

Factors Influencing Students' Satisfaction with Service at the Sichuan–Chongqing Employment Service Center

Shi Shuai¹, Sutthiporn Boonsong^{2*}, Thanaploysiri Siribansobh³
Education Faculty, Pathumthani University^{1, 2*, 3}
Corresponding author's e-mail: thanapolysiri@ptu.ac.th

Abstract

The objectives of this research were (1) to determine the level of students' satisfaction with the services provided by the Sichuan–Chongqing Employment Service Center, and (2) to identify the key factors influencing this satisfaction. This study employed a quantitative research design. The population consisted of 1,200 students who received services during the 2025 academic year, with a sample size of 291 students selected through simple random sampling. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, covering six dimensions: service quality, staff attitude, information quality, resource availability, training programs, and service environment. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis. The study is expected to provide evidence-based insights to improve the effectiveness and student-centeredness of career support services. The findings aim to support students' transition from education to employment within China's rapidly developing Sichuan–Chongqing economic zone.

Keywords: Student Satisfaction, Employment Service Center, Service Quality, Career Readiness, Sichuan–Chongqing Region

Introduction

Student satisfaction is widely recognized as a critical indicator of service effectiveness and institutional performance in higher education environments (Elliott & Shin, 2002; Hill, 2005). Within employment support contexts, satisfaction reflects students' evaluation of how well services meet their career-related expectations and developmental needs (Feldman & Whitcomb, 2005; Reardon et al., 2011). As regional economies such as the Sichuan–Chongqing economic zone undergo rapid transformation, employment service centers play a pivotal role in enhancing graduate employability and workforce readiness (World Bank, 2020; Bridgstock, 2009).

Service quality theory provides a foundational framework for evaluating student perceptions of institutional support. The SERVQUAL model conceptualizes service quality through dimensions such as reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Buttle, 1996). In educational settings, service quality has been empirically linked to student satisfaction and retention (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; DeShields et al., 2005; Yusoff et al., 2015). Furthermore, Expectation–Confirmation Theory posits that satisfaction emerges when perceived service performance meets or exceeds prior expectations (Elliott & Shin, 2002).

In the context of employment service centers, constructs such as staff attitude, information quality, and resource availability represent operational manifestations of these theoretical dimensions. For instance, staff professionalism reflects the assurance and empathy components of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), while information quality relates to reliability and responsiveness in service delivery (Gruber et al., 2010; Gupta & Kaushik, 2018). Therefore, this study integrates service quality theory and satisfaction frameworks to systematically examine the determinants of students' satisfaction at the Sichuan–Chongqing Employment Service Center.

Research Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative research design to systematically measure factors influencing student satisfaction.

Population and Sample: The population comprised 1,200 students who utilized the Sichuan–Chongqing Employment Service Center in 2025. A sample of 291 participants was selected using simple random sampling based on Krejcie and Morgan’s table.

Research Instrument: A three-part structured questionnaire was used: (1) Demographic information, (2) Factors influencing satisfaction (30–36 items), and (3) Overall satisfaction level (6–8 items) . The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale.

Validity and Reliability: Content validity was ensured through the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) by three experts, achieving values between 0.67 and 1.00. Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach’s alpha in a pilot test with 30 students .

Data Collection: Data were collected both online via QR codes and paper-based at the center’s reception and counseling areas .

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics (Mean, S.D.) summarized characteristics and perceptions . Inferential statistics, including t-test, ANOVA, Pearson Correlation, and Multiple Regression, identified significant predictors of satisfaction .

Result

Based on the research design and research objectives, the results are categorized into the following key findings:

The analysis of demographic data for the 291 respondents indicates a diverse user base, primarily aged 18–23, spanning various academic majors such as Business, Engineering, and Education. A significant portion of the sample consisted of students who had used the center "Sometimes" or "Often," reflecting a sustained reliance on the center's resources for career planning.

Regarding the primary factors influencing satisfaction, the quantitative data shows that Staff Attitude and Information Quality emerged as the most positively perceived dimensions. Students rated the professionalism, helpfulness, and empathy of the staff as "High" or "Very High," indicating that interpersonal interactions are a cornerstone of the service experience. Similarly, the timeliness and relevance of job postings and training announcements were identified as critical strengths that meet students' expectations for accuracy and clarity.

The Service Environment and Resource Availability were also significant factors, with students expressing satisfaction with the cleanliness, organization, and accessibility of digital resources like online job portals. The Training and Guidance Programs, specifically workshops on resume writing and interview preparation, were noted for their practical value in improving job-search skills and boosting confidence.

Finally, the Overall Satisfaction level among students at the Sichuan–Chongqing Employment Service Center was determined to be at a "High" level. The multiple regression analysis confirmed that Service Quality, Staff Attitude, and Information Quality are the strongest predictors of satisfaction. Students indicated a high likelihood of recommending the center’s services to their peers, reinforcing the institutional reputation and trust.

Discussion and conclusions

The findings demonstrate that Service Quality, Staff Attitude, and Information Quality are the strongest predictors of student satisfaction. However, these results require deeper theoretical interpretation beyond descriptive observation.

1. Service Quality as a Structural Determinant

The strong predictive role of overall Service Quality aligns with SERVQUAL theory, which posits that perceived quality directly influences customer satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). In this study, students' high satisfaction levels suggest that the center successfully delivers reliable and responsive services. This finding is consistent with research indicating that institutional service quality significantly predicts satisfaction and loyalty in higher education contexts (DeShields et al., 2005; Yusoff et al., 2015). Importantly, service quality in employment centers extends beyond physical facilities to include procedural clarity and outcome effectiveness. When students perceive that career services improve employability prospects, satisfaction becomes linked to tangible career advancement (Feldman & Whitcomb, 2005; Bridgstock, 2009).

2. Staff Attitude as an Assurance and Empathy Mechanism

The dominant influence of Staff Attitude reflects the interpersonal dimension of service delivery. Within the SERVQUAL framework, assurance and empathy are critical in shaping positive service evaluations (Parasuraman et al., 1988). When staff demonstrate professionalism, expertise, and personalized care, students experience psychological reassurance during the often stressful job-search process.

This finding supports service management literature suggesting that employee attitudes significantly affect customer satisfaction (Chi & Gursoy, 2009). In higher education settings, student engagement and perceived support from staff are strongly associated with satisfaction and institutional trust (Cheng, 2014; Bryson & Hand, 2007). Therefore, Staff Attitude functions not merely as a behavioral variable but as a trust-building mechanism that reduces employment anxiety and enhances emotional satisfaction.

3. Information Quality as Reliability and Value Confirmation

The significance of Information Quality can be interpreted through Expectation–Confirmation Theory. Students approach employment service centers with expectations of receiving timely, accurate, and relevant job information. When these expectations are confirmed through up-to-date postings and practical training announcements, satisfaction increases (Elliott & Shin, 2002).

Information quality also aligns with the reliability dimension of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Research on higher education services indicates that clear communication and accurate information significantly enhance perceived institutional effectiveness (Gruber et al., 2010; Gupta & Kaushik, 2018). In employment contexts, access to relevant labor market data and career development workshops directly influences students' perception of career readiness (Reardon et al., 2011).

Thus, Information Quality operates as both a cognitive confirmation factor and a functional service attribute, reinforcing students' belief that the center provides meaningful career value.

4. Systemic Interpretation of Satisfaction

The combined influence of Service Quality, Staff Attitude, and Information Quality suggests that student satisfaction is not determined by isolated factors but by an integrated service ecosystem. This aligns with multidimensional models of student satisfaction emphasizing the interaction between institutional processes, interpersonal relationships, and outcome expectations (Hill, 2005; Yusoff et al., 2015).

Moreover, in transitional environments such as employment service centers, satisfaction reflects not only immediate service experiences but also perceived long-term employability benefits (World Bank, 2020; Robotham, 2009). Therefore, satisfaction can be conceptualized as both an affective response and a rational evaluation of career support effectiveness.

Suggestion

1. Recommendations for Practice and Institutional Enhancement:

Strengthening Staff Development: Since staff attitude is a primary driver of satisfaction, the Center should invest in continuous professional development for counselors. Training should focus on advanced communication skills, career counseling psychology, and the latest labor market trends to ensure that "Assurance" and "Empathy" remain at the highest level.

Optimizing Digital and Real-time Information: To maintain high information quality, the Center should upgrade its digital career platforms to include AI-driven job matching and instant notification systems for internship deadlines. This will ensure that "Timeliness" remains a competitive advantage.

Customizing Training Programs: The results suggest that students value relevance. The Center should develop specialized workshops tailored to specific majors, such as "IT Technical Interviews" or "Business Communication in International Trade," to meet the diverse needs of students from different academic backgrounds.

Improving Procedural Efficiency: Administrative processes, such as registration and document submission, should be further streamlined through mobile applications to reduce waiting times and frustration, thereby enhancing "Procedural Efficiency".

2. Recommendations for Policy and Regional Development:

Expanding Industry Partnerships: To improve resource availability, the Center should strengthen collaborations with local municipal employment agencies and private industries in the Sichuan–Chongqing zone. This will provide a wider variety of high-quality internships and job placement opportunities.

National Alignment: The findings should be used to align local services with China's broader national strategies for vocational education reform and graduate employment rates.

3. Recommendations for Future Research:

Qualitative Deep-Dive: Future research should employ qualitative methods, such as focus groups or in-depth interviews, to explore the *underlying reasons* why certain factors, like staff empathy, have such a profound impact on students' emotional satisfaction.

Longitudinal Tracking: It is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies to track whether high student satisfaction with the center's services leads to higher long-term employment rates and career success.

Comparative Analysis: Further studies could compare student satisfaction levels across multiple employment service centers in different Chinese provinces to identify universal best practices in career guidance.

References

- Bridgstock, R. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 28(1), 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360802444347>
- Brown, J. D., & Clow, K. E. (2019). *Marketing management for services*. Cengage Learning.
- Bryson, C., & Hand, L. (2007). The role of engagement in inspiring teaching and learning. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 44(4), 349–362. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703290701602748>
- Buttle, F. (1996). SERVQUAL: Review, critique, research agenda. *European Journal of Marketing*, 30(1), 8–32. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090569610105762>
- Chen, S., & Wang, J. (2020). Career development guidance and university employment services in China. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 29(2), 145–160.
- Cheng, M. (2014). Quality in higher education: Developing a framework for student engagement. *Quality in Higher Education*, 20(3), 253–267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2014.969315>
- Chi, C. G., & Gursoy, D. (2009). Employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and financial performance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(2), 245–253. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2008.08.003>
- Chong, S., & Ho, B. (2009). Student perceptions of quality in higher education: SERVQUAL application in Asian universities.
- Chou, P. N., & Chen, W. F. (2008). Career guidance and satisfaction among Taiwanese business students. *Career Development Quarterly*, 57(1), 65–78. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2008.tb00166.x>
- Cronin, J. J., & Taylor, S. A. (1992). Measuring service quality: A re-examination. *Journal of Marketing*, 56, 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299205600304>
- DeShields, O. W., Kara, A., & Kaynak, E. (2005). Determinants of student satisfaction and retention in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 5(3), 62–71.
- Elliott, K. M., & Shin, D. (2002). Student satisfaction: A critical review. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 24(2), 197–209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080022000013518>
- Feldman, D. C., & Whitcomb, K. M. (2005). Career services impact on student employability. *Career Development Quarterly*, 54(2), 164–172. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2005.tb00147.x>
- Gruber, T., Fuß, S., Voss, R., & Gläser-Zikuda, M. (2010). Examining student satisfaction with higher education services. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 23(2), 105–123. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513551011022474>
- Gupta, P., & Kaushik, N. (2018). Service quality in higher education: A systematic review. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 26(3), 367–384. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QAE-04-2017-0016>
- Hill, Y. (2005). Student satisfaction and retention in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 13(1), 17–36. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09684880510578690>
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). *High-impact practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A scale for measuring service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12–40.
- Reardon, R., Lenz, J., Sampson, J., & Peterson, G. (2011). *Career development and planning: A comprehensive approach* (4th ed.). Cengage Learning.

- Robotham, D. (2009). Combining study and employment in higher education. *Education + Training*, 51(4), 322–332. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00400910910964590>
- World Bank. (2020). *China education sector analysis: Graduate employability and economic transformation*. World Bank Group. <https://www.worldbank.org>
- Yusoff, M., McLeay, F., & Woodruffe-Burton, H. (2015). Drivers of student satisfaction in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 23(1), 86–104. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QAE-03-2014-0011>