Campus Recruiting Service Quality: Understanding College Recruiters’ Experience During Campus Visits

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The purpose of this study is to assess the attributes college recruiters’ value when determining their campus recruiting activities. The concept of servicescape, SERVQUAL, and SERVPERF were used as a theoretical framework. Importance-performance analysis was utilised to evaluate nine attributes: employer development professional, career fair, tabling, classroom visit, information session, faculty meeting, student group meeting, on campus interviewing, and sponsorship. Data collection occurred at a university in the south eastern United States which hosts career fairs with more than 180 companies. Corporate recruiters were asked to complete a survey with questions regarding the attributed importance and performance of their recruiting experience with the university. This study fills a gap in the research regarding corporate recruiter’s evaluative criteria and decision-making of campus visits, as well as provides practical implications for university career services.

Keywords: campus recruiting, talent acquisition, servicescape, importance-performance analysis (IPA)

Introduction

Competition among companies in recruiting for the best and brightest new hires often brings those companies to university campuses across the nation (Gulati, 2015). Studies indicate that 86 percent of companies in the United States believe that on campus recruiting is the most effective way to identify qualified graduates (Graduate Management Admission Council, 2015). The companies who attend career fairs on university campuses benefit from being able to connect to a large pool of potential employees, recruit young talent, and strengthen the company’s brand awareness (Turban, 2000). In response to corporate interest and the increase of recruiters on campus, university career centres have added employer relations positions to provide better service for existing corporate partners and develop new relationships with potential recruiters. Businesses have long been using high quality customer service as a way to differentiate themselves from the competition (Thompson, DeSouza, & Gales, 1985), and a university is no different. Measuring service quality in a university setting is critical as universities seek to differentiate themselves from other...
schools when attracting companies to campus (Melrose & Reid, 2001). An increase in campus recruiting activities, especially from employers with strong brand recognition, raises the profile of the institution and the students it attracts.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 25 states tie funding for public colleges and universities to performance-based criteria, which can include employment rate and wages upon graduation (2015). Campus recruiting provides universities with the opportunity to showcase their students and increase student employment rate. For students, attending career fairs provide an opportunity to meet with companies, network, and gather companies’ information (Sikes, Adler, & Phillips, 2010). Engaging in other on campus recruiting activities generates opportunities for internships and full-time employment. As such, it is important to understand what attributes bring more companies’ recruiters to campus and provide job opportunities for students, and to monitor the service the university is providing for recruiters.

The recruiter, sometimes called the campus or corporate recruiter, is a human resources professional who recruits employees from colleges to fill internship, co-operative education, or full-time job openings. College recruiters typically travel extensively, visiting college campuses where they engage with students. To understand campus recruiters’ experience on campus, thus, the objective of this study is to answer the following question: Which on campus recruiting factors are most important when recruiters are selecting a university campus for recruiting potential employees? Which services provided by a university career centre positively contribute to corporate recruiters’ overall experience? Which career centre services are most important to corporate recruiters?

Literature Review

Research in Campus Recruiting

Previous research regarding campus recruiting activities is limited to students’ perceptions of recruiting activities and candidate attractiveness to recruiters. According to Sikes, Adler, and Phillips (2010), students who attended career fairs experienced increased knowledge and increased interest in their chosen careers. Rynes and Cable (2003) compiled research on the recruitment process regarding various factors that make a company attractive to an applicant, such as their impression of the recruiter, the timeliness of the selection process, and the opinion of personal friends or family members. Researchers also indicated that recruiters targeting collegiate seniors for management-level careers reported leadership, relevant job experience, organization, job fit, and personality were the most influential factors in the hiring decision (Kwok, Adams, & Price, 2011). However, aside from students’ experiences and recruiters’ reviewing process, there is no research regarding the recruiters’ evaluative criteria and decision-making of campus visits, university relations with college recruiters, and recruiters’ campus experience.

Companies have long been competing for top talent (Chambers et al., 1998; Hiltrop, 1999; Bartlett & Goshall, 2002), and colleges and universities have historically been a source of that talent (Pianko, 1996). Many companies have a university relations and recruiting team within their Human Resources Department. In 2016 the National Association for Colleges and Employers (NACE) reported the average budget for those departments was $562,642 and the average cost per new hire was $4,999. Certainly, then, companies are seeking to generate the greatest return on their investment (ROI) when selecting entry-level employees. One strategy for achieving ROI is through a formalized internship or cooperative education program. According to the 2017 Internship and Co-op report, internships are defined as one-time work or service experiences related to
the student’s major or career goal, while cooperative education programs or co-ops provide students with multiple periods of work in which the work is related to the student’s major or career goal. In the same report, NACE indicated the majority of employers said the primary focus of their internship or co-op program was to recruit for full-time, entry-level employment. Sixty seven percent of interns were offered full time positions at the company where they were interning. Further, NACE found the retention rate of entry-level employees who completed an internship with the company was higher at both the one-year and five-year mark than those who had not. Additionally, retention rates for new hires with any internship experience were higher than those employees who did not have an internship. In both the 2016 and 2017 reports, employers indicated a preference for “high touch” recruiting techniques such as career fairs and other on campus recruiting activities for recruiting interns, co-ops, and entry-level hires.

**Campus Recruiting Activities and University Career Centres**

According to a survey by NACE, 98 percent of corporate recruiters indicated they conducted on campus activities to recruit new graduates (2016). Corporate participation in on campus recruiting activities is often determined by whether or not the institution is on the companies’ list of “core” schools (Rivera, 2011; 2015). Because campus recruiting has been an effective way to seek young talent, NACE (2017b) recommends employers maximize their time on campuses by utilizing specific recruiting methods, such as on campus interviewing and information sessions, in addition to career fairs. Moreover, to assist corporate recruiters, many colleges and universities have an employer relations professional or team in their career centre to work closely with the recruiters. This position is responsible for building relationships with companies and organizations, promoting the benefits of hiring university students, marketing career centre services available, increasing the number of job postings, and managing recruitment activities for the career centre and the university (NACE, 2017a). In order to accomplish these goals, the employer relations professional will arrange opportunities for companies to connect with students on campus in a variety of ways, including classroom visits, student group meetings, hosting information sessions, tabling, on campus interviewing, faculty meetings, career fairs, and sponsorship opportunities. In short, the employer relations professional is the frontline service provider to the recruiter.

Campus recruiting provides many benefits not only for corporations, but also for students, faculty members, and educational institutions. Therefore, it is imperative to understand how corporate recruiters evaluate career centres’ services, the institutions’ employer relations, overall service quality, and important attributes that influence their campus visiting decisions.

**Servicescape**

Booms and Bitner (1981) created the servicescape model, grounded in environmental psychology, to explain the impact environmental factors play on influencing behaviour. The dimensions of the servicescape include “all of the objective physical surroundings that can be controlled by the firm to enhance employee and customer interactions” (Bitner, 1992, p. 65). The construct of servicescape includes ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, signs, symbols and artefacts, service typology and environmental dimensions. Ambient conditions are background characteristics that affect both customers and employees, such as lighting, music, wall colour, temperature, scent. The effects of ambient conditions are particularly noticeable when they are extreme, when the customer spends a long time in the servicescape, or when the conditions conflict with expectations (Bitner, 1990). Spatial layout and functionality is the size and shape of furnishings, equipment and
machinery, the way those items are positioned in the space, and how those items facilitate “performance and accomplishment of goals” (Bitner, 1992, p. 66). Signs, symbols, and artefacts, whether direct or implied, communicate information about a servicescape to its customers. Bitner notes this dimension is especially important for first impressions. Bitner (2000) elaborates the servicescape serves four primary functions: packaging, the appearance to the public; facilitator, guides the efficient flow of activities; socializer, communicates expected roles to both employees and customers; and differentiator, illustrates the competitive difference of the organization. Servicescapes are classified as either lean or elaborate (Bitner, 1992) with lean involving minimal stimuli and interactions, while elaborate may involve multiple service encounters over several days with varying physical environments. When customers enter an area, they are likely to take in and assess all the dimensions at once, creating an impression referred to as the holistic environment (Hoffman, Bateson, Elliot, & Birch, 2010).

Individual’s perception of a servicescape creates internal responses, in the form of cognitive, emotional, and physiological reactions, which lead to different behaviours (Bitner, 1992, p. 60). Bitner (1990) asserts a customer’s perception of service quality affects their overall view of the service firm, and their behavioural intentions. In the servicescape model, individual responses lead to approach or avoid behaviours. Approach behaviours occur when the customer stays in and utilizes the space during the service encounter, and avoid behaviours occur when the customer leaves and may experience feelings of disappointment. Approach behaviours can lead to affiliation with, and commitment to, the service firm (Bitner, 1992). Affiliation implies the customer will become a regular user with the intention to revisit, and through commitment could become a brand advocate who encourages others to engage with the service firm (p. 61).

While Bitner’s foundational research focuses on physical features, Rosenbaum and Massiah (2011) highlight the importance of social interactions within the servicescape. They expand the framework to include social, socially symbolic, and natural environmental dimensions. The social dimension encompasses all the possible interactions between a customer and employee (Rosenbaum & Montoya, 2007). The socially symbolic includes tangible signs that members of a particular group are welcome within the servicescape, and will find people like themselves in that space (Rosenbaum, 2005). The natural dimension refers to being away, fascination, and compatibility stimuli, all of which may be restorative in nature, thus encouraging approach behaviours (p. 480). In addition to Rosebaum’s expansion of the servicescape dimensions, Pantouvakis (2010) highlights the importance of differentiating service quality from customer satisfaction, and notes the influence of servicescape on service quality is significant and has a direct effect on customer satisfaction (p. 367). This is especially important when evaluating the service quality on a university campus where servicescapes are numerous and varied.

University Career Centre and Recruiting Servicescape

A university should be considered an elaborate servicescape (Bitner, 1992, p. 59) because recruiting activities take place both inside the career centre, and in other campus locations. There are both physical and interactive dimensions to each recruiting element. Since the economic downturn of 2008 university career centres have expanded their traditional functions of resume writing and career fairs to include partnerships with employers and stronger collaborations with campus groups (Rey & Cruzvergara, 2014). Corporate recruiting strategies often involve recruiting diverse majors, and Bitner (1990) highlights “the need for coordination among the functional areas within the service firm” (p. 79). This is the primary role of the employer relations
professional; coordinating across campus on behalf of the company recruiting. The employer relations professional is often the provider of service; however, each activity presents a new servicescape, and thus potential to influence the recruiter’s overall satisfaction.

Parasuraman, Ziemthaml, and Berry (1988) developed the five-dimension SERVQUAL model to measure the gap between respondents’ expectation of service quality and perception of service quality. SERVQUAL has been widely used in academics to measure service quality in a higher education setting (Tan & Kek, 2004; Engelland, Workman, & Singh, 2000; Aldridge & Rowley, 1998). The five dimensions are: tangibles (i.e., physical facilities, equipment, and the appearance of personnel), reliability (i.e., ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), responsiveness (i.e., willingness to help customers and provide prompt service), assurance (i.e., knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence), and empathy (i.e., caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers).

Service-related research in the higher education setting is limited to student satisfaction with factors such as their education experience (Douglas, McClelland, & Davies, 2008; O’Neill & Palmer, 2004), facilities (Farrell, 2014; Kärnä & Julin, 2015), and dining services (Joung, Choi, & Wang, 2016; Kwun, Ellyn, & Choi, 2013). Douglas, McClelland, and Davies (2008) develop a framework for measuring overall student satisfaction with their higher education experience, finding that responsiveness, communication, and access are the most important factors regarding perceived service quality. Similarly, O’Neill and Palmer (2004) utilize importance-performance analysis (IPA) to report on students’ perception of service quality in higher education and the continuous quality improvement process. Farrell (2014) used the dimensions of the servicescape to determine elements that most influenced the campus experience of students and staff. Elements related to facilities, such as functionality of academic and administrative spaces, as well as travel-ways were recurring themes in the analysis. Kärnä and Julin (2015) also found that comfortable learning environment, public spaces, and campus accessibility influenced overall student satisfaction with campus facilities, while staff satisfaction with campus facilities was influenced by quality of laboratory and teaching facilities. Regarding campus dining, Kwun, Ellyn, and Choi (2013) found that word-of-mouth communication from satisfied students is essential for the success of university dining, and factors like value, food quality, variety, and facilities influence customer satisfaction. Similar research from Joung, Choi, and Wang (2016) found that perceived quality and perceived value of campus food service had significant effects on customer satisfaction. Each of these studies focuses on different aspects of service and customer satisfaction within higher education; however, there is no research for service quality and customer satisfaction of university career centre services on campus.

Methodology

This study conducts an importance-performance analysis (IPA) to determine what attributes are critical for on campus recruiting. Introduced by Martilla and James in 1977, the IPA is used to evaluate the importance and performance of measures to identify attributes where improvement is necessary because the attributes are rated important, but the performance is rated low. Further, IPA also identifies attributes rated low importance, making performance irrelevant in these areas (Martilla & James, 1977). IPA is particularly useful in a service-based study, because the results are easier to understand for non-academic management personnel (p. 77) than other methods of analysis. IPA results are illustrated with a four-quadrant grid, Figure 1 below.
This method has been widely used in hospitality research regarding service quality and consumer satisfaction (M. Joseph & B. Joseph, 1977; Johnston, 1995; Lai & Hitchcock, 2015; Oh, 2001; Wong, Hideki, & George, 2011; Silva & Fernandes, 2011). The significance and reliability of IPA has been successfully tested in higher education research (O’Neill & Palmer, 2004). Thus, in order to understand corporate recruiters’ perceptions of the campus recruiting experience, the IPA is considered an appropriate research method for this study.

**Survey Design**

The survey was designed using the primary attributes of on campus recruiting activities available to companies on a southeast university campus. Specifically, there were nine attributes which were addressed in this study: career centre employer relations professional, attending career fair, classroom visits, student organization meetings, hosting information sessions, tabling, interview sessions, meeting with faculty, and sponsorship opportunities. These nine attributes were selected because they were considered to be the industry standard by the National Association of Colleges and Employers. Further, web analysis of career centres at institutions of similar size in the Southeastern Conference shows utilization of the same attributes for on campus recruiting activities (University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Tennessee, University of South Carolina, and University of Mississippi). Items regarding the employer relations professional were adapted from the SERVQUAL instrument. The recruiters were asked to rate the importance of the attributes by utilizing a five Likert point-scale from 1 “Not at all important” to 5 “Extremely important”. In terms of the performance of recruiting experience, the respondents were asked to rate the nine attributes of campus recruiting from 1 “Very poor” to 5 “Excellent”. Each attribute also had items related to that attribute which respondents were asked to rate. Regarding overall satisfaction with their on campus recruiting experience, recruiters were asked to rate the attributes from “Extremely dissatisfied” to “Extremely satisfied”. At the
beginning of the survey, recruiters were asked which general on campus recruiting activities they had participated in, and were only able to rate the categories they selected. Finally, respondents were asked a series of hospitality questions related to their economic impact on the university community.

Data Collection and Sampling

The data were collected at a southeast university from June of 2018 through October of 2018. Corporate recruiters were asked to complete a survey via email on the Qualtrics platform that included the questions regarding important attributes of campus recruiting and the performance of their recruiting experience with the university. A total of 124 surveys were collected, with two removed for incomplete responses.

The southeast university career centre was engaged with more than 500 companies on their online platform, Handshake. Each company listed their recruiters with contact information on the Handshake profile page. Additionally, more than 400 recruiters attended the fall 2018 career fairs on the southeast university campus. The recruiters listed in Handshake and the recruiters registered for the fair were combined to remove duplicates, and then emailed a request to complete the survey. There were 908 unique email addresses, which resulted in an 11% response rate.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The sample consists of 124 respondents, with “college recruiter” being the most frequently occurring job title, and 39% having more than five years’ experience in campus recruiting. A majority of respondents, at 85.5%, are “frequently”, “usually”, or “always” recruiting for entry level positions, and 55.2% for internships. The engineering/technical career fair was the highest attended at 47.4%, which similarly reflects the 42% of respondents who reported engineering as the industry most aligned with their company. The 26% of respondents that choose “other, please specify” for company industry, and most frequently reported areas related to commerce including banking, operations management, sales, marketing, and real estate when the recruiters specified their response in the “other” category. Alabama was the most represented state, with 29 respondents, followed by Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, and a three-way-tie between Pennsylvania, Mississippi, and the District of Columbia to round out the Top 5 states of geographic location.

Regarding the travel arrangements of on campus recruiting, the majority of respondents stayed in a hotel, with 84.05% staying two nights or fewer. Only 19 respondents said they took a flight to get to the university; however, 15 respondents said they would visit the campus more often if there was a direct commercial flight into the university city. Most recruiters spent $50 or less per day on dining.

IPA Matrix and Attribute Ratings

Overall, the means for the nine attributes are above 4.0 for performance, and above 3.5 for importance, which placed all the data points in the upper right corner of the Importance-Performance Matrix. Table 1 shows the mean scores of importance and performance for each attribute. Figure 2 indicates the results based upon IPA analysis. Table 1 also shows the most important attributes are meeting with faculty, the employer relations professional, student organization meetings, and interview sessions. The least important attribute was sponsorship opportunities. However, the highest performance ratings were sponsorship opportunities, interview sessions, tabling, and the employer relations professional. The lowest performance ratings were classroom visits and student organization meetings.
The attribute of “meeting with faculty” was rated the most important on average ($M = 4.45$), indicating that recruiters valued faculty who would promote the recruiter’s company to students.

Table 1
Importance-Performance Ratings for University Career Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories/attributes/variables</th>
<th>Importance Mean</th>
<th>Importance SD</th>
<th>Performance Mean</th>
<th>Performance SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Employer relations on campus recruiting visits, including campus tour, scheduling, recruiting resources, and career center staff’s professionalism</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Career fair experience and activities, including registration, table positions, logistic arrangement, and students’ connections</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Classroom visits, including scheduling, student population, and class setups</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attending student organization meetings, including scheduling, accessibility, allocated time for presentations, and student organization affiliation</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hosting information sessions, including scheduling, location, and time slots</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tabling, including ease of requesting, locations, scheduling, audience, and marketing effects</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Hosting interview sessions, including ease of requesting, interview space, conjunction with career fair, and scheduling</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Meeting with faculty, including ease of scheduling, faculty research areas, faculty’s willingness of promoting companies to students</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sponsorship opportunities, including information availability, sponsor events, donation, and/or in-kind donation</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Importance-Performance Matrix for on campus recruiting attributes.

Recruiters’ Satisfaction Regarding Their Recruiting Experience on Campus

Table 2 shows recruiters have an overwhelmingly positive opinion of the university and the recruiting opportunities, with not a single “strongly disagree” response, and only one “somewhat disagree”. Overall, the
recruiters had high satisfaction based upon the overall impression of the school \((M = 4.83)\), followed by the school was a favourable place to recruit talents \((M = 4.77)\) and overall recruiting experience \((M = 4.72)\) (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school is a favourable place to recruit talents.</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school has a well-earned reputation of quality of recruiting.</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a good impression about the school.</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The recruiting experience at this school is effective.</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my recruiting experience at this school.</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussions

Campus career centres will have the ability to allocate resources more efficiently when supporting existing employer relationships, and increase their attractiveness for developing new relationships with companies. The employer relations professional is responsible for building relationships and creating awareness among corporate and community organizations with regard to the benefits of hiring university students and graduates, and of the career centre services. Employer relations professionals strategically cultivate and strengthen corporate relations with and between employers, students, alumni, and faculty to maximise student employment, and generate increased monetary and non-monetary support for the career centre and the university.

Importance-performance analysis (IPA) is easily understandable method that can help service providers identify which attributes could be improved to increase customer satisfaction. Through conducting an IPA on university career centre attributes, meeting with faculty, utilizing employer relations professional, student organization meetings, and conducting on campus interviews, were identified as the most important factors for corporate recruiters. This information is especially valuable to university career centres as they consider strategy for increased corporate engagement. Sponsorship opportunities and tabling are revealed in the “potential overkill” quadrant, while interview sessions and the employer relations professional fall into the “keep up the good work” quadrant. This allows the career centre staff to concentrate on the side of the grid where improvement is needed, and prioritize those improvements based on how high the attributes are scored for importance.

This study indicates faculty plays a major role in overall satisfaction with on campus recruiting. Faculty members have a high degree of authenticity, and have the ability to influence students as they navigate their career development. Often, faculty members are former industry professionals, and university career services would benefit from developing partnerships with those faculty members. Further, faculty members could receive routine communication from career services about the companies seeking to recruit on campus. Familiarization would allow all faculty members to feel comfortable with, and continue, promoting companies to students. In addition, some faculty members allocate full class times for company visits; however, other faculty, especially in the more technical fields of study, will only allow 5-15 minutes for company classroom visits. Faculty and career services will need to work together to determine the appropriate parameters for classroom presentations and be proactive about course scheduling to allow time for company classroom visits. Further, the employer relations professional should ensure classroom visits are in sections consisting primarily of juniors and seniors unless the company states otherwise.
As the employer relations professional often has the most interaction with corporate recruiters, high ratings in customer service are essential. Recruiters are often navigating the campus landscape as an outsider, and typically recruit on multiple campuses. For the employer relations professional, making information easily accessible and sharing knowledge without the recruiter having to follow up is paramount in attracting recruiters to campus and maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction. The low rating on including a campus tour in on campus recruiting activities indicates respondents want to spend all their time actually recruiting, and that familiarization with campus is low priority. From a customer satisfaction perspective, university career services are performing exceptionally well. Perception of university career services, and the institution overall, could be significantly affected by the employer relations professional. Data gathered in this study provide great insight into the needs of recruiters, and the recruiting activities recruiters consider important. The employer relations professional should use that data to determine strategy for corporate engagement.

University career services should evaluate the student organization meeting scheduling process and ensure recruiters can easily find the student organization listing. Faculty advisors, career services professionals, and students within the group all engage in scheduling company presentations for the meetings. Additionally, since recruiters may sometimes incur difficulties in finding information about student organizations, a list of student organizations and relevant information can be provided at career services in order to enhance the interactions among student organizations and corporate recruiters.

Career fair represents one of the most competitive times of the recruiting season to schedule interview space, presumably because companies want to make the most of the time and resources. However, the results of this study showed that there was still a need for improvement in space availability. Career fairs offer the highest engagement in sheer volume of students. Corporate recruiters want to easily connect with qualified students who are knowledgeable about the company. University career services need to closely examine the servicescape model because career fair covers all the dimensions and those dimensions greatly impact service quality and overall recruiter satisfaction. The servicescape dimension of space layout/function, which would include table placement, is especially important to recruiters. Perhaps the most significant surprise of this study is that career fair is not ranked higher in terms of overall importance. This seems to indicate that career fairs are valued for the high touch opportunities; however, connecting with the right students is more difficult. Recruiters prefer to engage with a smaller number of students who meet their selection criteria, with more occasions for personal connection.

Limitations

This study surveyed respondents who were already engaged with the university career services, even if only superficially. Survey responses could be skewed positive because those who have disengaged would not have been included in the sample. Also, the survey did not ask respondents to list other on campus recruiting activities they consider important that were not already included on the survey. Finally, respondents were asked to rate each attribute for importance at the beginning of the survey. However, the responses to importance for that question differ slightly from the averaged responses to importance on each attribute section. Further study, with an extended data collection window and revised questions, could provide additional input into the factors recruiters consider most important when choosing to engage with a university.

While this study focuses on recruiters’ evaluative criteria for campus recruiting, the methodology could also be applied on other career services strategy. For example, an examination utilizing importance-performance
analysis, where importance is major density, that is the number of students in a certain major, and performance is career outcome rate, would have practical use. Career services professionals could use the data to guide strategy for targeting companies for on campus recruiting based on study areas that have a high number of students but low career outcome rate. A comprehensive evaluation of the services provided by career centres and university administrators not only can further engage with college recruiters and increase employment rate, but also support the universities’ strategic planning in a long term.

Conclusion

This study utilizes the servicescape, SERVQUAL, and SERVPERF attributes, which have been widely used in measuring service quality in many different industries, to recognize important factors that influence companies’ recruiters’ campus experience. Utilizing the IPA matrices can closely examine the on-campus recruiting activities related to each attribute provides insight that is useful for strategic planning of resources at university. In order to attract corporate recruiters, university career services should focus on improving service quality, providing necessary resources, and facilitating both recruiters and students’ needs. University administrators could utilize the nine attributes developed in this study to examine their corporate recruiters’ experience and satisfaction.

References


