et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). I asked questions to explore the senior leaders' strategies related to the strategic implementation of quality management standards to improve organizational performance. The participants of the study validated the information gathered through the semistructured interviews via member checking. The review of documents during the data collection process enhanced the reliability of the research through data triangulation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Heesen et al., 2019; Varpio et al., 2017). Following research protocols help researchers ensure and enhance the reliability and validity of their studies (Gentles et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2015). The

case study protocols include (a) data collection procedures, (b) data collection questions, and (c) a guide for the case study report (Yin, 2018). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix) to guide and assist me throughout this study. I assured protocol compliance by using the same protocol with all participants.

Data Collection Technique

Researchers can use semistructured interviews as the primary data collection technique for their study (Hamilton & Finley, 2020; Yin, 2018). For this qualitative single case study, I used semistructured interviews, member checking, and document reviews to explore the strategies senior leaders use to strategically implement quality management standards to improve organizational performance. The use of semistructured interviews is an effective method to collect data about the phenomenon studied (Bleiker et al., 2019; Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019; Park & Park, 2016). Interviews help researchers to interact with participants to allow them to reveal their lived experiences and share their insight into the phenomenon studied (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Park & Park, 2016; Wilson, 2016).

An advantage of using semistructured interviews is that it allows researchers to gather data quickly and present follow-up questions to clarify the information gathered (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). Using semistructured interviews has disadvantages including miscommunication, bias, or imprecise participants' perception of the phenomenon or experience (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Oye et al., 2016). I adhered to an interview protocol (see Appendix) while interviewing the participants to help increase the reliability and validity of the case study. Document

reviews help researchers to validate the data collected (Bleiker et al., 2019; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Saunders et al., 2015). I conducted document reviews throughout the data collection process.

Member checking aids a researcher to ensure the information participants shared was not misinterpreted and recorded accurately (Birt et al., 2016; Brear, 2019; Varpio et al., 2017). To authenticate the data collected, and to ensure that participants' experiences were recorded accurately, I used member checking. The information collected was shared with participants requesting their validation and to ensure I did not misinterpret or misunderstood their experiences.

Data Organization Techniques

The approach to organizing the vast amount of data collected in qualitative research studies aids researchers to efficiently access and analyze the data (Saunders et al., 2015; Williams & Moser, 2019; Yin, 2018). I used several software tools to organize the data collected for this study. NVivo facilitated the coding and evaluation of the data; while Microsoft Word was used to transcribe the content of the interviews. The data was named based on content and topic as per the Baldrige categories, and saved in folders on my desktop computer. Researchers are responsible for protecting the anonymity and ensuring the confidentiality of participants (Abshire et al., 2017; Wendler, 2020; Yin, 2018). My effort to protect the confidentiality of the client NPO participants during data storage included using pseudonyms as the designation for the client NPO and labels to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

Reflective journals aid researchers to examine personal assumptions, establish transparency, and codify the collected information into themes (Clark & Veale, 2018; Davidson et al., 2017). In this study, I used a reflective journal to help clarify individual subjectivities, and to help create transparency in my research process. Research logs aid researchers to organize and track information collected, maintain a list of comprehensive sources searched, and keep a summary of findings (Gangneux, 2019). I used a research log to track data collected from interviews and maintained a record of the research conducted to help determine strategies that leaders can use to implement quality management standards to improve performance. The data collected will be securely stored following the IRB protocol. The data collected will be safeguarded, and stored in a locked safe for 5 years, then destroy after that period.

Data Analysis

The data collected for this case study was analyzed using methodological triangulation. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) asserted that using more than one method to collect data about the same topic facilitates researchers' intent to improve the validity of the research. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), the process of methodological triangulation aids researchers to enhance the reliability of the results by achieving data saturation. Hence, my data analysis was focused on comparing the data collected from each senior leader interview with information from internal documents, private and public websites, and performance outcomes.

After completing the interviews and allowing participants to validate the data using the member-checking method, I analyzed the data looking for themes. I used Yin's

five-step thematic approach to analyze the data which consists of (a) compile the data, (b) disassemble the data, (c) reassemble the data, (d) interpret the data, and (e) draw conclusions about the data (Yin, 2018). I used the thematic analysis approach, my research journal, and NVivo 12 for Windows helped me to identify patterns, codes, and themes in the data. Researchers use thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data collected (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Methodological triangulation is a research strategy used to obtain additional comprehensive data and attain a greater understanding of the phenomenon researched (Joslin & Müller, 2016). I used methodological triangulation to validate my findings and help enhance my understanding of the studied phenomenon.

Deming's (1982) TQM theory was the conceptual framework for this study. Correlating literature, the conceptual framework, and findings help researchers interpret the meaning of the emerging key themes (Albright & Winston, 2017; Saunders et al., 2018). I compared the key themes and findings with the conceptual framework to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the TQM strategies NPO leaders can use to integrate quality management standards into strategic planning to improve organizational performance.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Establishing dependability by maintaining consistency, trustworthiness, and repeatability help researchers improve the reliability of research studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). Efforts to achieve reliability should rely on establishing and

adhering to a methodology, which if necessary, can be duplicated and will allow other researchers to arrive at the same discoveries and conclusions (Yin, 2018). The dependability of the data used for this study was addressed through member checking to validate interpretation. Researchers can improve the credibility and reliability of the data by conducting member checking (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Varpio et al., 2017). In support of this study, I used member checking to ensure the reliability of the data.

Validity

The validity of a study is predicated on the researcher's ability to obtain sufficient information, and authenticate the data collected to substantiate the findings (Houghton et al., 2017). Substantiating findings helps researchers establish credibility by linking the findings with facts to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the research study. Researchers return transcripts collected from interviews to participants to check the information collected for accuracy, quality, and validity (Gentles et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2015; Varpio et al., 2017). After completing an interview, I created, analyzed, and returned a transcript of the session to the participants requesting member checking of the accuracy of my notes. The transcripts were reviewed, validated, and edited by the participants as needed to ensure the collected information from the interview responses was presented accurately

The validity of qualitative research also describes the effectiveness of the measurements, analysis of the results, and the transferability of the study to similar groups or interests (Saunders et al., 2015). As the researcher, my efforts were focused on Fusch et al. (2018) recognized transferability as the ability to generalize or transfer results

to other contexts or settings. Korstjens and Moser (2018) noted that researchers can enhance transferability by describing the research context, detailing data collection and interpretation. The approach helps researchers to facilitate information that readers and future researchers can use to determine the transferability of the findings presented (Fusch et al., 2018). In this study, I detailed how I collected the data, and presented findings interpreted from methodological triangulation.

Confirmability is another criterium of a single case study that researchers are required to address within qualitative research to increase the validity of their studies (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Yin, 2018). Researchers can use multiple data analyses to increase the credibility of their findings (Renz et al., 2018). In my qualitative analysis, I used several methods to analyze the data collected, including methodological triangulation and member checking. Renz et al. (2018) noted that researchers might use triangulation to achieve confirmability in qualitative research. In this study, I relied on methodological triangulation to achieve confirmability.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I discussed the purpose of my study, the role of the researcher, the research method and design, and the population and sampling decisions made for this research. I used a qualitative single case study, which helped me gain a richer insight into the phenomenon studied and find potential answers to the research question. The participants of this qualitative single case study included three senior leaders from the midwestern region in the United States who have successfully helped improve the performance of their organizations. The section includes information about the data

collection techniques and analysis used to ensure reliability and validity for the case

study. Section 3 contains my findings, potential social contribution, and professional

implications of my study.

Section 3: Organizational Profile

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that leaders of NPOs have used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. Business leaders use the organizational profile of the Baldrige Excellence Framework to assess their organization, understand key factors and business operations that shape their organization, and gain insight into the competitive environment (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2019). I formulated interview questions using the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework to facilitate data collection and to gather information about the organization. The effort helped answer the research question that guided this study: What strategies do leaders of NPOs use to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance? My thematic analysis of the data collected resulted in the emergence of three key themes: (a) quality management standards in strategic planning, (b) employee empowerment and involvement, and (c) customer satisfaction.

MSY is a pseudonym that I assigned to protect the identity of the client organization that is the focus of this study. Established in 1995, MSY founders intended to meet the needs of foster families and to help overcome other existent gaps in service for prospective adoptive parents and their children. MSY began when a group of concerned foster parents organized around the lack of assistance, training, and help available for families and children in MSY's service area. MSY founders requested and were granted the authority to offer and provide services to families under the auspices of the state's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) as an NPO. Subsequently,

MSY leaders began to provide services to families in their local community, including educational workshops, respite care, and conferences emphasizing their support to adoptive and prospective foster parents.

Governance for the MSY organization is the responsibility of the board of directors (BOD). The BOD is composed of volunteers who share responsibility for achieving the organization's mission and vision. Members of the BOD serve in roles such as president, board members, treasurer, and secretary. MSY employs an executive director (ED) who serves as an agent of the BOD. Additional staff members include service coordinators, childcare providers, teachers, and administrative assistants.

MSY senior leaders expanded the organizational capacity by adding the capability to provide educational training designed specifically to help prospective foster parents and assist with clothing, school supplies, and childcare services to all families within the community. Senior leaders organized retention events intending to attract potential adoptive or foster parents and used the opportunity to provide resources and inform members of the new services available. MSY leaders established partnerships, alliances, and collaborative relationships with other NPOs, government agencies, and private and public donors, which helped the organization to gain the capacity to offer and provide full-fledged daycare services to families in need. The senior leaders' partnership efforts helped MSY to spread its service capability and provide services to 18 counties within the state.

Key Factors Worksheet

Organizational Description

MSY is an NPO located in the midwestern region of the United States. Senior leaders helped established MSY as a mission-driven organization focused on assisting, mentoring, and servicing families and children beyond what the child welfare system provides. The MSY leaders developed member and partner relationships with state, county, and local government agencies, enabling the organization to provide two arms of services: a childcare center and the foster care services team. Organizational leaders' efforts helped establish a childcare center that provides a variety of services to include a drop-in, temporarily free, specialized, and emergency daycare for the children of foster and kinship adoptive families. MSY leaders established the foster care services team to service, resource, educate, and train foster parents, adoptive parents, and kinship families.

The senior leaders' development of partnerships and collaboration with other NPOs, government agencies, and community members enabled MSY to service, train, and teach families in more than 18 counties within the state. The senior leaders' approach helped MSY to build a reputation as an organization focused on the needs and interests of people within the community. Exemplifying the organizational reputation, MSY leaders and staff members use their professional expertise and personal experiences to teach potential foster parents how to navigate through the licensing process, complete all legal requirements to successfully adopt a child, and cope with the challenges of becoming a provider and a caregiver.

The MSY leaders' competencies (see Table 1) help set apart this mission-driven organization from over 70 daycares in the midwestern service area. Senior leaders helped improve services to families by offering a preschool program funded by the state for at-risk 4-year-old children. MSY leaders' innovative approach to kinship care services includes educational workshops, training, conferences, advocacy, and support groups that create opportunities to offer and distribute community resources and information to families in need. The leaders' involvement, team-building philosophy, and customer-oriented focus helped the organization secure donations and provide resources such as permanent or temporary care, food, and clothing to families in need.

Table 1

Leaders Core Competencies

Key competency	Key area	Alignment
Strategic thinking	Organizational sustainability	Leaders implement short- and long-term plans to create opportunities and manage risks.
Entrepreneurship	Organizational development	Leaders help the organization to improve services and identifying new opportunities to position the organization for future success.
Team building	Organizational partnerships and collaborations	Leaders develop relationships to increase the capacity to serve more families in the community.
Foster parent experience	Creativity and flexibility	Leaders offer instruction through educational workshops, training, and organizational support groups for foster parents.
Customer service	Strategic management	MSY leaders establish design or modify the organization's strategy focused on satisfying customer's needs
Leveraging diversity	Workforce management	MSY leaders foster an inclusive workplace and leverage diversity to achieve the organizational mission and vision.
Management experience	Human capital, conflict, and resource management	Leaders standardize processes, design and implement organizational alignment, and encourage innovative service methods.
Financial management	Funds management	Leaders ensure that donations, grants, and resources are used for the intended purpose.
Childhood education	Cognitive, functional, social, and emotional development	Leaders operationalize educational and work experience into services provided to families and their children

Organizational Environment

Program and Service Offerings. MSY employees touch and help foster, adoptive, and kinship families through the services and programs offered to families such as the recruitment, retention, and training service, the kinship care service, the preschool readiness program, and the Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) program. Under the auspices and funding of the state, MSY's foster care navigators (FCNs) become advocates and educators to potential foster parents. FCNs liaise between the prospective foster parent and government agencies and use their expertise and institutional insight to mentor and help prospective foster parent applicants reduce the application time and continue to provide care for their loved ones as required. Recruitment, retention, and training coordinators serve and support both current and prospective foster parents, providing education, training, and respite care at periodic events throughout the year for 18 counties in the state.

MSY staff members leverage a state-funded preschool program to provide early childhood care and to holistically develop children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs as the broad foundation for lifelong learning and well-being. The organization's kinship care coordinators provide educational workshops, emotional support, family raising training, community resource information, referrals, respite care, and assistance with school supplies, clothing, and other items. MSY's PRIDE coordinators help foster and adoptive parents with standardized, competency-based training, and professional development necessary to successfully protect, nurture, and meet children's developmental needs.

Mission, Vision, and Values. MSY senior leaders define the mission and vision of the organization as a provider of services for all families with an emphasis on helping adoptive, kinship, and foster parents improve the quality of life of their children (see Figure 1). Senior leaders use their core competencies (see Table 1) to establish and sustain an organizational culture that supports workforce creativity, flexibility, and innovative solutions to help provide better services to customers. Organizational leaders leverage their experiences as organizational managers and foster parents to facilitate resources and help all families make changes to improve the well-being of their children.

Figure 1

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission: To provide services for all families with an emphasis on training, mentoring, and resourcing adoptive and foster parents

Vision: To help foster and adoptive kinship families improve the quality of life for every child.

Values: To focus on serving and providing care, fostering diversity, developing internal and external teams, mission-oriented management, commitment to excellence, and continuously improve to meet and surpass customers' needs and expectations

Workforce Profile. MSY's workforce includes volunteers and full-time and part-time employees. The number of volunteers working for the organization fluctuates depending on the number of programs and services MSY offers to customers. The organization comprises staff members divided into three distinct groups, which are the leadership, program directors/supervisors, and specialists (see Table 2). MSY leaders

segment the workforce according to the respective organizational function to generate cooperation and operational flexibility to respond to changes in customers' needs.

The educational requirements for employees vary based on position and degree of responsibility. Table 2 includes the specific educational requirements for the employee segments. The key drivers for organizational success are the professional competencies, work, and experience of the workforce. The variety of educational, professional, and life experience backgrounds of the workforce aligns with MSY senior leaders' value of diversity. There are no organized bargaining units.

The MSY workforce is required to adhere to occupational health and safety standards, submit to a comprehensive childcare background check, and follow federal and state guidelines regarding the protection of personal information and privacy. MSY employees working as childcare providers are required to obtain and maintain licenses and certifications as required by state and federal laws. MSY leaders ensure that the workforce receives health and training during employee onboarding to gain insight into the actions that can be used to respond to safety concerns and prevent accidents in the workplace.

Table 2

Educational Requirements by Workforce Segment

Segment	Audience	Educational requirement
Leadership	23%	Minimum bachelor's degree, and work-related experience.
Director/supervisors	12%	Bachelor's degree, or work-related experience. Additional education & certifications per job description.
Specialists	64%	Childhood developmental associate's certificate. Additional licenses and certifications as per the state regulatory guidelines, and the job description (e.g., administrative assistant, teachers, trainers, and cook).

Assets. The organizational assets include MSY's workforce group, daycare equipment, office equipment, and information technology equipment used in support of the execution of MSY's mission. The organization operates its daycare from one rental space located in the midwestern region of the United States. MSY's senior leaders do not own any buildings, tools, or large equipment. The senior leaders place a high value on the organizational workforce and consider employees the most valuable asset.

Regulatory Requirements. MSY leaders are licensed to operate in the state as a tax-exempt organization under Internal Revenue Service Code 501(c)(3). The senior leaders of the organization conduct business in compliance with the IRS code and are eligible to receive tax-deductible donations and contributions. The IRS code requires MSY leaders to annually file IRS 990 tax forms and comply with the regulations for NPOs. MSY's registration as an NPO is on file in the office of the secretary of state where the organization operates.

MSY leaders use internal periodic evaluations and inspections to ensure the

workforce's adherence to the state's DHHS, county, and city standards of ethical

behavior. The special health and safety requirements are defined by the state and include

vaccinations, CPR training and licensing, adherence to the Occupational Safety and

Health Act (OSHA) guidelines and standards, food handling licenses, criminal

backgrounds, and child neglect and child abuse background investigations. Monthly,

internal and external evaluations help MSY leaders to remain compliant with the daycare

licensing and certification requirements. Equally, an external state organization

periodically conducts assessments and inspections to certify that individuals who educate

and teach current or prospective foster parents have attained the required certifications

through official training. The MSY workforce complies with DHHS, OSHA, county, and

city regulatory standards.

Organizational Relationships

Senior leaders develop partnerships and collaborative relationships with external

organizations to help achieve MSY's mission and vision objectives (see Table 4). The

organizational relationships include established partnerships and collaborations with local

community organizations; city, county, and state agencies; and other NPOs providing

similar services. Senior leaders' efforts help the organization to facilitate training

required for lead teachers to complete the required childhood development associate's

certificate. The relationships forged with similar entities help MSY leaders to maintain

the required qualified human resources to support the organizational core objectives and

achieve the sustainability necessary to provide uninterrupted services to the communities

supported.

Organizational Structure. The organizational structure of MSY consists of the

BOD, the ED, the fiscal manager, program directors, and staff members. The ED reports

directly to the BOD and the program directors/supervisors (PD/S) report to the ED. The

governance system for MSY consists of the BOD, which includes executive members

who advise the president of the board and are assigned to ad hoc committees in support of

specific strategic initiatives. The ED and the program directors are part of the leadership

group, are authorized by the BOD to make day-to-day decisions, and provide input about

the strategic decision of the organizational programs as noted in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Organizational Structure
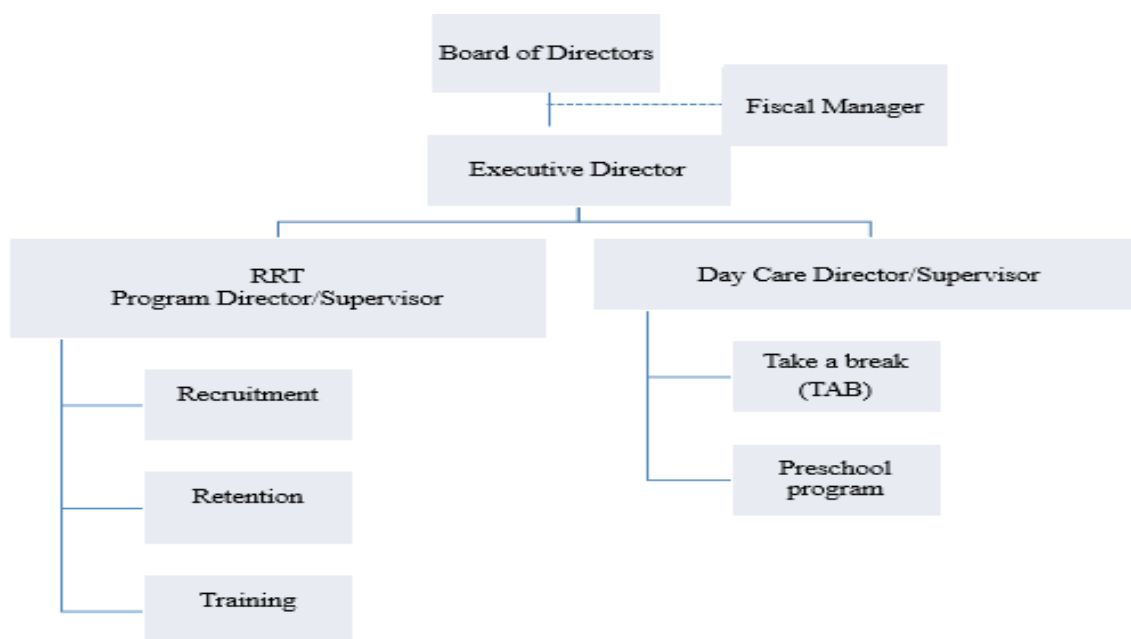
Customers and Stakeholders. The MSY leadership team believes and conducts organizational operations focused on satisfying and surpassing customer's needs. MSY's key customer groups include foster, adoptive, kinship care families, neighborhood associations, other daycares within the organization's service area. The MSY key customer groups are the primary drivers and catalysts for the organization's mission, vision, and commitment to providing services to help overcome existing gaps within the state's child welfare system. MSY leaders continuously assess the organizational strategic objectives to ensure the delivery of programs and services that meet and surpass customers' needs and expectations. MSY customers are encouraged and welcome to actively participate in the organizational efforts to help other foster, adoptive, kinship care families overcome their challenges, issues, or concerns.

MSY's stakeholders (see Table 3) have a vested interest in helping the organization achieve its mission and vision objectives and provide assistance and resources to ensure the successful execution of the organization's initiatives. The key stakeholders participate at all levels of the MSY's organizational structure and facilitate assistance, training, and certification classes, which helps the MSY leaders to maintain a competent workforce. The result of the MSY leaders' efforts to continue to build collaborative partnerships with their stakeholders helps to increase the organizational capacity to provide food and meals to MSY's customers; families and children. MSY's key stakeholder groups include the BOD, workforce members, donors, and grantmakers, contractors, neighborhood associations, county school districts, other daycare, and state anchor organizations. The key stakeholders support MSY's program and services by

providing funding, subsidized resources, personnel as required to fill temporary

shortages, training, evaluations, and certifications (see Table 3 for a list of key customers

and stakeholders).

Table 3

Key Customers and Stakeholders

	Key requirements	Alignment
Key customers		
Community members	Assistance, training, and guidance through the licensing process, childcare, preschool children education, emergency childcare.	Leaders ensure and align products and services with the needs of community members.
Key stakeholders		
Board of directors	Accountable for the governance and strategy approval and adherence to local, state, and federal laws.	Leaders develop, implement, evaluate, modify, and align the operational strategy to ensure mission, vision, values achievement
Workforce	Skilled, licensed, experienced, and supportive of the leadership commitment to generate opportunities to develop and improve performance to achieve MSY's vision and mission.	Leaders develop and implement processes to create synergy, maximize resources, and support the workforce's ability to perform job functions.
Anchor organization	Support MSY's programs and services by providing resources, education, certification, funding, personnel, and opportunities.	MSY senior leaders collaborate with anchor government institutions to provide training, advocacy, mentorship, products, personal supplies, and services to community members within the organizational service areas.
Grant funding/donors	Support MSY's programs, services through donations, grants, and resources.	Leaders ensure that donations, grants, and resources are used for the intended purpose.

Suppliers, Partners, and Collaborators. Indispensable to the mission of the

MSY organization is the relationship with its partners and collaborators. MSY senior

leaders foster, build and maintain partnerships, and alliances relationships with NPOs,

local, county, and state government organizations, professional consultants, and

individuals that provide support and resources used in support of the organizational

initiatives. As a result, MSY leaders receive support from substitute teachers, support

with billing and budgeting, professional training development, and prospective foster

parent recruitment. The MSY key partner also facilitates the office space where the

organization operates and provides daycare services. The senior leaders' effort to develop

collaborative relationships with key partners helps secure funding use to increase the

organizational capacities to offer services such as free emergency daycare, recruitment,

and training for current and prospective foster parents (see Table 4 for a list of key

collaborators and partners).

Table 4

Key Collaborators and Partners

	Key requirements	Alignment
Key collaborators		
Local NPO	Provide the office space where MSY staff offers and delivers daycare service to customers.	MSY senior leaders maintain collaborative partnerships with the NPO
Key partners		
Community members	Support MSY through the use of the organizations' programs and services, resource donation, and volunteer participation.	MSY senior leaders ensure that programs and services satisfy customer needs.
NPOs	Provides substitute teachers and supports MSY with financial management services.	MSY leaders work with other NPOs ensuring to promote the achievement of MSY's strategic initiatives.
Anchor organization	Support MSY with funding, licensing, training, and customer referrals.	MSY leaders work with anchor organizations to advocate, train, provide resources, and help future foster parents obtain their licenses.
Professional consultant	Provides payroll and accounting services to the organization.	MSY senior leaders ensure that organizations maintain strict adherence to the IRS requirements described under section 501(c)(3), and programs and services create a benefit for the community, not private individuals.
Local businesses	Support MSY's programs, services through donations, grants, and resources.	Leaders ensure that donations, grants, and resources are used for their intended purpose.

Organizational Situation

MSY's senior leaders experience competition for scarce resources available

through foundations, grants from government organizations, donations, and contributions.

The senior leaders recognized among the strategic competitors were other nonprofit and

private organizations that offer similar services and programs to families within the
midwestern region of the United States. The competitive strategic challenges include a
continuous need for senior leaders to attract and retain qualified personnel required to
achieve the organizational services and programs offered to customers to provide a
strategic advantage over their competitors.

Competitive Environment

The senior leaders of the MSY organization operate in a competitive, complex
market environment with limited resources available to sustain and meet strategic
objectives. As a provider of childcare and preschool education to 18 counties, the MSY
organization competes with over 74 other organizations for the city, county, and state
funds, grants, contributions from businesses, and individual donors.

MSY's senior leaders mitigate challenges by offering childcare services at
competitive or lower rates than their rivals, and temporary urgent daycare on a case-by-
case basis. The senior leaders' approach to comprehensive assistance includes providing
families, foster parents, and children with subsidized educational resources, children,
infant, and baby products, food, and clothing. The partnerships and alliances MSY senior
leaders established helped the organization to overcome operational risks resulting from
employee turnover.

Competitive Position. The strategic competitors of the MSY senior leaders
include other NPOs and private organizations that offer similar services and programs to
families within the midwestern region of the United States. MSY senior leaders achieved
a competitive advantage by focusing their program and service offerings on a particular

segment of the population, mainly foster, adoptive and kinship families. The senior

leaders' commitment to care, built, and forge collaborative partnerships and alliances

enabled the organization to provide services to foster, adoptive, and kinship families

beyond the capacity of competitive rivals. Senior leaders differentiate their organization

from competitors leveraging their alliances and collaborative relationships to maximize

resources, strive to increase capabilities, and achieve the necessary organizational

synergy needed to help achieve MSY's mission, vision, and values.

Competitiveness Changes. MSY senior leaders are attuned to the need to sustain

and improve the quality of their offerings to create distinct value propositions for the

customers. Senior leaders' efforts to provide childcare services, preschool education,

assistance, and care to adoptive, foster, and kinship families are challenged by

competitors entering the market segments. Employee turnover, daycare service capacity,

and government administrative processing delays have implications for MSY senior

leaders who intend to continue to provide services throughout 18 counties. The increasing

number of families and children in need of support, care, and assistance is another

concern that MSY senior leaders must address and resolve to attain a competitive

position within the market segment as premier trainers, mentors, and service providers for

adoptive, foster, kinship families and their children.

Comparative Data. MSY leaders rely on comparative data to analyze customer

demand fluctuations, resources, and capabilities for the development and implementation

of organizational strategic initiatives. The comparative data about competing NPOs is

accessible on GuideStar and other local and state government websites. The senior

leaders can use the data to identify their competitors, recognize customers' trends, and identify potential partners that can potentially help strengthen the organization's competitive positions. A potential challenge for MSY senior leaders is the lack of personnel available to analyze and provide strategic insight useful to implement organizational initiatives or time-sensitive solutions to improve performance.

Strategic Context

The primary challenge for MSY senior leaders is to design and implement a strategy that helps improve and sustain the organizational capacity. Developing a business strategy helps senior leaders to provide a sustainability roadmap that can facilitate the accomplishment of the mission and vision. Hence, senior leaders facilitate education and training opportunities to help the workforce complete licensing and certification requirements. The approach to developing the workforce's skills and capabilities helps senior leaders keep up with current and anticipated changes.

MSY senior leaders' strategic focus to sustain the organizational capacity includes developing relationships. Senior leaders used their strategic relationship to help MSY offer childcare services as an attractive value proposition for customers due to its competitive cost. However, the space available to offer childcare services limits the organizational capacity to assist a larger customer segment. MSY leaders must address the potential threat to lose customers to competing service providers.

The key strategic advantage of MSY is the capacity to offer through partnerships and alliances products and services to a specific customer segment, and deliver tangible and intangible resources such as food, clothing, education, training, and emergency

daycare. MSY's leaders' competence, experience, and willingness to share with

prospective parents their skills and insight is a critical advantage that helps the

organization to provide paralleled training, assistance, and mentorship. MSY senior

leaders' determination and commitment to act founded on their values of caring, and

compassion enables the organization to help enhance the quality of life for members of

the communities they serve (see Table 5 for a list of key strategic challenges and

advantages).

Table 5

Key Strategic Challenges and Advantages

Business area	Strategic challenge	Strategic advantage
Strategy	Secure adequate funding	Enables the capacity to provide services to customers at a competitive cost
	Lessen employees' licenses and certifications attainment time	Increase organizational capacity
	Establish a succession plan	Facilitates continuity of operations
Communication	Improve internal and external communication	Helps MSY leaders to maintain communication with partners, collaborators, customers, and the workforce
Marketing	Continuously assess customer's needs.	Gained insight offer opportunities to respond to environmental threats and changes in customers' needs.
Operations	Sustain competencies and capacity to provide services in 18 counties	Maintaining organizational competencies supports the strategic objective to improve survivability
Societal responsibility	Increased number of fosters, adoptive, kinship parents, caregivers, and families in crisis	MSY area of operations extends to 18 counties, which offers the potential to assist a greater number of families in need

Performance Improvement System

MSY's senior leaders use performance management systems to assess employees' contributions to organizational goals, compare and contrast expectations with actual performance. Organizational leaders rely on annual professional evaluations to assess individual performance, develop a training plan to satisfy those needs, and appraise good performance. Leaders also include the results of external periodic evaluations and ongoing supervision to retrain the workforce, modify performance standards to increase regulatory compliance and coach for performance. MSY leaders' pursuit of continuous improvement includes conducting monthly, quarterly, and annual training and workshops to enhance professional competencies.

Organizational leaders aligned work performance expectations with the organization's mission and goals. During onboarding, MSY employees receive the scope, standards, and expectations of work performance from their direct supervisor. MSY supervisors evaluate employees' performance considering how individual contributions support the organizational mission of assisting, mentoring, and servicing families and children. Leaders also evaluate employees' support for organizational values. MSY leaders recognize employees that surpass customers' expectations or help the organization to provide a better quality of care.

Leadership Triad: Leadership, Strategy, and Customers

Leadership

Senior Leadership

Leadership for the MSY organization is the responsibility of the senior leadership team, which includes members of the BOD. As a team, senior leaders establish the purpose and provide direction for the organization. MSY's senior leaders provide strategic objectives to help define how operations will be conducted to improve performance and purposes, goals, and values. Senior leaders participate in ad hoc committees, establish performance standards, and make hiring decisions.

The ED is a full-time paid employee who serves as an ex officio member of the senior leadership team and reports to the BOD. The ED manages and oversees organizational resources to ensure the accomplishment of daily operations. The ED has direct operational control over the PD/S and is responsible for workforce training and coaching.

Collectively, MSY leaders build, develop, and exploit new and existing relationships to help advance toward the achievement of competitive advantage and to improve service quality. Senior leaders incentivize workforce engagement through the offering of education and training to help increase professional competencies. MSY senior leaders create leadership skill development and incentivize improved performance through recognition.

Vision and Values. The BOD meets monthly to evaluate how effectively organizational performance is helping to achieve strategic objectives, and quarterly to

modify the guidance or direction as necessary to meet and surpass customers'

expectations/needs. During quarterly meetings, board members assess the status of the

organizational culture to ensure the organizational values are aligned with the strategic

plan. Senior leaders set the vision and values defining MSY's future state, identifying

specifically how services and training will be provided to customers, and standardizing

the acceptable professional conduct for the workforce. The secretary of the BOD is

responsible for codifying all recommended strategic changes to the vision and values,

while the executive members approve changes to the organizational vision.

MSY senior leaders also deploy the vision and organizational values to the

workforce formally through the ED who in turn, communicate the vision and provides

specific operational guidance to the PD/S. Collectively, the BOD and the ED share

MSY's vision and values with collaborators, partners, customers, and stakeholders

publishing the information on MSY's website, and presenting MSY's vision and values

during conference presentations, workshops, and teleconferences.

Senior leaders leverage monthly board meetings to define, plan, and decide on the

organizational strategic direction, describe interim actions, or make course changes

required to resolve operational obstacles limiting the ability to render services to

customers. The ED employs a coaching leadership style to dynamically interact with the

PD/S and embed the mission and vision set by the BOD into organizational processes and

the plans of work. The approach facilitates conditions to generate the synergy required

for the MSY's workforce to share resources, capabilities, and responsibilities to satisfy

customer's needs.

Actively participating in customer and stakeholder-oriented events, MSY senior leaders demonstrate their commitment to support the advancement of the organizational values to provide care for families and the children of the 18 communities served. Exemplifying their commitment to customers, senior leaders volunteer and shared their knowledge with prospective foster parents during all the scheduled organizational events. Senior leaders' support for continuous organizational improvement includes the establishment of training sessions designed to help improve internal professional expertise needed to help foster parents complete the state-required training or licensing. During board meetings and training sessions, senior leaders reiterate the importance of constant adherence to ethical and legal standards including DHHS, OSHA, county, city regulatory standards, and state licensing rules for childcare organizations. Monthly, the ED validates and reports the organizational adherence to the state's licensing requirements to the BOD.

Communication. MSY senior leaders engage and communicate with the workforce formally and informally. Senior leaders publish and distribute within the organization updates to the vision and values through face-to-face discussions and internal communication tools. MSY leaders use organizational meetings to share information, assess the effectiveness of the strategy, and receive feedback from the workforce. Quarterly, senior leaders meet with the workforce during formal meetings to solicit insight from the workforce to help identify operational needs, or challenges limiting employees' ability to improve performance. During work meetings, the ED defines the organizational objectives and clarifies functions each program director must

complete in support of a specific strategic goal. The ED also communicates organizational changes, performance expectations, and solicits feedback from the PD/S about the need for additional resources.

Periodically, senior leaders communicate the mission and values during their monthly or quarterly meetings with stakeholders, customers, and partners through messaging. Additionally, MSY leaders established an organizational leadership team to continuously disseminate their mission and vision internally, with other partner NPOs, government agencies, community businesses, and customers. MSY senior leaders employ innovative solutions to maintain open lines of communication with collaborators, customers, partners, and stakeholders. As an example, MSY leaders' used teleconferencing as an interim solution to meet, communicate, and continue working with community members, local, municipal, and state officials, key stakeholders, and partners to deliver assistance to customers during the pandemic period, March through August 2020, caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 that affected the Midwestern region of the United States [and the world from the start of 2020]. MSY leaders' efforts help to assess organizational needs and as necessary, realign capabilities to meet and surpass customer's expectations. Hence, through active internal and external communication, senior leaders help resolve and maintain a balance between creating value for customers and continuously expanding organizational capabilities (see Table 6 for a description of communication methods and their strategic purpose).

Table 6

Communication Method and Strategic Purpose

Focus	Method	Audience	Strategic purpose
External	Website	Customers, stakeholder, partners, and the public	Helps leaders' efforts to communicate the organizational mission, vision, and values
	Conferences, meetings, teleconferences	MSY leaders, collaborators, and partners	Enable MSY's leaders to exchange information, develop or build collaborative relationships
	Email, meetings	BOD, ED, PD/S, and the workforce	Facilitate and share information flow within MSY
Internal	Social media	Customers, community members	Helps MSY leaders to identify customer needs, exchange information with current and potential future customers.

Mission and Organizational Performance. MSY leaders foster conditions for organizational success through their active participation in customer and stakeholder-oriented events. Exemplifying their commitment to customers, senior leaders volunteer and shared their knowledge with prospective foster parents during training workshops and scheduled organizational events. Senior leaders' support for continuous organizational improvement includes the establishment of training sessions designed to help improve internal professional expertise needed to help foster parents complete the state-required training or licensing. During organizational meetings and training sessions, senior leaders reiterate the importance of constant adherence to ethical and legal standards, including DHHS, OSHA, county, city regulatory standards, and state licensing rules for childcare organizations. Monthly, the ED validates and reports to the BOD the organizational adherence to the state's licensing requirements.

Senior leaders promote leadership development through mentoring, delegating responsibility, and offering specialized professional development. MSY leaders reinforce the organizational commitment to excellence by recognizing value-centric behavior. MSY senior leaders recognize high-performing staff members that surpass defined operational standards or helped improved the standards of quality service offered to customers. Additionally, senior leaders communicate strategic changes, discuss external challenges that may affect the organization, and provide updates about future procedural changes required to align operational performance with strategic goals.

MSY senior leaders use existent relationships and build collaborative partnerships with local businesses, other NPOs, and community leaders to increase the operational capability to provide continuous training and deliver quality services to foster parents and their children. Internally, senior leaders recognize and analyze operational accomplishments to foster employee engagement and assess the need to implement operational changes to achieve strategic objectives. The result of the analysis enables senior leaders to modify internal policies, reporting procedures, and implement training to help the staff manage and resolve potential conflict due to aggressive children's behavior. The senior leaders' approach helped the organization to expand the ability to provide services to a segment of the community that struggles to obtain childcare services for children with attachment issues.

Senior leaders use technological capabilities, relationships, and partnerships to attain and sustain the agility to address organizational risks and maintain the focus on achieving the organizational mission. MSY leaders use teleconferencing to communicate

with their workforce and continue to work with community members and key
stakeholders to deliver training to prospective adoptive parents during the pandemic
period caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 that affected the midwestern region of the
United States (and the world from the start of 2020). Constant communication with
customers through social media, enable MSY senior leaders to assess and as necessary
realign capabilities to meet and surpass customer's needs. Hence, through active internal
and external communication, senior leaders help resolve and maintain a balance between
creating value for customers and continuously expanding organizational capabilities.

Governance and Societal Contributions

The governance of the MSY organization is the responsibility of the board of
directors (BOD). The BOD consists of volunteers who have a vested interest in the
organizational achievement of the mission and vision. The MSY board members possess
the skills and expertise to develop strategies, lead, and implement processes to achieve
organizational strategic objectives. Senior leaders establish a hierarchical structure to
facilitate the accomplishment of legal and ethical responsibilities. The MSY's BOD
governs the organization with the support of the ED and a staff that helps execute the
organization's strategic objectives to assist and service families and their children,
emphasizing support to foster and adoptive parents.

Governance System. The president of the board uses annual performance
evaluations to ensure accountability for senior leaders' actions. The president evaluates
the annual performance of board members and the ED focusing on adherence to the
organizational bylaws and contributions in support of the organizational strategy.

Organizational leaders use the feedback from the evaluation for professional development and respond to potential issues related to services and operations.

MSY senior leaders ensure accountability for the achievement of strategic objectives through the assessment and management of operational and environmental risks. Members of the BOD actively participate in the decision to implement new initiatives, modify the strategy, and provide information about available accredited programs, services, and training through publicly accessible MSY's organizational website. Monthly, the BOD receives reports from the ED that detail the performance of the childcare center and the foster care program. Senior leaders use the reports to identify issues and respond to internal and external issues that may affect the organizational ability to achieve strategic goals. The internal control approach helps senior leaders maintain operational transparency.

As stewards of public funds and private donations, members of the BOD disclose financial information as applicable to satisfy organizational fiscal accountability. Members of the BOD are assigned to the audit committee and work directly with the treasurer who assists with the preparation and submission of financial reports to the IRS annually. Senior leaders use an external audit team to validate the accuracy of financial reports. Efforts to help achieve independence and effectiveness of internal and external audits include reassigning committee members and selecting different auditing service providers every 3 years.

The process of selecting future board members is the responsibility of an ad hoc committee. The criteria for the selection are based on education, skills, and experience.

The approach helps senior leaders to select applicants that can help expand the organizational competencies.

Legal and Ethical Behavior. The bylaws established by MSY's senior leaders defined the organizational tenets for the accepted ethical, legal, and professional conduct. Organizational standards of operations outlined in the bylaws, help senior leaders monitor and ensure that the workforce possesses the state-mandated licenses and certifications, and maintain strict adherence to legal and regulatory guidelines while providing training or services to the community. As members of the ad hoc risk management committee, MSY senior leaders determine the need to terminate the employment of individuals whose behavior indicates the unwillingness to actively participate, support diversity, provide quality care services to adoptive parents and their children, and help to improve the organizational performance continuously.

The ED and program supervisors monitor and validate that employees possess the state-mandated licensing and certification credentials necessary to render care, training, or services to families and their children. The ED submits monthly reports to the BOD, which details regulatory compliance and any adverse action that affected families or their children. Efforts to avoid adverse action include perioding conflict management training for the workforce and active personnel management, which includes day-to-day guidance to childcare providers, trainers, and mentors.

Societal Contributions. MSY leaders support and encourage workforce members to actively participate as volunteers in efforts to help improve the community. Quarterly, organizational leaders recognize employees who devote time to help advance the people,

the environment, or the social conditions of the community in which MSY operates. Senior leaders stimulate and promote the involvement of community members as volunteers to help satisfy key roles during social events, collect donations, and distribute resources to families in need. MSY leaders also solicit and encourage members of the community, foster, and adoptive parents to volunteer to help facilitate opportunities to share parenting practices and coping mechanisms that can be used to improve the quality of all families and facilitate the establishment of support groups within the community.

Organizational leaders' efforts to benefit the community include collaborating with other NPOs, community, and government organizations to establish outreach programs, educational workshops, and specialized childcare for children with special needs to help increase parenting competencies skills of current and prospective foster parents. The outreach programs and educational workshops are tailored to provide parents additional information, resources, and assistance with specific issues that can affect or could impact the family. During the sessions, foster parents receive technical knowledge and training on child development that can be used to help their children improve cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Senior leaders leverage support groups to connect adoptive or foster parents with government organizations and experienced foster parents that offer and provide families the necessary resources, education, and training needed to help children with special needs. MSY leaders demonstrate the intent to care for the community and support diversity through the offering of daycare services for all families of the community,

including support and care for children with attachment issues or attention-deficit problems.

Strategy

Leaders develop and implement an organizational strategy to provide direction, identify objectives, and define how plans will be followed to achieve a competitive advantage. The development of strategic objectives and action plans helps leaders to use and invest resources, implement changes, and help set the organization to timely respond to emerging threats and opportunities. The compilation of actions recognizes as vital to achieving short- and long-term organizational success become the strategic plan. The resulting action plans and identified key objectives comprise the strategy which will propel the organization forward toward the pursuit of long-term organizational sustainability.

The strategy development process MSY leaders employ begins with the assessment of information obtained from the ED, directors, and customers. After evaluating the current business situation, identifying market opportunities and threats, senior leaders design and establish the approach to achieve results within a year (short-term), 3 or 5 years (longer-term). Senior leaders align short- and longer-term strategic plans with MSY's mission and vision. Exemplifying the approach, short-term action plans include professional development training to help maintain the level of quality standards required to operate under the auspices of the state as a daycare provider for the children of foster and kinship adoptive families.

Strategy Development

MSY senior leaders develop and implement key short- and longer-term action plans to support the mission, vision, and values, enable strategic objective achievement and respond to changing customer needs. MSY leaders recognize that the key processes that support the development of a strategy must include analyzing collected customer information and assessing environmental opportunities and threats. MSY board members are at the beginning stage of developing and incorporating a 3- to 5-year strategy to provide direction and insight into the future for the organization. Members of the BOD strategically guide the transformational change through the ED who in turn implements action plans and measures the outcome of the initiatives.

MSY leaders rely on social media, personal and professional interaction with customers, to obtain and collect relevant data used in support of the development of the organizational strategy. Senior leaders analyze customer data to identify strategic opportunities and determine the transformational changes required to offer and deliver high-quality services to customers. Using a hybrid strategic development approach, MSY leaders maximize financial resources to offer low price services to traditional and potential new customers. The number of potential customers supported is a decisive factor that members of the BOD consider before pursuing strategic opportunities.

Senior leaders also use aggregated information obtained from partners, collaborators, and community members to evaluate environmental conditions, design, and implement strategic changes focused on delivering services to a larger customer segment. The BOD also receives a monthly report from the ED that details the number of

customers trained and the number of children that received childcare services. MSY

leaders' efforts to strategically expand the organizational capacity include shifting the

delivery of services to a virtual environment where a larger group of parents can receive

and use the information. MSY board members recognize the core competencies of their

employees as a necessity to execute the strategic plan. In that regard, MSY leaders

continuously work with partners and donors to provide appropriate training to increase

proficiency within the workforce and help reduce potential employee turnover. However,

efforts to develop a comprehensive benefits package remain immature.

MSY senior leaders contract services only in circumstances in which the MSY

workforce cannot satisfy the operational requirement. The ED is authorized to determine

suitable contractors and the board of directors approves the purchase of services. The

decision to allow key processes to be accomplished by other than the workforce is

accompanied by the strategic decision to attain the skills whereas in the future MSY

workforce can achieve the tasks. Senior leaders use their partnerships, collaborations, and

professional relationships to maintain awareness of future licensing, regulatory, and

environmental needs. MSY leaders evaluate core competencies monthly during board

meetings to ensure the workforce possesses the ability to satisfy the strategic mission,

vision, and values.

MSY senior leaders consider the need to increase core competencies and expand

the operational space as strategic objectives important to materialize within the next 3 to

5 years for the organization to sustain and improve overall performance. The interest to

hire a more talented diverse workforce is based on senior leaders' aim to provide

additional assistance to foster and adoptive parents and their families. Equally, senior leaders are focused on hiring individuals with advanced business acumen to help expand training and services to a larger segment of the communities the organization serves. MSY leaders plan to continue to improve service delivery to reach and help a larger customer audience and develop greater capacities through partnerships to offer more services to families and their children.

Senior leaders' efforts to offer more services include the strategic consideration to expand the organizational capacity to help parents manage potential behavioral challenges. MSY leaders intend to leverage core competencies to increase the organizational capacity to help families with daycare for children with attention or reactive attachment disorders. The approach to sustain the capacity long-term includes fostering partnerships relationships, design, and publish training material parents can access to obtain relevant information about helping children with learning disorders. Maintaining partnership relationships helps MSY leaders to continue to provide relevant education and training the workforce needs to continue to deliver services to children with special needs.

Strategy Implementation

MSY leaders actively lead, participate, and manage the implementation of the strategic plans. Senior leaders established strategic organizational control standards to improve accountability and to facilitate the development of customer-centered organizational agility able to respond to fluctuating customer needs. Setting and defining the strategic direction, helped leaders to implement support resource alignment to

enhance team collaboration, and overcome environmental threats and organizational deficiencies to improve performance and improve service quality. The active engagement of senior leaders throughout the implementation phase facilitates internal and external communication, emphasis on critical practices, and the adoption of an organizational culture focused on achieving and surpassing the strategic goals outlined in the mission and vision.

Collectively, MSY leaders develop and deploy action plans intending to sustain the level of quality services and performance to meet strategic objectives. Senior leaders incorporate strategic and operational changes to the existing plans and procedures to address short-term needs. Members of the BOD prioritize the deployment of the strategy, develop short- and long-term actions plan, and communicate the strategic changes to key stakeholders, collaborators, partners, and suppliers. Board members collaborate with partners and leaders of other organizations to secure the necessary funding and additional resources to meet existent obligations and support the strategic deployment. The ED is responsible for operationalizing the action plans, implement mitigation approaches to minimize risks, and overcome obstacles preventing the organization from transforming.

Leaders' efforts to support short- and long-term strategic objectives include providing professional training and increasing the degree of collaboration with strategic partners to increase and improve organizational capacities and capabilities. The approach helps leaders to motivate employees to actively participate in the implementation of the strategy. Exemplifying this position, leaders envision long-term opportunities to leverage emerging information technologies to offer training modules on the organization's

website accessible to the public. Senior leaders are evaluating available options to share

and provide other private and public teachers with highly specialized educational and

training competencies to help reach a larger audience and service more families and their

children.

MSY leaders demonstrated their commitment and organizational agility by

shifting their action plans to satisfy customer needs during the pandemic period which

affected customers and their families. Collaborating with government agencies, nonprofit

partners, and donors, MSY leaders used virtual delivery platforms to extend the

organizational capacity to conduct and offer training to current and prospective foster

parents. Senior leaders also incorporated the use of video and teleconferencing tools and

social media platforms to maintain communication, obtain and share information with

customers, collaborators, and partners. The management practices the senior leaders

implemented, helped to ensure that environmental threats did not derail the organizational

efforts to remain on the correct path to achieve strategic objectives.

Customers

Organizational leaders can combine practices, strategies, and technologies to

facilitate the management and analysis of customer information gathered through

interaction. The strategic approach helps leaders to improve customer service satisfaction

and provides opportunities to improve customer retention through enhance customer

loyalty. Leaders' deliberate approach to adopt a customer-centered strategy to improve

satisfaction might help improve customer retention and drive organizational growth.

Voice of the Customer

MSY leader's use and action information collected from social media and web-based technologies, including blogs and discussion boards, to manage the relationship with current and prospective customers. The actionable information helped leaders to implement strategic changes to satisfy customer needs. The strategic changes included realigning organizational capabilities, delivering resources, training, and education directly with customers. Leaders also use actionable insight to improve decision-making and enhance service delivery to satisfy a larger customer segment.

Senior leaders used the insight gathered from actively listening to customers to adapt, modify, and tailor service offerings in response to fluctuating customer needs. Illustrating this strategic approach, during the pandemic outbreak of 2020, leaders adopted an information-sharing approach that provided parents with real-time updates about their children's status while in daycare. The approach helped improve relationships with current customers and attracted new clients who valued the commitment to share information.

Customer Engagement

MSY leaders leverage communication technologies to manage relationships and interactions with current and future customers. The strategic management approach enabled MSY leaders to exchange information, reach a larger customer segment, remain attuned with, and implement action plans to respond to changing customer needs due to evolving environmental threats introduced by the global pandemic. Strategic customer engagement allows leaders to maintain open lines of communications which facilitate

opportunities to anticipate and timely respond to customers' complaints and concerns. MSY leaders use surveys and telephonic follow-ups to interactively share information, determine customer satisfaction, dissatisfactions, and engagement.

Results Triad: Workforce, Operations, and Results

Workforce

MSY senior leaders develop and establish workforce policies that support the organizational strategy and are aligned with the organization's MVVs. MSY is a small NPO with 23 employees responsible for completing daily tasks and providing services to customers of the organization. MSY senior leaders empower employees to elicit creativity and to motivate the workforce to accomplish tasks efficiently to ensure the achievement of strategic objectives (see table 7). MSY's senior leaders set and foster a work environment that promotes and integrates diversity and open communication to build and develop the organizational capabilities and capacities needed to provide high-quality services to families in the community.

Table 7

Employee Empowerment and Strategic Impact

Workforce group	Empowering action	Strategic advantage
Director/supervisors	Request and implement process changes	Leadership engagement promotes creative thinking and participation
Childhood development associates	Establish a team-based environment	Active employee engagement facilitates collaborative, synergistic behavior, and knowledge sharing which help increase organizational agility
Trainers/teachers	Professional development (education/training)	Learned skills enhance MSY's competencies and capabilities

Workforce Environment

MSY senior leaders established and follow a strategic hiring policy focused on attracting employees with the skills, competencies, and certifications required to achieve the organization's vision. Senior leaders evaluate and select candidates with a demonstrated emphasis on customer satisfaction, communication skills, team building, innovativeness, personal, and professional wellness. The approach enables MSY leaders to maintain a workforce with the capacity and capability needed to uninterruptedly offer and render services to foster parents and children in 18 counties. MSY leaders' efforts to sustain diversity in their workplace are integrated within the hiring process and by periodically communicating the organizational policy to employees.

MSY leaders integrate and align new employees with organizational and career goals. The method helps leaders to set and prepare conditions that enable new employees to adapt to the organizational culture. Leaders train and educate new employees on multiple tasks, operations, and processes to ensure newly integrated personnel can contribute to organizational continuity, prevent workforce disruptions, and mitigate the impact of organizational changes on customers. MSY leaders empower employees, solicit, and implement the workforce best practices and recommendations to increase customer satisfaction.

Workforce Engagement

MSY leaders formally and informally engage the workforce by promoting a culture of open communication, professional development, and growth, trust, respect, inclusion, diversity, and teamwork. Senior leaders share and disseminate information to

the workforce through the ED, who in turn provides feedback from the employees to board members. MSY senior leaders provide education and training for the professional development of the workforce and to help increase employee retention. Exemplifying the commitment to diversity and inclusion, the senior leaders solicit and elicit the participation of the workforce to execute the daily activities of the organization and attain vision objectives.

MSY's workforce consists of 23 employees responsible for providing childcare and foster care services. Senior leaders promote accountability and ownership of processes to facilitate teamwork and collaboration among the workforce. The senior leaders of the MSY organization demonstrate their engagement by actively participating in ad hoc committees, designing, implementing, and helping execute the organizational strategic goals.

MSY leaders rely on performance evaluations to assess workforce satisfaction and workforce engagement. The senior leaders use the findings to design and implement professional training to help improve or sustain job performance. Monthly and quarterly, organizational leaders receive information from the anchor government organization which helps determine the effectiveness of the training strategy. MSY senior leaders use surveys to collect customer satisfaction data and to identify opportunities to empower the workforce to help improve the services rendered.

MSY senior leaders support the organizational team-building philosophy by focusing on the needs and actively engaging the workforce. Their efforts include working with partners and collaborators to ensure the workforce possesses the resources,

education, and training to service foster care parents and their children. Exemplifying the

commitment, MSY senior leaders were able to secure funding from the anchor

organization to help the workforce to cope with the financial challenges caused by the

outbreak of COVID-19. Consequently, MSY employees that serve as childcare providers

were able to respond to challenges caused by the temporary unemployment and return to

work once the daycare facility reopened.

Operations

MSY senior leaders are responsible for designing, implementing, and assessing

work processes to facilitate the organizational capacity to deliver value to customers.

Senior leaders consider customer's needs the determinant key factor which drives the

type of programs and services MSY offers and delivers. MSY leaders align work

processes to ensure the design and implementation supports the organizational vision to

provide childcare, educate, train, and facilitate resources to help families improve the

quality of life of their children.

MSY leaders recognize organizational agility and adaptability as vital

requirements, communication, quality, and service delivery as key processes. MSY senior

leaders seek input and collaborate with key stakeholders, partner agencies, and

collaborators to ensure work processes enable the delivery of services and programs to

customers. Leaders use information technology to maintain internal and external lines of

communication, collect, and analyze customer data to modify work processes as required

to attain and sustain the organizational agility to render services.

Work Processes

MSY senior leaders are responsible for designing, implementing, and assessing work processes to facilitate the organizational capacity to deliver value to customers. Senior leaders consider customer's needs the determinant key factor which drives the type of programs and services MSY offers and delivers. MSY leaders align work processes to ensure the design and implementation supports the organizational vision to provide childcare, educate, train, and facilitate resources to help families improve the quality of life of their children.

MSY leaders recognize organizational agility and adaptability as vital requirements, communication, quality, and service delivery as crucial processes. Senior leaders solicit information from the workforce and implement changes as applicable to improve organizational capabilities and capacities. MSY senior leaders seek input and collaborate with key stakeholders, partner agencies, and collaborators to ensure work processes enable the delivery of services and programs to customers. Leaders use information technology to maintain internal and external communication, collect, and analyze customer data to modify work processes required to attain and sustain the organizational agility to render services.

Service and Process Design. Senior leaders design the organizational programs and services based on the needs of customers, partners, and the community. MSY leaders align resources with the organization's vision to provide care to foster children. Aiming to achieve this intent, senior leaders conduct periodic internal evaluations and assess collected customers' data. MSY leaders provide training to professionally develop the

workforce and increase the capacity to service, educate, and train current and future

adoptive and kinship parents.

MSY senior leaders design services and work processes to meet requirements.

The approach includes leveraging information technology (IT) and social media (SM) to

remain attuned with customer needs and maintain strict adherence to legal and regulatory

requirements. Exemplifying the method, senior leaders used IT and SM to maintain

constant communication with customers while distant due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The added organizational agility enabled MSY's foster care navigators to continue to

provide training and assistance while distant from their customers.

MSY's senior leaders consider the education, training, and childcare provided to

adoptive, kinship, and foster parents and their families as key work processes. The key

requirements for the accomplishment of the MSY work processes include strict

adherence to federal and state regulatory guidelines, a licensed and certified workforce,

resources, and funding. Senior leaders work jointly with anchor organizations, partner

agencies, and collaborators to assist the workforce to attain and maintain the certification

and licenses needed to complete MSY facilitate processes. The senior leaders secure

funding and resources through contractual agreements with the anchor organization and

contributions from partners, donors, and members of the community.

Process Management and Improvement. Senior leaders recognize human

resource, organizational, and financial management as key support processes that enable

the organization to deliver services to its customers. MSY senior leaders facilitate

training, align individual and team efforts to ensure the workforce possesses adequate

resources to accomplish key tasks in support of programs and services. Exemplifying the approach, senior leaders worked with the anchor organization to secure funds that were used to lessen the financial burden the workforce experienced once facilities were mandated to temporarily close due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Senior leaders secured an agreement with the anchor organization which facilitated resources needed to continue to fund and operate the recruitment, retention, and training program. The agreement also included opportunities for training and professional development of the workforce as a collective effort to ensure the organization maintains professional competencies and delivers quality services to customers.

Senior leaders collect and analyze customer data to assess the effectiveness of the work processes and the quality of services rendered. The information helps senior leaders to modify processes, realign resources, and implement day-to-day changes to satisfy customers' needs. MSY leaders also analyze data received from the anchor organization, partner agencies, and collaborators. Senior leaders use the insight to design and implement training plans to help enhance core competencies.

Senior leaders establish contractual agreements with suppliers to ensure resources are available to meet MSY's operational needs. MSY senior leaders build and maintain alliances with several NPOs to increase the organizational capacity to achieve customer satisfaction. The approach helps MSY leaders ensure that supplies and additional capabilities including substitute teachers, billing, and collection services are available to meet operational needs. MSY senior leaders use information and feedback from

suppliers, NPOs, community members, and customers to make improvements to organizational processes.

Operational Effectiveness

The senior leaders of the MSY organization use a customer-centric management strategy to provide value-added programs and services to customers. In support of this aim, senior leaders develop and establish budgetary guidelines to balance cost control and operational efficiency. The budget is designed to ensure funding is available for program and service commitments with customers, partner organizations, and the community. The approach helps senior leaders maintain operational costs low and lessen the need to raise prices to the low-income families MSY support.

Senior leaders meet with the ED monthly to assess the effectiveness of the strategy and operational efficiencies. The periodic communication enables MSY senior leaders to discuss the status of programs and services and helps identify opportunities to improve tasks, processes, and overall delivery to MSY's customers and their children. Exemplifying the method, senior leaders leveraged added operational capabilities gained from partnerships, alliances, and collaborative relationships with other providers to enhanced MSY operational agility, capability, and capacity to deliver programs and services.

Security and Cybersecurity. MSY senior leaders are responsible for the safety of the children enrolled in MSY's childcare, safeguarding, and protecting personal information. As per MSY's policy, access to the childcare center is limited to the workforce, parents, and if necessary, health providers. MSY leaders monitor, inspect, and

physically escorts children to protect children from hazards, diseases, and to validate that children are transferred from and to an authorized person.   Senior leaders consider communication an essential component to the success, efficiency, and effectiveness of the organization. However, senior leaders recognize the importance of protecting customer's personal information. Hence, access to parents' and children's information is limited to approved users only.

Safety and Emergency Preparedness. The senior leaders of the MSY organization protect the workforce; hence, the childcare center has video recording, motion detection, and locked doors. MSY leaders monitor the building hourly throughout the day and after hours. Senior leader established an emergency preparedness plan that includes drills which the workforce train, test, and complete quarterly. The plan provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of leaders and the workforce to respond to natural disasters, humanmade disasters, or severe weather emergencies.

Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

The leaders of the MSY organization are required to provide proof to grantors and donors of what actions are taken to demonstrate the effective use of resources and the achievement of strategic objectives and goals. MSY leaders set and promote a customer-centered organizational work culture of learning and continuous improvement focused on achieving strategic objectives and offering a value proposition to customers. MSY senior leaders also establish strategic goals and service initiatives to maximize resource utilization and deliver value to customers. Performance measurements and process

evaluations enable leaders to ensure the continuous improvement of MSY business

processes.

Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance

MSY senior leaders use key performance indicators (KPIs) to collect data and

information about individual and collective performance in support of daily operations.

Senior leaders recognize KPIs (see Table 8) as the tasks and processes that help define

and measure progress towards organizational goals. MSY leaders use evaluations to

assess and measure the performance of the workforce. The method helps senior leaders to

align and integrate individual capabilities into a collective effort to help achieve strategic

objectives and action plans. Senior leaders track monthly, quarterly, and annual progress

toward the achievement of goals.

Table 8

Key Performance Indicators

Business area	Key performance indicators	Strategic impact
Childcare center	Customer satisfaction and retention	Facilitates the discovery of the capacity/capability to meet customers' needs.
	Adherence to legal, health, and regulatory guidance	Enables the assessment of organizational standards, tasks, and processes in supporting customers' needs and caring for children
	Operational cost	Help senior leaders establish the adequate cost of services
Foster care services	Number of customers trained	Enables assessment of the effectiveness of the program
	PRIDE training sessions and number of families serviced	Helps leaders design/create/implement the best customer service for current and prospective foster parents
	Profits and loss ratios	Help senior leaders determine opportunities for generating returns

Tracking KPIs helps MSY senior leaders ensure that the workforce has all the

requisite resources to respond to unexpected organizational or external changes and is

capable to achieve the organization's mission and vision. Senior leaders define financial health, the number of foster families serviced, and the total of children cared for as the key organizational performance indicators for MSY. Monitoring and assessing the financial health of the organization enables senior leaders to ensure that financial measures are emplaced to support short- and long-term action plans. Focusing on the number of foster families serviced helps senior leaders to plan and facilitate trainers, and coordinators to ensure current and prospective parents receive the education, training, and support to care for their loved ones. Tracking how many children are cared for helps MSY senior leaders to negotiate and collaborate with the anchor organization and partners to ensure resources, teachers, and childcare specialists are available to provide early childhood care and a preschool program.

Performance Analysis and Review. The senior leaders of the MSY organization use comparative data to periodically evaluate organizational performance and capabilities. Monthly, senior leaders gauge the performance of services rendered using information gathered from customer surveys. Quarterly and annually, senior leaders assess the budget against actual variance of the financial statement to evaluate organizational performance, forecast future income, and allocate funds. The analysis helps MSY senior leaders to assess organizational success, competitive performance, and allocate funds to the operational centers to ensure resources are available to enable the achievement of the organizational strategic objectives.

Performance Improvement. The BOD is responsible for projecting organizational performance. In that capacity, the BOD conducts monthly, quarterly, and

annual meetings to assess short- and long-term performance and to develop strategic

plans to offer value propositions to customers, now and in the future. MSY senior leaders

use performance reviews and comparative data collected to derive conclusions. The

approach helps MSY senior leaders to design and implement an organizational

methodology to achieve continuous improvement and support innovative solutions. As an

example, senior leaders established internal policies to improve communication among

the workforce which helped the childcare center to improve tasks, processes, and

performance outcomes.

Information and Knowledge Management

MSY senior leaders use information technology systems to collect and analyze

customer data and organizational performance. Hence, senior leaders recognize the

importance of verifying the quality of the data and information collected. Efforts to

ensure the accuracy of the information received include validating face-to-face with the

workforce, customers, partners, and collaborators same as analyzing, comparing, and

examining data from surveys searching for themes or patterns.

Senior leaders facilitate access to the organization's database to the workforce to

ensure data is available timely. Senior leaders rely on internal information-sharing

policies that facilitate communication flow and maintain a collaborative relationship with

collaborators, partners, suppliers, and external agencies. The capabilities that senior

leaders use to maintain open lines of communications internally and externally include

platforms such as emails, organizational meetings, teleconferencing, and social media.

Exemplifying the approach, senior leaders evaluate performance lessons learned and after

assessing ensure that the best practices are formally shared during training sessions to help improve organizational performance and customer satisfaction.

Collection, Analysis, and Preparation of Results

Thematic Findings

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that some leaders of NPOs used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. The central question for this case study was: what strategies do leaders of NPOs use to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance? In support of this study, I collected data from semistructured interviews, public documents, a review of internal documents, the organization's website, and the analysis of organizational performance outcomes. The thematic analysis of the collected data resulted in three themes emerging: (a) quality management standards in strategic planning, (b) employee empowerment and involvement, and (c) customer satisfaction. The themes validated that nonprofit leaders could apply the TQM theory to improve organizational performance. Below are the summaries for the discovered themes.

Thematic Finding 1

The first theme identified from data collection was that the implementation of quality management standards in strategic planning helped senior leaders of Client MSY develop and implement a plan to improve organizational performance. The senior leaders used quality management standards to establish operational specifications and guidelines that enable the continuous delivery of quality services. During the interviews, senior

leaders described that processes are evaluated and modified as necessary to maintain a focus on customer service satisfaction. Exemplifying the approach, senior leaders noted that FCN and PRIDE coordinators leverage information technology solutions to continue to deliver services to customers while adhering to social distance rules impose due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senior leaders standardized operations to manage vital processes to deliver value propositions that satisfy customers' needs. Senior leaders understand the need to evaluate performance and revise standards to remain consistent with changing customers' demands. The strategy to standardized operations, manage and modify vital processes aligns with Deming's TQM framework to advance the organizational environment to improve performance. The senior leaders' actions align with the TQM construct to maintain quality standards to enhance the organization and attain a competitive advantage

Thematic Finding 2

The second theme identified was employee empowerment and involvement in achieving organizational plans (see Table 7). MSY senior leaders recognize that employee empowerment facilitates workforce participation. Senior leaders explained that employee involvement is a significant factor that affects the organizational capacity to achieve common strategic goals. Hence, senior leaders empower employees to motivate their involvement in delivering services that satisfy customer needs and expectations. The approach helps senior leaders to improve information sharing in the workplace and collect valuable insights about the efficacy of programs and processes.

The MSY senior leaders described during the interviews approaches to use to promote employee empowerment include: (a) delegate work and responsibility, (b) remain open to input, and (c) demonstrate appreciation. Senior leaders noted that delegating the authority to resolve and respond to customers' needs or concerns helps the organization maximize the use of the workforce's experience and creativity. Aware that members of MSY's workforce are foster parents themselves, senior leaders solicit input and implement staff recommendations that aligned with the accomplishment of the vision and strategic goals. Senior leaders noted that encouragement is important and noted during the interviews that periodically employees are recognized for their performance and contributions to achieve organizational objectives.

Senior leaders use learned insights to modify tasks and processes to continuously improve the quality of services, meet customers' expectations, and become more competitive. The theme of employee empowerment and involvement aligns with the TQM construct because empowering employees helps leaders enhance organizational offerings and improve performance. The senior leaders' approach to support employee empowerment and involvement aligns with Deming's theory to facilitate workforce engagement to maximize resource utilization, improve and increase opportunities to attain strategic objectives.

Thematic Finding 3

The third theme that emerged from the analysis of the data was customer satisfaction. Senior leaders recognized and explained during the interviews that MSY exists as an organization to meet customers' needs. MSY senior leaders collect and

analyze customer data to remain attuned with existent and emerging requirements. Senior leaders use KPIs (see Table 8) to assess programs and service effectiveness to satisfy fluctuating demands. Exemplifying the approach, senior leaders modified processes and leveraged IT and SM to deliver services to customers while adhering to social distance rules impose due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senior leaders explained that customer data collection includes the use of surveys, emails, social media, face-to-face interactions. Senior leaders described that surveys and emails enable the collection of customer feedback about services provided. MSY senior leaders leverage social media to identify the needs of customers (see Table 6). Senior leaders explained that anticipating customers' needs facilitates the creation or modification of service to meet those needs.

The senior leaders' approach to focus on customer satisfaction aligns with Deming's TQM theory to maintain task, processes, and operations customer-focused to satisfy consumers' needs. The senior leaders' approach to focus on the customers aligns with Deming's theory to design, redesign, and implement a strategic plan framed on identified requirements to improve opportunities to satisfy customer's demands

Product and Process Results

The MSY organization has been in operation for over 20 years. During that period, leaders focused on offering and rendering services to help meet the needs of foster parents and their children. Collaborating with the anchor institutions, local, county, and state government organizations, other NPOs, businesses, professional consultants, and individuals, MSY leaders help secure adequate resources needed to deliver

education, training, and childcare to help address the needs of foster families. Senior

leaders have achieved success in deploying programs and services that support the

organizational mission to help adoptive, kinship, and foster parents improve the quality of

life of their children.

MSY senior leaders help provide customer-focused products and services. The

MSY senior leaders help provide customers with a preschool program and childcare,

education, and training for prospective foster, adoptive, and kinship parents. The efforts

help senior leaders to support the organizational mission to provide services to families

with an emphasis on training, resourcing foster parents. MSY leaders help provide

programs and services that include childcare, and foster care services.

Childcare

The primary objective of the MSY childcare service is to care for infants,

toddlers, and/or preschool children. The MSY childcare service provides foster parents a

safe before and after school care, occasional drop-in care, or short-term, respite, and

emergency care. MSY senior leaders help deliver a service that facilitates foster parents'

aim to provide a nurturing environment that supports the holistic development of their

children. The MSY childcare center also provides foster parents with education and

training to help develop or improve parenting skills required to meet the emotional,

intellectual, and cultural needs of their children. During the fiscal years 2018 and 2019,

MSY leaders secured $881,841 funding from multiple sources that paid for 472 days of

childcare services rendered to 77 children.

The MSY senior leaders provide additional services under the umbrella of the daycare including the High Scope Curriculum (HSC), a state-funded preschool program, and a Summer camp. MSY teachers use a plan-do-review/assess method to facilitate active learning focused on developing children's self-confidence, problem-solving, and motor skills. MSY leaders leverage the state-funded Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) to give four-year-old children additional education support before entering kindergarten. MSY's Summer camp provides childcare for school-aged children, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to help working parents and continue developing children's coping skills.

Foster Care Services

The main function of the MSY foster care program is to provide guidance, training, and assistance to empower and help to improve the quality of all families, especially foster and kinship families. During the fiscal year 2020, the state's DHHS made the MSY organization the pilot program provider of foster care services. The recognition included a contract extension and funds to operate for an additional five-year period as the lead foster care service provider for 18 counties within the state. Securing funds over $560, 993 annually for the next 5 years helps MSY senior leaders to continue to provide quality education, training, and resources to foster parents and their children.
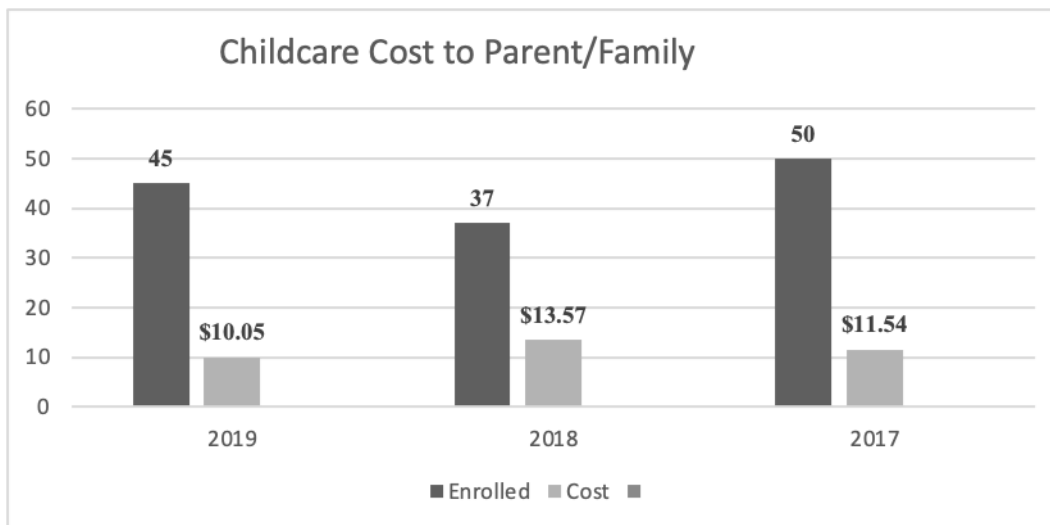
MSY leaders also provide kinship care services, parent workshops, and support groups to help foster parents gain access to education, training, resources, referrals, respite care, and financial assistance as needed. FCNs and PRIDE coordinators provide added assistance to prospective and current foster parents as their guides through the

licensing process. During the 2020 fiscal year, FCNs and PRIDE coordinators conducted 134 events and trained 768 customers.

Customer Results

MSY customers consist of community residents from the 18 counties communities that comprised the organizational service area, other NPOs, the anchor organization, and local businesses. MSY senior leaders recognize customer needs as an imperative to fulfill the organization's mission and vision. Hence, senior leaders use KPIs (see Table 8) to evaluate program and service results. The method helps senior leaders to provide services at reduced costs (see Figure 3) and ensure to satisfy customers' needs.

Organizational leaders used social media to increase customer engagement and to obtain information that facilitated the modification of internal procedures which helped increased customer loyalty and satisfaction. Specifically, leaders adopted organizational standards which included pairing childcare providers with children and trainers with parents to set and establish conditions to help build relationships, develop trust, and deliver services specific to the child or parents' need.

Figure 3

Childcare Cost

Childcare Cost to Parent/Family

(Bar chart showing values — 2019: Enrolled 45, Cost $10.05; 2018: Enrolled 37, Cost $13.57; 2017: Enrolled 50, Cost $11.54. Legend: ■ Enrolled ■ Cost ■)

Workforce Results

The MSY workforce consists of a small group of highly skilled professionals responsible for completing tasks and processes to achieve the organizational objectives. The senior leaders of the organization use performance evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the workforce. MSY senior leaders design and provide education and training opportunities to align workforce capabilities with the organizational intent to satisfy customers' needs. The efforts helped the workforce use alternate options to deliver programs and services to customers.

MSY senior leaders ensure that the workforce is engaged in completing activities that support the organizational mission and vision. Eliciting workforce engagement helped senior leaders recognize the need to hire an additional staff person to helped reduced health risks while servicing customers during the pandemic outbreak. The added

capability helped MSY leaders to incorporate new practices to protect children, customers, and the workforce, yet continue to care for and satisfy customers' needs.

MSY senior leaders foster a culture that promotes leadership development by selectively increasing the level of responsibility of high-performing staff members. MSY senior leaders promote and recognize members of the workforce that surpass standards or exceed customers' expectations. Senior leaders are at the initial stage of incorporating policy changes focused on establishing succession planning for management and key leadership positions.

Leadership and Governance Results

Leadership

The MSY senior leaders include the BOD and the ED. MSY senior leaders establish the purpose and guide the organization toward the achievement of strategic objectives. Hence, senior leaders maintain communication and engagement with the workforce, collaborators, partners, and customers to elicit and solicit participation and synchronize efforts to accomplish strategic goals. As a result, senior leaders helped obtain the operational flexibility and adaptability to deliver services to foster parents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governance

MSY senior leaders use performance evaluations as a tool to provide governance oversight. The evaluations enable senior leaders to assess leaders' effectiveness that affects organizational capabilities. Competencies measured include communication, level of engagement, fairness, and professional accountability. Consequently, MSY senior

leaders implemented operational changes to respond to the environmental threat caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The MSY senior leaders design and implement fiscal controls that helped maintain financial accountability. Senior leaders monitor and assess monthly financial reports to ensure investments support the achievement of strategic objectives. The senior leaders hired an accountant to audit financial records for accuracy and compliance with laws and regulations. The added capability helped senior leaders to ensure financial accountability, transparency, and strict adherence to all legal and regulatory standards required to maintain the tax-exempted nonprofit status under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3).

Law and Regulation

The senior leaders of the MSY organization follow an agency compliance monitoring program to ensure adherence to state licensing regulations and the organizational standards of ethical conduct. Senior leaders inspect and validate the compliance with legal and regulatory requirements to include child-staff ratios, building safety, and the nutrition of food served to children. Collaborating with state and local government agencies, senior leaders conduct on-site inspections of tasks, processes, communication, and reporting procedures. The state recognized the efficacy of MSY senior leaders and added the organizational business practices as part of the new curriculum to help family members become foster parents.

Societal Contributions

Senior leaders acknowledge programs and services as tenets of the organization designed to improve societal well-being and the quality of life of every child. Hence, the MSY senior leaders build and operate a customer-focused organization focused on satisfying the needs of foster parents and their children. The state's annual performance evaluations validate the organizational effectiveness providing programs and services that help improve the quality of life of supported customers. The state officials also recognize the senior leaders' success in facilitating education, training, and resources to foster adoptive, kinship parents and their children.

Financial and Market Results

The MSY senior leaders operate the organization with limited financial resources from funds, donations, and grants. Consequently, senior leaders establish a fiscal year budget to help achieve short and long-term strategic goals. Senior leaders use and analyze past financial data to design the next fiscal year's budget. Leaders employ an accounting team that provides financial performance analysis used to modify allocations as applicable. The MSY financial manager monitors and allocates financial resources to fund programs and services. Figure 4 illustrates a summary of MSY's revenue and expenses from FY 2014-2017.

Figure 4

Revenue and Expenses, FY2017-2020

Key Themes

I used the TQM theory as the lens to view MSY senior leaders' application of quality management standards in strategic planning. The thematic analysis of the collected data resulted in three themes emerging: (a) quality management standards in strategic planning, (b) employee empowerment and involvement, and (c) customer satisfaction. Using the 2019-2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework to evaluate overall organizational performance and leader's impact on the organization help to derive insights into process strengths, process opportunities, results strengths, and results

opportunities. The factors used to evaluate the key themes included: (a) approach, (b) deployment, (c) learning, and (d) integration.

Process Strengths

The senior leaders in the MSY organization implemented several processes to meet the needs of customers and stakeholders. Senior leaders developed and used a communication engagement process to engage customers, partners, and collaborators to determine and satisfy their needs. MSY senior leaders use manual and automated options to collect and share information used to evaluate the business capability and capacity to meet customers' needs. The approach facilitates the development of short- and longer-term strategic plans.

MSY senior leaders invest time and resources to develop the workforce. Educating and training the workforce enables senior leaders to provide childcare, early childhood care, emergency childcare, and preschool children education. Investing in competency-based education and training of FCNs and PRIDE coordinators enabled the organization to continue to provide services even when unable to deliver face-to-face to customers due to COVID-19.

MSY senior leaders established processes to build partnerships, alliances, and collaborative relationships with NPOs, government agencies, private and public donors that increase that contribute to the organization's success. Senior leaders have effectively established processes that help maintain adherence to legal and regulatory requirements, foster a positive working environment, and support performance improvement.

Process Opportunities

In my review of the MSY organization, I determined that its strategic planning process is in the early stages of development and deployment and represents an opportunity for improvement. Although MSY senior leaders design and implement a strategic plan, establishing a systematic process offers opportunities to expand the organizational reach and continuously improve program and service quality. Formalizing the strategic planning process can help MSY leaders to respond to internal and external changes that might disrupt sustainability. Senior leaders can conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis to assess the company's competitive position and determine where to improve internally to attract more customers. MSY senior leaders can develop and use performance metrics to assess the effectiveness of their strategic plan.

Leadership development represents an additional improvement opportunity that can help senior leaders gain a competitive advantage. The senior leaders should consider establishing leadership development training to increase the capacity to respond to fluctuating customer demands and expand the organizational service area. Developing leadership competencies can help senior leaders to mitigate challenges associated with another process opportunity; succession planning. MSY senior leaders should consider planning for succession to maintain the continuity of operations. Establishing a succession plan could help senior leaders to maintain quality standards and overall organizational performance.

Results Strengths

  The leaders of NPOs face challenges designing and implementing strategic plans that yield results. The MSY senior leaders successfully use quality management standards to design and implement a strategic plan that resulted in the organizational capacity to provide services to customers at reduced costs (see Figure 3). As shown in Figure 4, Senior leaders established a budget that sustained and enabled the achievement of short and long-term strategic goals. MSY senior leaders build and established business relationships with government agencies, NPOs, private and public donors that enable the organization to provide programs and services that helped improve the quality of life of foster parents and their children.

Results Opportunities

  Although MSY senior leaders have successfully used quality management standards in strategic planning, the analysis revealed several opportunities to improve results. Senior leaders should consider conflating standardization with innovation to eliminate wasted efforts and modify processes to improve quality. MSY senior leaders can offer training opportunities to help other providers deliver services to current and prospective foster parents. The approach might help senior leaders to secure additional funds and increase opportunities to serve foster parents and their children. MSY senior leaders should consider conducting comparative analysis to ensure that services represent a competitive value proposition for customers.

Project Summary

In this qualitative single case study, I explored strategies that MSY senior leaders used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. Strategic planning and performance improvement remain challenges that business leaders must overcome to sustain future growth (English, 2019; Miller, 2018). Business leaders design and implement a strategy to orientate services towards customers' needs, meet future objectives, and attain competitive advantage (Mensah, 2020). Nonprofit leaders build and implement strategic plans to enhance performance (Liao & Huang, 2016). Designing a strategic plan enables leaders to direct efforts to meet current and future organizational goals and objectives.

For this study, I collected data from semistructured interviews, organizational documents, the Client MSY's website, public documents, academic literature, and GuideStar. The conceptual framework that I used for this study was the TQM theory. In addition to learning about the strategic use, I used the 2019-2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework to evaluate the strengths and improvement opportunities against the seven pillars of performance: leadership, strategy, customers, workforce, operations and analysis, measurement, and knowledge management. The approach helped identify the comprehensive impact that QMS can have on strategic planning and leaders' efforts to improve organizational performance.

In this study, I analyzed the strategies that senior leaders of the Client MSY organization used to integrate quality management standards in strategic planning focused on improving performance. MSY senior leaders had the right idea to use quality

management principles, design and implement a strategic plan focus on customer

satisfaction, employee engagement, and continuous improvement performance. TQM

principles support the MSY senior leaders' ideology to standardize processes to improve

performance. Business and nonprofit leaders might find the information included in this

study useful for generating value propositions, improving performance, and increasing

the opportunity to expand business growth.

Contributions and Recommendations

Business leaders can use strategic planning to manage resources, risk, and

maximize opportunities to realize organizational growth (Ali, 2018). However,

operationalizing a strategic plan requires deliberate leader actions, motivating, and

developing teamwork (Tawse et al., 2019). MSY senior leaders applied quality

management standards to design and facilitate strategic plan implementation that

achieved organizational improvement. Senior leaders explained during the interviews that

customer feedback was the catalyst for the implementation of organizational changes.

Beard-Gunter et al. (2019) noted that adopting procedural changes to processes based on

customer feedback facilitates opportunities to increase organizational competitiveness.

As previously indicated in this case study, the efficacy of the MSY senior leaders' results

was so conclusive, that the anchor agency adopted MSY's business practices to improve

the service quality of other NPOs.

The results from this case study might provide leaders of nonprofit and for-profit

organizations with insightful information to improve performance. The case study might

encourage business leaders to use the Baldrige Performance Excellence to evaluate their

organizations holistically, determine areas in need of change to reach goals, and become more competitive. Business leaders can attain meaningful insights into the application of TQM's underlying principles to improve customer satisfaction, planning, and services.

MSY senior leaders successfully motivated the workforce to contribute to the improvement of service quality and overall performance. I recommend MSY leaders continue to encourage employee engagement to provide quality services that support the community, partners, and stakeholders. Improving quality within an organization facilitates efforts to improve organizational performance (Shafiq et al., 2019). I also suggest for MSY senior leaders to continue implementing strategic changes based on feedback from customers.

Attempts to advance the academic understanding of how NPO leaders use TQM principles to improve overall organizational performance required further research. Hence, I recommend that researchers examine the impact that strategic planning failure has on organizational effectiveness, competitiveness, and profitability. Researchers noted that successfully implementing a strategic plan requires personnel support and resource alignment (Brophy et al., 2020). Researchers should continue to explore different factors that influence the ability of nonprofit leaders to implement strategies that result in improved performance.

Application to Professional Practice

The results of this case study might benefit the leaders of nonprofit and for-profit organizations to develop and implement a strategic plan. Similar to the approach used by MSY senior leaders, other business leaders can focus on implementing QMS to motivate

their employees. According to Tawse et al. (2019), the approach to motivate employees

facilitates conditions for successful strategy implementation. Rusch et al. (2019) noted

that empowered employees help avoid and overcome strategic implementation issues.

The findings of this research may help other NPO leaders overcome the lack of strategies

to improve performance.

Strategically adopting QMS can facilitate leaders' efforts to manage key

processes and activities to improve organizational performance (Wilson & Campbell,

2020). The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that

some leaders of NPOs used to implement quality management standards in strategic

planning to improve organizational performance. Business and NPO leaders who are

contemplating available options to improve performance may benefit from the findings

and recommendations presented in this study when designing a strategic plan to improve

their organizations. Business leaders interested in developing long-term plans can adopt

quality management standards to facilitate the strategic planning process.

The findings of my research might further clarify how relationship-building helps

leaders to improve organizational capacity and capability. Similar to the approach

presented in this case study, business leaders might leverage relationships and

communications strategies to obtain customer feedback and gain insight into customers'

needs. Nonprofit and for-profit leaders can integrate the information into the strategic

plan to improve service offerings. Business leaders interested in improving organizational

performance might emulate the MSY senior leaders' approach to educate and train the

workforce.

The results of my research may add to the body of knowledge on the use of quality management standards to facilitate strategic planning and to improve organizational performance. The study findings included several actionable recommendations NPOs leaders may use to apply QMS to establish a strategic plan and improve performance. Recommendations included empowering the workforce and maintaining a customer-centric focus. Al-Omari et al. (2020) recognized that empowering employees and placing customers first helps leaders to enhance organizational performance, meet or exceed customers' expectations. The use of the findings regarding the implementation of QMS may help NPOs to design and successfully implement a strategy to improve organizational performance.

Implications for Social Change

As a doctoral student at Walden University, I shared the institution's commitment to promoting social change through higher education (Walden University, 2020). Hence, I elected to participate in the Walden University DBA Consulting Capstone as a scholar-practitioner for the opportunity to effect positive social change (Walden University, 2019). According to Kornov (2021), change requires individuals that serve as agents that contribute to the change process. As a scholar-consultant at Walden University, the insights and findings collected during the research contribute to bringing about social change.

The genesis of MSY as an organization was a concern from private citizens about the lack of services and support to foster parents and their children. The results of this study provide insight as to the specific services, resources, and assistance MSY senior

leaders continue to offer to foster parents and their families. Additionally, the results presented in this study contribute to social change by providing NPO leaders with strategies to implement a strategic plan to improve performance. Improving performance might help senior leaders to enhance organizational capabilities and capacities to serve members of the community.

The findings of this case study demonstrate that implementing a strategic plan can help leaders increase organizational sustainability. Nonprofit leaders might use the strategies to help enhance the sustainability of their organizations. As presented in this study, establishing KPIs enabled senior leaders to measure organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Nonprofit leaders might use KPIs to determine the effect that their programs and services have on the well-being of the community served.

The implications for social change include the opportunity to adopt QMS to improve organizational performance and thereby offer services that meet or surpass the needs of foster care parents and their children. The thematic findings of the study that described employee empowerment, can help NPO leaders to motivate the engagement of their workforce to help the organization achieve its strategic goals and bring about positive change. NPO leaders can use the findings of this study and apply the themes to inspire and motivate the workforce to deliver high-quality services and help others.

Recommendations for Action

The following includes recommendations that leaders of the MSY organization and other NPOs could consider implementing quality management standards to facilitate the development and implementation of a strategic plan to enhance organizational

performance, deliver quality services, and continuously improve the organization. The data analysis conducted in this research revealed that applying quality management standards such as measuring performance, maintaining a customer-centric strategy, and planning for succession can help leaders establish a strategic plan and improve performance. Hence, I recommend that senior leaders use a management tool such as the Baldrige Excellence Framework to help determine meaningful KPIs that measure tangible and intangible results.

Measuring performance can help MSY senior leaders to determine strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. The method enables leaders to make evidence-based decisions and apply changes to achieve tangible results. I recommend MSY leaders remain focused on designing and implementing a strategic plan aiming to satisfy customer needs. Hence, I recommend for MSY senior leaders to integrate data management to gather and analyze data. Senior leaders can consider using information technology to automate the data collection process. MSY senior leaders can create and publish surveys on the organization's website to obtain and share information with customers.

The recommendation to plan for succession aims to help MSY senior leaders maintain the capacity to deliver programs and services that meet and surpass customers' expectations. MSY senior leaders' efforts to develop and implement a succession plan should include a method to develop leadership. The approach can help senior leaders to respond to potential employee turnover while benefitting from the unique experiences the workforce obtained from working with foster parents and their children. Establishing a

succession plan can also help maintain quality standards while demonstrating a commitment to uninterruptedly serve the community.

I recommend that NPO leaders review MSY leaders' strategic use of QMS and compare it to their own to determine possible opportunities. The approach to assess their organization may help NPO leaders determine how they can use QMS to implement strategic planning. The information, results, findings, and conclusions of this research can benefit NPO leaders to develop a successful strategy to improve their organizational performance. The results of this study will be available and disseminated to NPO, for-profit leaders, and researchers through multiple databases via literature searches. Additional means of dissemination include conferences, social media platforms, training, and lectures.

Recommendations for Further Research

The literature review conducted for this study revealed a gap in the research on the use of quality management standards to implement strategic planning. The limitations of this doctoral study further highlight the need to conduct additional research on strategies used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning. Considering that the population used for this study is limited to senior leaders of one NPO, findings may not represent strategies used by all NPO senior leaders. Future qualitative case study research should explore other NPOs and for-profit organizations to expand the scope of this case study. I also recommend that researchers focus on identifying opportunities to use quality standards to improve organizational sustainability.

Researching sustainability may help NPOs and for-profit leaders to obtain funds and resources needed to operate businesses.

Researchers might explore potential management and strategic approaches to assist NPOs to improve their internal capabilities. Exploring management and strategic methods may yield insights into options leaders can use to improve organizational capacities to attain a competitive advantage. Future studies might examine the impact of strategic planning on profitability. I recommend additional qualitative case study research to focus on identifying how senior leaders of other NPOs used QMS to design and implement a strategic plan. I also recommend that researchers explore and examine how other NPO leaders use QMS to develop a strategy focused on improving performance. I

Reflections

The doctoral consulting capstone provided an opportunity to enhance my professional understanding and work as a scholar-consultant. In that capacity, it was personally and professionally satisfying to work with senior leaders from the client organization that candidly shared their insights and experiences running the business. I also learned that Baldrige Performance Excellence Program can help senior leaders determine capabilities, opportunities, and barriers to organizational success. Perhaps the greatest personal lesson was the reminder that balancing work, family, and priorities is key to achieve personal success.

During the study, my determination to remove personal biases kept me focused on recording, analyzing, and presenting only validated information. The approach helped me discover that the performance of NPOs affects customers, partners, and society in

general. In the future, I look forward to opportunities to continue to help NPO senior leaders provide services for the benefit of their communities. Finally, the journey in completing my case study helped me to understand that using the underlying principles of TQM theory can help business leaders deliver beneficial products for the advancement of people in general.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that some leaders of NPOs used to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance. The discovery of successful strategies may enable other business leaders to effectively use quality management standards to improve organizational performance. The results of this research show that developing and implementing a customer-centric strategy, focusing on meeting and satisfying customer needs, and developing competencies can help business leaders improve performance and achieve strategic objectives. Consequently, business leaders can set conditions that foster organizational growth, increase sustainability and achieve a competitive edge.

References

Abshire, M., Dinglas, V. D., Maan, I. C., Eakin, M. N., Needham, D. M., & Himmelfarb,

    C. D. (2017). Participant retention practices in longitudinal clinical research

    studies with high retention rates. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *17*(1), 1–

    10. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-017-0310-z

Abu-Rumman, A., Mhasnah, A., & Al-Zyout, T. (2020). Direct and indirect effects of

    TQM on the patients' satisfaction and loyalty in the Jordanian health care sector.

    Management Science Letters, *11*(2), 493–502.

    https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2020.9.018

Agrawal, N. (2019). A framework for Crosby's quality principles using ISM and

    MICMAC approaches. *The TQM Journal, 32*(2), 305–330.

    https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-03-2019-0085

Agus, A., & Selvaraj, R. (2020). The effects of people- and technical-oriented TQM on

    productivity: The mediating role of production performance. *International*

    Journal of Business & Society, *21*(1), 234–252.

    http://www.ijbs.unimas.my/images/repository/pdf/Vol21-no1-paper14.pdf

Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good

    qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy*

    Studies, 5(2), 9–19. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.5n.2p.9

Alauddin, N., & Yamada, S. (2019). Overview of Deming criteria for total quality

    management conceptual framework design in education services. *Journal of*

    Engineering and Science Research, 3(5), 12–20.

https://doi.org/10.26666/rmp.jesr.2019.5.3

Albright, S. C., & Winston, W. L. (2017). *Business analytics: Data analysis & decision making* (6th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Ali, A. A. (2018). Strategic planning-organizational performance relationship: Perspectives of previous studies and literature review. *International Journal of Healthcare Management*, *11*(1), 8–24.

https://doi.org/10.1179/2047971915Y.0000000017

Alpi, K. M., & Evans, J. J. (2019). Distinguishing case study as a research method from case reports as a publication type. *Journal of the Medical Library Association,* *107*(1), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2019.615

Al-Omari, Z. S, Alomari, K. A, & Aljawarneh, N. M. (2020). The role of empowerment in improving internal process, customer satisfaction, learning and growth. *Management Science Letters*, *10*(4), 841–848.

https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2019.10.013

Alston, J. T. (2018). The nonprofit sector's uncertain future in a post-TCJA America. *Brigham Young University Law Review*, *2018*(4), 859–891.

https://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/lawreview/vol2018/iss4/5/

Ames, H., Glenton, C., & Lewin, S. (2019). Purposive sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example from a synthesis on parental perceptions of vaccination communication. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 19*(1), 1–9.

https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0665-4

Andersson, F. O. (2018). Start-up funding intentions among nascent nonprofit

entrepreneurs: An exploratory investigation. *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, *4*(1), 7–20. https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.4.1.7-20

Andreeva, T., Zhulina, E., Popova, L., & Yashin, N. (2018). Integration of strategic and quality management in oil and gas companies of Russia. *Quality - Access to Success*, *19*(163), 81–84.

Androniceanu, A. (2017). The three-dimensional approach of total quality management, an essential strategic option for business excellence. *Amfiteatru Economic*, *19*(44), 61–78.

Anil, A. P., & Satish, K. P. (2019a). Enhancing customer satisfaction through total quality management practices, an empirical examination. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *30*(13/14), 1528–1548. https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2017.1378572

Anil, A. P., & Satish, K. P. (2019b). TQM practices and its performance effects, an integrated model. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, *36*(8), 1318–1344. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQRM-10-2018-0266

Aveyard, H., & Bradbury-Jones, C. (2019). An analysis of current practices in undertaking literature reviews in nursing: Findings from a focused mapping review and synthesis. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *19*(1), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0751-7

Bahadori, M., Teymourzadeh, E., Tajik, H., Ravangard, R., Raadabadi, M., & Hosseini, S. M. (2018). Factors affecting strategic plan implementation using interpretive structural modeling (ISM). *International Journal of Health Care Quality*

Assurance, 31(5), 406–414. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJHCQA-05-2017-0075

Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. (2019). *2019–2020 Baldrige excellence framework: A systems approach to improving your organization's performance.* U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology. https://www.nist.gov/baldrige

Beard-Gunter, A., Ellis, D. G., & Found, P. A. (2019). TQM, games design and the implications of integration in Industry 4.0 systems. *International Journal of Quality & Service Sciences*, *11*(2), 235–247. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQSS-09-2018-0084

Becker, A. (2018). An experimental study of voluntary nonprofit accountability and effects on public trust, reputation, perceived quality, and donation behavior. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *47*(3), 562–582. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764018756200

Benoot, C., Hannes, K., & Bilsen, J. (2016). The use of purposeful sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example on sexual adjustment to a cancer trajectory. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *16*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-016-0114-6

Bhatia, M. S., & Awasthi, A. (2018). Assessing relationship between quality management systems and business performance and its mediators: SEM approach. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, *35*(8), 1490–1507. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQRM-05-2017-0091

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A

tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health*

Research, 26(13), 1802–1811. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870

Bleiker, J., Morgan-Trimmer, S., Knapp, K., & Hopkins, S. (2019). Navigating the maze:

Qualitative research methodologies and their philosophical foundations.

Radiography, *25*(Supplement 1), S4-S8.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.radi.2019.06.008

Bloomfield, J., & Fisher, M. J. (2019). Quantitative research design. *Journal of the*

Australasian Rehabilitation Nurses Association (JARNA), *22*(2), 27-30.

https://www.amfiteatrueconomic.ro/ArticolEN.aspx?CodArticol=2594

Bouranta, N., Psomas, E., Suárez-Barraza, M. F., & Jaca, C. (2019). The key factors of

total quality management in the service sector: A cross-cultural study.

Benchmarking: An International Journal 26(3), 893-921.

https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-09-2017-0240

Bradford, P. G., & Miranti, P. J. (2019). Information in an industrial culture: Walter A.

Shewhart and the evolution of the control chart, 1917–1954. *Information &*

Culture, *54*(2), 179-19. https://doi.org/10.7560/IC54203

Brear, M. (2019). Process and outcomes of a recursive, dialogic member checking

approach: A project ethnography. *Qualitative Health Research*, *29*(7), 944-957.

https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1049732318812448

Breja, S. K., Banwet, D. K., & Iyer, K. C. (2016). Towards sustainable excellence:

Strategic analysis of Deming prize-winning companies. *TQM Journal*, *28*(3), 390-

410. https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-09-2012-0070

Brophy, P. D., Stevenson, K., Kaczorowski, J., & Schriefer, J. (2020). A proposed

   technique to enhance strategic plan implementation using continuous quality

   improvement methodologies. *Journal of Pediatrics, 224*, 6-9.

   https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2020.01.060

Bryson, J. M., Edwards, L. H., & Van Slyke, D. M. (2018). Getting strategic about

   strategic planning research. *Public Management Review*, *20*(3), 317-339.

   https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2017.1285111

Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2018). *National income and product accounts.*

   https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?reqid=19&step=2#reqid=19&step=2&isur

   i=1&1921

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018). *Research data on the nonprofit sector.*

   https://www.bls.gov/bdm/nonprofits/nonprofits.htm

Caska, C., & Indrawati, H. (2017). The impacts of the strategic planning implementation

   on the cooperative members' participation. *Mediterranean Journal of Social

   Sciences*, *8*(3). http://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2017.v8n3p99

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol

   refinement framework. *Qualitative Report*, *21*(5), 811-831.

   https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss5/2

Castleberry, A., & Nolen, A. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: Is it

   as easy as it sounds? *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning, 10*(6), 807-

   815. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2018.03.019

Chamberlain, R. P. (2016). Five steps toward recognizing and mitigating bias in the

interview and hiring process. *Strategic HR Review*, *15*(5), 199-203.

https://doi.org/10.1108/SHR-07-2016-0064

Chiarini, A. (2020). Industry 4.0, quality management and TQM world. A systematic

literature review and a proposed agenda for further research. *TQM Journal*, *32*(4),

603-616. https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-04-2020-0082

Chung, G., & Kong, G. (2016). Innovation and performance improvement integration.

Performance Improvement, *55*(10), 17-26. https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.21624

Clark, K. R., & Veale, B. L. (2018). Strategies to enhance data collection and analysis in

qualitative research. *Radiologic Technology, 89*(5), 482-485.

http://www.radiologictechnology.org/

Conbere, J., & Heorhiadi, A. (2017). Escaping the tower of babble. *OD Practitioner*,

49(1), 28-34. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312046880

Creswell, J. W. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*

approaches (4th ed.). SAGE.

Crosby, P. B. (1979). Quality is free: The Art of Making Quality Certain. McGraw Hill.

Crosby, P. B. (2005). Crosby's 14 steps to improvement. *Quality Progress*, *38*(12), 60-

65. https://asq.org/quality-progress/articles/crosbys-14-steps-to-

improvement?id=6b1b87b492374808be05a72c2b0f3d3b

Dale, B. G., Bamford, D. R., & van der Wiele, A. (2016). *Managing quality: An essential*

guide and resource gateway. Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Davidson, J., Thompson, S., & Harris, A. (2017). Qualitative data analysis software

practices in complex research teams: Troubling the assumptions about

transparency and portability. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *23*(10), 779-788.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417731082

Dawson, A. (2019). A practical guide to performance improvement: Implementation of

systematic methodologies. *AORN Journal*, *110*(1), 40-48.

https://doi.org/10.1002/aorn.12723

de Las Casas, J. B., & Alecchi, B. A. (2020). The path of total quality management

implementation in a developing country: Peru. *International Journal for Quality*

Research, *14*(3), 749-764. https://doi.org/10.24874/IJQR14.03-07

Deming, W. E. (1982). *Quality, productivity, and competitive position.* Massachusetts

Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study.

Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of the crisis*. MIT Press.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (5th

ed.). Sage.

Dharyanti, F., Jati, S. P., & Pramukarso, D. T. (2019). Proses pelaksanaan rencana

strategis penyedia pelayanan kesehatandi rumah sakit umum daerah

[Implementation process of strategic planning at district general hospital]. *Jurnal*

Administrasi Kesehatan Indonesia, *7*(2), 123-131.

https://doi.org/10.20473/jaki.v7i2.2019.123-131

Diamandescu, A. (2016a). The main principles of total quality management. *Challenges*

of the Knowledge Society, 6, 672–678.

https://doaj.org/article/27717785ed48498ab83d55088e2ff134

Diamandescu, A. (2016b). The significance of total quality management principles in

industrial organizations. *Global Economic Observer*, *4*(2), 92-99.

http://www.globeco.ro/wp-

content/uploads/vol/split/vol_4_no_2/geo_2016_vol4_no2_art_012.pdf

Dobrai, K., & Farkas, F. (2016). Nonprofit organizations from the perspective of

organizational development and their influence on professionalization. *Our*

Economy (Nase Gospodarstvo), *62*(2), 25-32. https://doi.org/10.1515/ngoe-2016-

0009

Dudin, M. N., Smirnova, O. O., Vysotskaya, N. V., Frolova, E. E., & Vilkova, N. G.

(2017). The Deming Cycle (PDCA) concept as a tool for the transition to the

innovative path of the continuous quality improvement in production processes of

the agro-industrial sector. *European Research Studies*, *20*(2B), 283-293.

https://doi.org/10.35808/ersj/679

Dyer, J. H., Godfrey, P., Jensen, R., & Bryce, D. (2016). *Strategic management*:

Concepts and tools for creating real world strategy. John Wiley & Sons.

Elbanna, S., Andrews, R., & Pollanen, R. (2016). Strategic planning and implementation

success in public service organizations: Evidence from Canada. *Public*

Management Review, 18(7), 1017-1042.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2015.1051576

Elmir, R., Schmied, V., Jackson, D., & Wilkes, L. (2011). Interviewing people about

potentially sensitive topics. *Nurse Researcher, 19(*1), 12-16.

https://journals.rcni.com/doi/abs/10.7748/nr2011.10.19.1.12.c8766

Elsasser, E. J., White, C. A., & Jones, M. R. (2018). Implementation of a

transformational plan of care at a Veterans Affairs medical center. *American*

        Journal of Health-System Pharmacy, *75*, S72-S76.

        https://doi.org/10.2146/ajhp170485

Elshaer, I. A., & Augustyn, M. M. (2016). Direct effects of quality management on

        competitive advantage. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability*

        Management, *33*(9), 1286-1310. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQRM-07-2014-0086

English, M. (2019). Nonprofit leadership and management. *Salem Press Encyclopedia*.

Ershadi, M. J., Najafi, N., & Soleimani, P. (2019). Measuring the impact of soft and hard

        total quality management factors on customer behavior based on the role of

        innovation and continuous improvement. *TQM Journal, 31*(6), 1093-1115.

        https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-11-2018-0182

Esfahani, P., Mosadeghrad, A. M., & Akbarisari, A. (2018). The success of strategic

        planning in health care organizations of Iran. *International Journal of Health*

        Care Quality Assurance (09526862), *31*(6), 563–574.

        https://doi.org/10.1108/IJHCQA-08-2017-0145

Ferdousi, F., Baird, K., Munir, R., & Su, S. (2018). Associations between organizational

        factors, TQM, and competitive advantage: Evidence from an emerging economy.

        Benchmarking: An International Journal, *25*(3), 854-873.

        https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-05-2017-0110

Fernandes, A., Sampaio, P., Sameiro, M., & Truong, H. (2017). Supply chain

        management and quality management integration: A conceptual model proposal.

        International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, 34(1), 53-67.

https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQRM-03-2015-0041

Fusch, P., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2018). Denzin's paradigm shift: Revisiting

   triangulation in qualitative research. *Journal of Social Change, 10*(1), 19-32.

   https://doi.org/10.5590/JOSC.2018.10.1.02

Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative

   research. *Qualitative Report*, *20*(9), 1408-1416.

   https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss9/3

Gangneux, J. (2019). Rethinking social media for qualitative research: The use of

   Facebook activity logs and search history in interview settings. *Sociological*

   Review, *67*(6), 1249-1264. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0038026119859742

Gentles, S. J., Charles, C., Ploeg, J., & McKibbon, K. A. (2015). Sampling in qualitative

   research: Insights from an overview of the methods literature. *Qualitative Report*,

   20(11), 1772-1789. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss11/5/

Gioia, D. (2021). A systematic methodology for doing qualitative research. *Journal of*

   Applied Behavioral Science, 57(1), 20-29.

   https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886320982715

Gonzalez, M. E. (2019). Improving customer satisfaction of a healthcare facility: Reading

   the customers' needs. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, *26*(3), 854-870.

   https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-01-2017-0007

Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International*

   Journal of Qualitative Methods, *3*(1), 42-55.

   https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918774662

Grover, S., Kovach, J. V., & Cudney, E. (2016). Integrating strategic planning and quality improvement methods to create sustainably high performance. *Journal for Quality & Participation*, *39*(2), 23-32. https://www/asq.org/pub/jqp

Hales, D. N., & Chakravorty, S. S. (2006). Implementation of Deming's style of quality management: An action research study in a plastics company. *International Journal of Production Economics*, *103*(1), 131-148. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2005.05.020

Hamid, S. R., Isa, S., Chew, B. C., & Altun, A. (2019). Quality management evolution from the past to present: Challenges for tomorrow. *Organizacija*, *52*(3), 157-186. https://doi.org/10.2478/orga-2019-0011

Hamilton, A. B., & Finley, E. P. (2020). Reprint of: Qualitative methods in implementation research: An introduction. *Psychiatry Research*, *283*(2020), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2019.112629

Hamja, A., Maalouf, M., & Hasle, P. (2019). Assessing the effects of lean on occupational health and safety in the ready-made garment industry. *Work 64*(2), 385-395. https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-192982

Hammersley, M. (2018). What is ethnography? Can it survive? Should it? *Ethnography and Education*, *13*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2017.1298458

Hamzeh, W., Mershad, K., & Vetohin, S. (2019). Integrating technology into higher education: A case study in Lebanon. *Journal of Technology and Science Education*, *9*(3), 442-457. http://dx.doi.org/10.3926/jotse.651

Hancock, M. E., Amankwaa, L., Revell, M. A., & Mueller, D. (2016). Focus group data

saturation: A new approach to data analysis. *The Qualitative Report, 21*(11),

2124-2130. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss11/13

Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J. (2017). Case study research:

Foundations and methodological orientations. *Forum: Qualitative Social

Research, 18*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-18.1.2655

Harvey, W. S. (2011). Strategies for conducting elite interviews. *Qualitative Research,

11*(4), 431-441. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794111404329

Heesen, R., Bright, L. K., & Zucker, A. (2019). Vindicating methodological

triangulation. *Synthese, 196*(8), 3067-3081. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-016-

1294-7

Houghton, C., Casey, D., & Smyth, S. (2017). Selection, collection and analysis as

sources of evidence in case study research. *Nurse Researcher, 24*(4), 36-41.

https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2017.e1482

Hsu, Y. L. (2019). The study of total quality management on business performance in

tourist hotels in Taiwan. *International Journal of Organizational Innovation*,

12(1), 305-337. https://www.ijoi-

online.org/attachments/article/143/0957%20Final.pdf

Hu, Q., & Kapucu, N. (2017). Can management practices make a difference? Nonprofit

organization financial performance during times of economic stress. *European

Journal of Economic & Political Studies*, *8*(1), 1-18.

https://www.ojs.tripaledu.com/index.php/jefa/article/view/26/17

Husaković, D., & Mujčinović, E. (2019). Application of en ISO 9001: 2008 and en ISO

9004: 2009 standards and business performances improvement of small and

medium enterprises in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *BH Economics Forum / BH*

Ekonomski Forum, *10*, 91-106. https://doi.org/10.5937/bhekofor1901091h

Hyett, N., Kenny, A., & Dickson-Swift, V. (2014). Methodology or method? A critical

review of qualitative case study reports. *International Journal of Qualitative*

Studies on Health and Well-Being, *9,*1-12. https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v9.23606

Jean-Francois, E. (2014). *Financial sustainability for nonprofit organizations.* Springer

Publishing Company.

Jimoh, R., Oyewobi, L., Isa, R., & Waziri, I. (2019). Total quality management practices

and organizational performance: The mediating roles of strategies for continuous

improvement. *International Journal of Construction Management*, *19*(2), 162-

177. https://doi.org/10.1080/15623599.2017.1411456

Johnson, S. L. (2019). Impact, growth, capacity-building of mixed methods research in

the health sciences. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 83*(2), 136-

139. https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7403

Joslin, R., & Müller, R. (2016). Identifying interesting project phenomena using

philosophical and methodological triangulation. *International Journal of Project*

Management, 34(6), 1043-1056*.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2016.05.005

Juran, J. M. (1986). The quality trilogy: A universal approach to managing for quality.

Quality Progress, 19(8), 19-24. https://asq.org/quality-progress/articles/the-

quality-trilogy?id=fd76da805e434c93837d640f98461e98

Juran, J. M., & Godfrey, A. B. (1999). *Juran's quality handbook*. McGraw Hill

Professional.

Kabeyi, M. J. (2019). Organizational strategic planning, implementation and evaluation

    with analysis of challenges and benefits for profit and nonprofit organizations.

    International Journal of Applied Research, 5(6), 27-32.

    https://doi.org/10.22271/allresearch.2019.v5.i6a.5870

Kachaner, N., King, K., & Stewart, S. (2016). Four best practices for strategic planning.

    Strategy & Leadership, *44*(4), 26-31. https://doi.org/10.1108/SL-06-2016-004

Kaur, M., Singh, K., & Singh, D. (2019). Synergetic success factors of total quality

    management (TQM) and supply chain management (SCM): A literature review.

    International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, *36*(6), 842-863.

    https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQRM-11-2017-0228

Khan, R. A., Mirza, A., & Khushnood, M. (2020). The role of total quality management

    practices on operational performance of the service industry. *International*

    Journal for Quality Research, *14*(2), 439-454.

    https://doi.org/10.24874/IJQR14.02-07

Kharub, M., Mor, R. S., & Sharma, R. (2019). The relationship between cost leadership

    competitive strategy and firm performance: A mediating role of quality

    management. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*, *30*(6), 920-

    936. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMTM-06-2017-0116

Kornov, L. (2021). SEA as a change agent: Still relevant and how to stay relevant?

    Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal, *39*(1), 63-66.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2020.183067

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice, 24*(1), 120-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Kowo, S. A., Akinbola, O. A., & Akinrinola, O. (2019). The implementation of total quality management (TQM) in the telecommunication industry: Problems and prospects. *Proceedings on Engineering Sciences*, *1*(2), 301-312. https://doi.org/10.24874/PES01.02.027

Krajcsák, Z. (2019). Implementing open innovation using quality management systems: The role of organizational commitment and customer loyalty. *Journal of Open Innovation*, *5*(4), 90-100. https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc5040090

Kumar, V., Sharma, R. R. K., Verma, P., Lai, K.-K., & Chang, Y.-H. (2018). Mapping the TQM implementation. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, *25*(8), 3081-3116. https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-06-2017-0150

Ladewski, B. J., & Al-Bayati, A. J. (2019). Quality and safety management practices: The theory of quality management approach. *Journal of Safety Research*, *69*, 193-200. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2019.03.004

Laforest, R., & Smith, S. R. (2017). Nonprofits in a time of turbulence: Challenges and opportunities. *Nonprofit Policy Forum*, *8*(2), 117-120. https://doi.org/10.1515/npf-2017-0021

Lapid, M. I., Ciarte, B. L., & Wright, R. S. (2019). Institutional review boards: What clinician-researchers need to know. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, *94*(3), 515-526. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.macyop.2019.01.020

Lasrado, F., & Nyadzayo, M. (2019). Improving service quality: Examining the drivers

    and outcomes of TQM internalization in organizations. *International Journal of*

    Quality & Reliability Management, *37*(3), 393-410.

    https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQRM-08-2019-0253

Lee, C., & Nowell, B. (2015). A framework for assessing the performance of nonprofit

    organizations. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *36*(3), 299-319.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214014545828

Lenger, A. (2019). The rejection of qualitative research methods in economics. *Journal of*

    Economic Issues (Taylor & Francis Ltd), *53*(4), 946-965.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/00213624.2019.1657748

Lenning, J. (2018). Auditing of explorative processes. *Total Quality Management &*

    Business Excellence, *29*(9/10), 1185-1199.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2018.1487605

Lewis-Beck, M. S., Bryman, A., & Liao, F. T. (2004). *The SAGE encyclopedia of social*

    science research methods. SAGE Publications.

    https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412950589

Liao, K. H., & Huang, I. S. (2016). Impact of vision, strategy, and human resource on

    nonprofit organization service performance. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral*

    Sciences, 224, 20-27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.395

Liao, Y. Y., Soltani, E., & Yeow, P. (2014). What sparks quality-driven change

    programmes in not-for-profit service sector? Some evidence from the voluntary

    sector. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *25*(11/12), 1295-1317.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2013.850887

Lo, C. K. Y., & Yeung, A. C. L. (2018). Quality management standards,

   institutionalization and organizational implications: A longitudinal analysis.

   International Journal of Production Economics, *200*, 231-239.

   https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2018.03.028

Majstorovic, V., & Sibalija, T. V. (2015). From IMS and six sigma toward TQM: An

   empirical study from Serbia. *TQM Journal*, *27*(3), 341-355.

   https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-12-2013-0130

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2016). *Designing Qualitative Research*. (6th ed.). SAGE.

Mas'udin, I., & Kamara, M. (2018). Impact of just-in-time, total quality management and

   supply chain management on organizational performance: A review perspective.

   Jurnal Teknik Industri, *19*(1), 11-20.

   https://doi.org/10.22219/JTIUMM.Vol19.No1.11-20

Matta, C. (2019). Qualitative research methods and evidential reasoning. *Philosophy of*

   the Social Sciences, *49*(5), 385-412. https://doi.org/10.1177/0048393119862858

Maurer, L. L. (2016). Board member perceptions of small nonprofit organization

   effectiveness. *Journal of Social, Behavioral, and Health Sciences, 10(*1), 18-30.

   https://doi.org/10.5590/JSBHS.2016.10.1.03

Melander, A., Löfving, M., Andersson, D., Elgh, F., & Thulin, M. (2016). Introducing the

   Hoshin Kanri strategic management system in manufacturing SMEs. *Management*

   Decision, *54*(10), 2507-2523. https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-03-2016-0148

Melão, N. F., Maria Guia, S., & Amorim, M. (2017). Quality management and excellence

in the third sector: Examining European Quality in Social Services (EQUASS) in

nonprofit social services. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*,

28(7/8), 840–857. https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2015.1132160

Mensah, J. (2020). Improving quality management in higher education institutions in

developing countries through strategic planning. *Asian Journal of Contemporary*

Education, *4*(1), 9-25. https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.137.2020.41.9.25

Meyerowitz, D., Lew, C., & Svensson, G. (2018). Scenario-planning in strategic

decision-making: Requirements, benefits and inhibitors. *Foresight*, *20*(6), 602-

621. https://doi.org/10.1108/FS-04-2018-0036

Mihaela-Lavinia, C. (2019). Approaches for an efficient quality management system.

Journal of Academic Research in Economics, *11*(2), 419-427. http://www.jare-

sh.com/downloads/jul_2019/ciobanica.pdf

Mihalciuc, C. C., & Grosu, M. (2019). Improving the monitoring process and the external

and internal communication process of an organization performance. *USV Annals*

of Economics & Public Administration, *19*(2), 141-150.

http://annals.seap.usv.ro/index.php/annals/article/view/1187/988

Miller, E. W. (2018). Nonprofit strategic management revisited. *Canadian Journal of*

Nonprofit & Social Economy Research / Revue Canadienne de Recherche Sur Les

OSBL et l'économie Sociale, *9*(2), 23-40.

https://doi.org/10.22230/cjnser.2018v9n2a270

Mitchell, D. (2019). It all depends, but on what? Testing contingency in public strategic

implementation. *Public Performance & Management Review*, *42*(4), 783-807.

https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2018.1523063

Mohajan, H. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related

subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, *7*(1), 23-

48. https://doi.org/10.26458/jedep.v7i1.571

Mondragón-Ixtlahuac, M. M., Cortés-Martínez, J. C., & Delgado-Hernández, D. J.

(2017). A strategic planning model for the passenger rail implementation process:

The case of Mexico. *Transport Policy*, *55*, 29-37.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2017.01.004

Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part

3: Sampling, data collection, and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice*,

24(1), 9-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and

Behavioral Research. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and*

guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research.

https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/Belmont.html

Neis, D. F., Pereira, M. F., & Maccari, E. A. (2017). Strategic planning process and

organizational structure: Impacts, confluence, and similarities. *BBR: Brazilian*

Business Review, 14(5,) 479-492. https://doi.org/10.15728/bbr.2017.14.5.2

Nguyen, T. L. H., & Nagase, K. (2019). The influence of total quality management on

customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Healthcare Management*, *12*(4),

277-285. https://doi.org/10.1080/20479700.2019.1647378

Nicholas, J. (2016). Hoshin kanri and critical success factors in quality management and

lean production. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *27*(3/4), 250-264. https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2014.976938

Nienaber, H., & Martins, N. (2020). Exploratory study: Determine which dimensions enhance the levels of employee engagement to improve organisational effectiveness. *The TQM Journal*, *32*(3), 475-495. https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-05-2019-0151

Olinske, J. L., & Hellman, C. M. (2017). Leadership in the human service nonprofit organization: The influence of the board of directors on executive director well-being and burnout. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, *41*(2), 95-105. https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2016.1222976

Oye, C., Sorensen, N. Ø., & Glasdam, S. (2016). Qualitative research ethics on the spot: Not only on the desktop. *Nursing Ethics, 23*(4), 455-464. https://doi.org/10.1177/0969733014567023

Paquibut, R. Y. (2017). A system evaluation theory analyzing value and results chain for institutional accreditation in Oman. *Quality Assurance in Education: An International Perspective*, *25*(2), 161-170. https://doi.org/10.1108/QAE-06-2016-0030

Paraschivescu, A. O. (2018). Hoshin Kanri and total quality management. *Economy Transdisciplinary Cognition*, *21*(1), 91-98. https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2014.976938

Park, J., & Park, M. (2016). Qualitative versus quantitative research methods: Discovery or justification? *Journal of Marketing Thought, 3*(1), 1-7.

https://doi.org/10.15577/jmt.2016.03.01.1

Patton, M. Q. (2015). Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and
practice (4th ed.). SAGE Publishing

Piccioli, M. (2019). Educational research and mixed methods. Research designs,
application perspectives, and food for thought. *Studi Sulla Formazione, 22*(2),
423-438. https://doi.org/10.13128/ssf-10815

Pojasek, R. B., & Hollist, J. T. (2011). Improving sustainability results with performance
frameworks. *Environmental Quality Management*, *20*(4), 81-96.
https://doi.org/10.1002/tqem.20302

Rafailidis, A., Trivellas, P., & Polychroniou, P. (2017). The mediating role of quality on
the relationship between cultural ambidexterity and innovation performance.
Total Quality Management & Business Excellence, *28*(9/10), 1134-1148.
https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2017.1309122

Ramu, G. (2016). Ready, set, transition. *Quality Progress*, *49*(12), 66-69.
http://207.67.83.164/quality-progress/2016/12/standards-outlook/ready-set-
transition.html

Renz, S. M., Carrington, J. M., & Badger, T. A. (2018). Two strategies for qualitative
content analysis: An intramethod approach to triangulation. *Qualitative Health
Research*, *28*(5), 824-831. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317753586

Rodriguez, G. (2018). Economic and social impact of the internationalization strategy
based on megaplanning for Southern Sonora region, Sonora, Mexico.
Performance Improvement, *57*(6), 24-32. https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.21798

Rohit, B., & Rengamani, J. (2018). Total quality management based on conceptions, principles and systems for automotive materials purchasing quality decision and management. *International Journal of Supply Chain Management, 7*(1), 224-229. https://ojs.excelingtech.co.uk/index.php/IJSCM/article/view/2088

Rusch, S., Lachmann, M., Wilkesmann, M., & Bastini, K. (2019). The effects of entrepreneurial orientation on strategy choice and management control in nonprofit organizations. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, *17*(3), 153-168. https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.17(3).2019.13

Rutberg, S., & Bouikidis, C. D. (2018). Focusing on the fundamentals: A simplistic differentiation between qualitative and quantitative research. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*, *45*(2), 209-213. https://www.annanurse.org/resources/products/nephrology-nursing-journal

Rybski, C., Jochem, R., & Homma, L. (2017). Empirical study on status of preparation for ISO 9001:2015. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *28*(9/10), 1076-1089. https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2017.1303886

Sahoo, S. (2019). Lean manufacturing practices and performance: The role of social and technical factors. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, *37*(5), 732-754. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQRM-03-2019-0099

Sak-Colareza, C., & Hammami, M. (2017). Initial training of teaching skills in Romania: Total quality management (TQM). *ELearning & Software for Education*, *1*, 230-237. https://doi.org/10.12753/2066-026X-17-034

Samawi, G. A., Abu-Tayeh, B. K., Yosef, F., Madanat, M., & Al-Qatawneh, M. (2018).

Relation between total quality management practices and business excellence: Evidence from private service firms in Jordan. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, *8*(1), 28-35. https://econjournals.com/index.php/irmm/article/view/5819

Sansalvador, M. E., & Brotons, J. M. (2017). The application of OWAs in expertise processes: The development of a model for the quantification of hidden quality costs. *Economic Computation & Economic Cybernetics Studies & Research*, *51*(3), 73-90. https://ideas.repec.org/a/cys/ecocyb/v50y2017i3p73-90.html

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: Exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity, 52*(4), 1893-1907. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8

Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2015). *Research methods for business students* (7th ed.). Pearson Education Unlimited.

Savov, R., Chebeň, J., Lančarič, D., & Serenčéš, R. (2017). MBNQA approach in quality management supporting sustainable business performance in agribusiness. *Amfiteatru Economic*, *19*(44), 11-27. https://www.amfiteatrueconomic.ro/home

Sawicki, N. N. (2017). Informed consent as societal stewardship. *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics, 45*(1), 41-50. https://doi.org/10.1177/1073110517703098

Setia, M. S. (2016). Methodology series module 5: Sampling strategies. *Indian Journal of Dermatology, 61*(5), 505-509. https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5154.190118

Shafiq, M., Lasrado, F., & Hafeez, K. (2019). The effect of TQM on organizational

performance: Empirical evidence from the textile sector of a developing country using SEM. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *30*(1), 31-52. https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2017.1283211

Shin, N., Park, S., & Lee, S. (2016). Korean standard quality excellence index for strategic quality planning and improvement. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *27*(7/8), 735-750. https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2016.1187993

Shumate, M., Cooper, K. R., Pilny, A., & Pena, M. (2017). The nonprofit capacities instrument. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, *28*(2), 155-174. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21276

Shumate, M., Fu, J. S., & Cooper, K. R. (2018). Does cross-sector collaboration lead to higher nonprofit capacity? *Journal of Business Ethics, 150*(2), 385-399. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3856-8

Sim, J., Saunders, B., Waterfield, J., & Kingstone, T. (2018). Can sample size in qualitative research be determined a priori? *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *21*(5), 619-634. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2018.1454643

Smith, I., Hicks, C., & McGovern, T. (2020). Adapting lean methods to facilitate stakeholder engagement and co-design in healthcare. *BMJ (Clinical Research Ed.)*, *368*, 1-4. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m35

Soliman, M. A. (2018). Towards strategic planning implementation for Egyptian cities. *Environmental Science and Sustainable Development*, *2*(2), 99-114.

https://doi.org/10.21625/essd.v2i2.171

Soysa, I. B., Jayamaha, N. P., & Grigg, N. P. (2016). Operationalizing performance

measurement dimensions for the Australasian nonprofit healthcare sector. *TQM*

Journal, *28*(6), 954-973. https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-08-2015-0109

Strang, K. D. (2018). Strategic analysis of CSF's for not-for-profit organizations.

Measuring Business Excellence, 22(1), 42-63. https://doi.org/10.1108/MBE-07-

2016-0035

Sumardi, A., & Fernandes, R. (2020). The influence of quality management on

organization performance: Service quality and product characteristics as a

medium. *Property Management*, *38*(3), 383-403. https://doi.org./10.1108/PM-10-

2019-0060

Talapatra, S., & Uddin, M. K. (2019). Prioritizing the barriers of TQM implementation

from the perspective of garment sector in developing countries. *Benchmarking:*

An International Journal, 26(7), 2205-2224. https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-01-2019-

0023

Talib, F., & Faisal, M. N. (2020). Assessment of total quality management

implementation in Indian service industries. *IUP Journal of Operations*

Management, *19*(2), 7-28. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2907927

Tawse, A., Patrick, V. M., & Vera, D. (2019). Crossing the chasm: Leadership nudges to

help transition from strategy formulation to strategy implementation. *Business*

Horizons, *62*(2), 249-257. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2018.09.005

Tejaningrum, A. (2019). Implementation the trilogy Juran in SMEs business case study in

Indonesia. *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, *506*,

012031. https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899x/506/1/012031

Teoman, S., & Ulengin, F. (2018). The impact of management leadership on quality

performance throughout a supply chain: An empirical study. *Total Quality

Management & Business Excellence*, *29*(11/12), 1427-1451.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2016.1266244

Theofanidis, D., & Fountouki, A. (2018). Limitations and delimitations in the research

process. *Perioperative Nursing*, *7*(3), 155-163.

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2552022

Thompson, A. J., Martin, A. J., Gee, S., & Geurin, A. N. (2018). Building brand and fan

relationships through social media. *Sport, Business & Management*, *8*(3), 235.

https://doi.org/10.1108/SBM-04-2017-0024

Toma, S. G., & Naruo, S. (2017). Total quality management and business excellence: The

best practices at Toyota Motor Corporation. *Amfiteatru Economic*, *19*(45), 566-

580. https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/169089/1/aej-v19-i45-p566.pdf

Türkoğlu, B. (2019). A mixed method research study on the effectiveness of board game-

based cognitive training program. *International Journal of Progressive

Education*, *15*(5), 315-344. https://doi.org/10.29329/ijpe.2019.212.21

Uzarski, D., & Broome, M. E. (2019). A leadership framework for implementation of an

organization's strategic plan. *Journal of Professional Nursing: Official Journal of

the American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, *35*(1), 12-17.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2018.09.007

Valjevac, B., Sorak, L., & Sorak, M. (2018). Development of the strategic planning

    process necessary for the business performance quality improvement in small and

    medium companies. *BizInfo*, *9*(1), 47-57.

    http://www.bizinfo.edu.rs/index.php/bizinfo/article/view/135

van den Berg, A., & Struwig, M. (2017). Guidelines for researchers using an adapted

    consensual qualitative research approach in management research. *Electronic*

    Journal of Business Research Methods, *15*(2), 109-119. https://academic-

    publishing.org/index.php/ejbrm/article/view/1361/1324

van Nuil, J. I., Kestelyn, E., Umutoni, G., Mwambarangwe, L., Umulisa, M. M., van de

    Wijgert, J., & Ravinetto, R. (2018). Informed consent, community engagement,

    and study participation at a research site in Kigali, Rwanda. *Developing World*

    Bioethics, 18(4), 349-356. https://doi.org/10.1111/dewb.12149

van Rijnsoever, F. J. (2017). (I can't get no) Saturation: A simulation and guidelines for

    sample sizes in qualitative research. *Plos One, 12*(7), 1-17.

    https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0181689

Varpio, L., Ajjawi, R., Monrouxe, L. V., O'Brien, B. C., & Rees, C. E. (2017). Shedding

    the cobra effect: Problematizing thematic emergence, triangulation, saturation,

    and member checking. *Medical Education, 51*(1), 40-50.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.13124

Vasileiou, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S., & Young, T. (2018). Characterizing and justifying

    sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: Systematic analysis of

    qualitative health research over a 15-year period. *BMC Medical Research*

Methodology, *18*(1), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-018-0594-7

vom Lehn, D. (2019). Phenomenology-based ethnography for management studies and

organizational analysis. *British Journal of Management*, *30*(1), 188-202.

https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12309

Walden University. (2020). A vision for social change. Retrieved from

https://www.waldenu.edu/-/media/Walden/files/about-walden/walden-university

2017-social-change-report-final-v-2.pdf

Walden University. (2019). Manual for the DBA consulting capstone (2nd ed.). Author.

Wendler, D. (2020). Minimizing risks is not enough: The relevance of benefits to

protecting research participants. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine 63*(2),346-

358. https://doi.org/10.1353/pbm.2020.0023

Williams, M., & Moser, T. (2019). The art of coding and thematic exploration in

qualitative research. *International Management Review*, *15*(1), 45-55.

http://www.imrjournal.org/uploads/1/4/2/8/14286482/imr-v15n1art4.pdf

Williams, N. J., Wolk, C. B., Becker-Haimes, E. M., & Beidas, R. S. (2020). Testing a

theory of strategic implementation leadership, implementation climate, and

clinicians' use of evidence-based practice: A 5-year panel analysis.

Implementation Science, *15*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-020-0970-7

Wilson, J. P., & Campbell, L. (2020). ISO 9001:2015: The evolution and convergence of

quality management and knowledge management for competitive advantage.

Total Quality Management & Business Excellence, *31*(7/8), 761-776.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14783363.2018.1445965

Wilson, V. (2016). Research methods: Interviews. *Evidence-Based Library and Information Practice*, *11*(1), 47-49. https://doi.org/10.18438/B8404H

Wolf, C., & Floyd, S. W. (2017). Strategic planning research: Toward a theory-driven agenda. *Journal of Management*, *43*(6), 1754-1788. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206313478185

Yadav, N., Shankar, R., & Singh, S. P. (2020). Impact of industry4.0/ICTs, Lean Six Sigma and quality management systems on organisational performance. *The TQM Journal*, *32*(4), 815-835. https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-10-2019-0251

Yates, J., & Leggett, T. (2016). Qualitative research: An introduction. *Radiological Technology, 88*(2), 225-331. http://www.radiologictechnology.org/content/88/2/225.full

Yeong, M. L., Ismail, R., Ismail, N. H., & Hamzah, M. I. (2018). Interview protocol refinement: Fine-tuning qualitative research interview questions for multi-racial populations in Malaysia. *Qualitative Report*, *23*(11), 2700-2713. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss11/7

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage.

Young, C., Lambert, L., Abel, J., & O'Neill, B. J. (2018). Quality of cardiac care in Canada: Recommendations for building a sustainable future. *The Canadian Journal of Cardiology*, *34*(6), 800-803. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cjca.2018.01.025

Zrymiak, D. (2016). Cost of social responsibility model. *Journal for Quality & Participation*, *38*(4), 1-. 3. https://asq.org/quality-resources/articles/cost-of-social-

responsibility-model?id=5b17d0dd34a7439896336007b7bdca66

Appendix: Interview Protocol

Research Study Title: Continuous Improvement Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations

Research Question: What strategies do leaders of nonprofit organizations use to implement quality management standards in strategic planning to improve organizational performance?

Interview Procedures

I will present a brief overview and introduction that reiterates the IRB requirements

The interview will be conducted using a video and audio-conferencing platform for 60 minutes.

The interview will be digitally recorded

The interviewee or interviewer may choose to end the interview at any time

The interviewee will be allowed to read the interview transcript at the end of the interview.

Participation in this interview will not be compensated.

Interview Questions

I developed the following interview questions to address the research question:

1.   How are quality management standards integrated into your organization's strategic planning process?

2.   What are the responsibilities of board members, leaders, and managers in assuring quality management practices are integrated with your organization's strategic planning process?

3.   How do you facilitate the implementation of quality management standards and practices in strategies to achieve short- and longer-term objectives identified in the strategic planning process?

4.   What strategies for strategic planning have proven successful for the implementation of quality management standards?

5.   How do you prepare and foster conditions for present and future evaluations of the effect that implementing quality management standards has on organizational performance?

6.   What are your strategic short- and long-term action plans to ensure quality management standards are met?

7.   What were the key barriers to integrating and implementing quality management standards in your organization's strategic planning process?

8.   How did you address the key barriers to integrate and implement quality management standards in your organization's strategic planning process?

9.   Based on your experience, what insights can you provide to help me understand how to integrate quality management into the business strategy?

10.   What more do you want to tell me about implementing quality management standards in your organization to improve its performance?