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An analysis of value creation in the private primary and secondary
education sector in Zimbabwe.

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE
REQUIREMENTS OF EXECUTIVE MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEGREE
(EMBA)

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ABSTRACT

The research problem sought to evaluate if private primary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe were creating value to parents, owners of schools and other stakeholders. Four objectives were set for the study and these included an objective of evaluating clients' expectations regarding the private education sector in Zimbabwe and assessing the significance of the customer value concept within the private education sector. The other objectives were on evaluating the investment required to deliver satisfying customer value and analysing how customers (guardians) select schools of choice. This particular research tested whether private schools indeed created value as perceived by parents, and if private schools differentiated themselves according to expectations of parents. The research study also evaluated whether investors in the private education sector enjoyed sustainable business when they created value. Various frameworks constituted the scope of the study, the main ones being the first order determinants of value creation by Pitelis (2008:21) and the value creating model by Herrala, Pakkala and Haapasalo (2011:16). The study covered two main districts in Harare these being, Warren Park- Mabelreign Education District and the central-Northern Education District. Purposive sampling methods were used to draw appropriate sample size of participants who provided the information that was specifically required for the study. Literature reviewed that the reasons for choice of private schools varied from social, economic, cultural, parochial, specific needs, racial reasons and that private schools can compete among themselves. The study utilized quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to extract primary data. Data instruments used included questionnaires for the parents and interviews for education officers and representative of school owners. A Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyse primary data. Findings of the research study revealed that parents sent their children to private schools because they valued the outcomes of private school attendance which benefited the children later in life, key among these being networking opportunities, pursuit of good and rewarding career and access to better institutions of higher education. Investors in the private education sector and education officers pointed out that schools are required to invest intensively in infrastructure, human resources, technology and need to consistently innovate in order to deliver high quality education.