



**PERCEIVED QUALITY AND VALUE AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN STUDENT
EXPECTATIONS, TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE, AND SATISFACTION
ON ONLINE INTERACTION IN A CHINESE UNIVERSITY**

By

WANG XIAOZHUAN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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Philosophy**

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The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly boosted the enrolment rate of online courses, with an increasing number of higher education institutions actively endorsing online learning through diverse digital platforms. Given the deteriorating natural environment and the influence of various unstable factors, online learning remains a vital teaching method for higher education institutions to navigate future unpredictable events. Despite the upward trend in online course enrolment both before and during the pandemic, the persistently low retention rate of such courses continues to pose a significant challenge, impeding the widespread promotion and development of online learning initiatives.

This study proposes an International Student Satisfaction Index Model (ISSM) on the interaction of online international courses in Chinese universities, aiming to investigate the potential factors that affect international students'

online learning interaction. The model proposed in this study includes four antecedent variables, one target variable, and one outcome variable. This study is a quantitative research employing a survey research method. A pilot study was conducted on 50 international students from Zhejiang University of Science and Technology, China, to assess the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.705 to 0.969, indicating acceptable internal consistency. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a research sample of 320 international students enrolled in online courses. The collected empirical data were analysed using SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 21.0 software packages.

The research results show that focusing on student satisfaction with online course interaction is conducive to improving the loyalty and retention rate of students ($\beta=.147$, $p<.05$). The key to improving international student satisfaction with online courses is to improve the overall perceived quality of international students' interaction with online courses ($\beta=.302$, $p<0.05$). Students' interaction expectations before participating in online courses ($\beta=.185$, $p<.05$), the perceived value after participating in online courses ($\beta=.2$, $p<.05$), and online technology performance ($\beta=.182$, $p<.05$) are also factors that cannot be ignored when improving student satisfaction. The mediation analysis results validate the mediating roles of perceived quality and perceived value. In addition, students' gender and students' major do not affect student satisfaction with online courses.

To a certain extent, this study fills in the gaps in the research field of the online learning student satisfaction index model and provides a new research perspective. In addition to advancing the development of related literature in this field, this study also expands the empirical research scope of the online course student satisfaction index model. The results of this study are conducive to promoting the reform of online international courses in the field of higher education in China and improving the online retention rate of international students.

Keywords: Student expectations, Perceived Quality, Perceived Value, Technology Performance, Student Satisfaction

SDG: Goal 4; Quality Education

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KUALITI DAN NILAI SEBAGAI PENGANTARA ANTARA JANGKAAN
PELAJAR, PRESTASI TEKNIKAL, DAN KEPUASAN DALAM INTERAKSI
DALAM TALIAN DI UNIVERSITI CHINA**

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Pandemik COVID-19 telah secara ketara meningkatkan kadar pendaftaran kursus dalam talian, dengan jumlah institusi pengajian tinggi yang semakin meningkat menyokong pembelajaran dalam talian melalui pelbagai platform digital. Mengambil kira persekitaran semula jadi yang semakin teruk dan pengaruh pelbagai faktor yang tidak stabil, pembelajaran dalam talian tetap menjadi kaedah pengajaran penting bagi institusi pengajian tinggi untuk mengendalikan peristiwa masa depan yang tidak dapat diramalkan. Walaupun terdapat peningkatan dalam kadar pendaftaran kursus dalam talian sebelum dan semasa pandemik, kadar pemeliharaan kursus tersebut yang masih rendah terus menjadi cabaran yang signifikan, menghalang promosi dan pembangunan inisiatif pembelajaran dalam talian secara meluas.

Kajian ini mencadangkan Model Indeks Kepuasan Pelajar Antarabangsa (ISSM) mengenai interaksi kursus antarabangsa dalam talian di universiti-

universiti China, dengan tujuan untuk menyiasat faktor-faktor yang berpotensi mempengaruhi interaksi pembelajaran dalam talian pelajar antarabangsa. Model yang dicadangkan dalam kajian ini merangkumi empat pembolehubah pendahulu, satu pembolehubah sasaran, dan satu pembolehubah hasil. Kajian ini adalah kajian kuantitatif yang menggunakan kaedah penyelidikan tinjauan. Satu kajian perintis telah dijalankan ke atas 50 pelajar antarabangsa dari Universiti Sains dan Teknologi Zhejiang, China, untuk menilai kebolehpercayaan instrumen. Nilai alpha Cronbach berkisar dari 0.705 hingga 0.969, menunjukkan konsistensi dalaman yang diterima. Teknik persampelan rawak bertingkat digunakan untuk memilih sampel kajian sebanyak 320 pelajar antarabangsa yang mendaftar dalam kursus dalam talian. Data empirik yang dikumpulkan dianalisis menggunakan perisian SPSS 26.0 dan AMOS 21.0. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa tumpuan kepada kepuasan pelajar dengan interaksi kursus dalam talian membantu meningkatkan kesetiaan dan kadar pemeliharaan pelajar ($\beta=.147$, $p<.05$). Kunci untuk meningkatkan kepuasan pelajar antarabangsa dengan kursus dalam talian adalah untuk meningkatkan kualiti persepsi keseluruhan pelajar antarabangsa terhadap interaksi dengan kursus dalam talian ($\beta=.302$, $p<.05$). Jangkaan interaksi pelajar sebelum mengambil bahagian dalam kursus dalam talian ($\beta=.185$, $p<.05$), nilai yang dirasakan selepas mengambil bahagian dalam kursus dalam talian ($\beta=.2$, $p<.05$), dan prestasi teknikal dalam talian ($\beta=.182$, $p<.05$) juga merupakan faktor yang tidak boleh diabaikan dalam meningkatkan kepuasan pelajar. Keputusan analisis mediasi mengesahkan peranan mediasi kualiti dan nilai yang dirasakan. Selain itu, jantina pelajar dan jurusan pelajar tidak mempengaruhi kepuasan pelajar terhadap kursus dalam talian.

Secara khusus, kajian ini mengisi kekosongan dalam bidang penyelidikan model indeks kepuasan pelajar dalam pembelajaran dalam talian dan memberikan perspektif penyelidikan baru. Selain memajukan pembangunan literatur berkaitan dalam bidang ini, kajian ini juga meluaskan ruang lingkup kajian empirik model indeks kepuasan pelajar kursus dalam talian. Keputusan kajian ini membantu dalam mempromosikan reformasi kursus antarabangsa dalam talian dalam bidang pengajian tinggi di China dan meningkatkan kadar pemeliharaan dalam talian pelajar antarabangsa.

Kata kunci: Jangkaan Pelajar, Kualiti Persepsi, Nilai Persepsi, Prestasi Teknikal, Kepuasan Pelajar

SDG: MATLAMAT 4; Pendidikan Berkualiti

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACSI	American Customer Satisfaction Index
CI	Confidence Interval
CSI	Customer Satisfaction Index
DV	Dependent Variable
ECSI	European Customer Satisfaction Index
ECT	Expectation Confirmation Theory
F2F	Face-to-Face
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
ISSM	International Student Satisfaction Index Model
IV	Independent Variable
KMO	Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin
PEOU	Perceived Ease of Use
PQ	Perceived Quality
PU	Perceived Usefulness
PV	Perceived Value
SCI	Student-Content Interaction
SCSB	Swedish Customer Loyalty Barometer
SE	Student Expectations
SIE	Standard Indirect Effect
SII	Student-Interface Interaction
SL	Student Loyalty
SS	Student Satisfaction
SSI	Student-Student Interaction

SSM	Student Satisfaction Model
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TP	Technical Performance
TSI	Teacher-Student Interaction



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of higher education internationalisation has gained remarkable traction on a global scale, which has sparked significant scholarly interest, particularly in the realm of international student satisfaction (Feifei, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced significant impediments to the process of internationalising higher education, particularly manifesting in disruptions to the customary enrollment procedures for international students in the short term. As a consequence, higher education institutions globally were compelled to transition all academic offerings to online platforms in the spring of 2020, in response to the imperative of sustaining educational operations amidst the epidemic (Bao, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020). This paradigm shift towards online learning emerged as an indispensable strategy for ensuring the continuity of educational activities within colleges and universities during the pandemic (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022).

The advantages of online courses in terms of personalisation, flexibility, and convenience have been widely acknowledged (Danchikov et al., 2021; Muljana and Luo, 2019), prompting most Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to integrate fully online courses into their overall university curriculum, encouraging student participation (Abuhassna et al., 2020). Research by Ali (2020) has underscored the necessity of online learning in adapting to unforeseeable circumstances in teaching, a sentiment echoed by students

who express a willingness to continue online studies even post-pandemic (Danchikov et al., 2021). However, the challenge of low student retention rates in online courses remains a significant concern for educators (Muljana and Luo, 2019), placing pressure on online education programs to enhance student retention and satisfaction.

Recognising the pivotal role of students' satisfaction in evaluating online course quality (Alqurashi, 2019), researchers advocated for an in-depth analysis of students' satisfaction with e-learning to discern its impact on academic achievement (Gopal et al., 2021). Prior research has underscored interaction as a critical factor influencing student satisfaction in online learning, encompassing various modalities that significantly enhance the usability and efficacy of online education (Baber, 2020; Muzammil et al., 2020). The satisfaction of online international students is closely associated with their retention rates (He et al., 2014). By developing satisfaction models, educational institutions can identify the significant factors influencing student retention and implement measures to enhance student satisfaction, thereby increasing student retention rates. Furthermore, through the establishment of satisfaction models for online international students, educational institutions can continuously enhance educational quality, attract a larger pool of international students, and consequently bolster their international competitiveness.

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, global Higher Education (HE) has witnessed a profound internationalisation trend, exemplified by a surge in international student mobility. By 2017, the worldwide count of international students had surpassed 5.3 million, indicating a significant rise (UNESCO, 2019). However, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic precipitated a paradigm shift in HE, compelling institutions globally to transition to online teaching modalities (Bao, 2020). By June 26, 2020, approximately half of the world's nations had suspended traditional offline courses, impacting more than half of all enrolled students (UNESCO, 2020). Consequently, online education emerged as a vital means of ensuring continuity in teaching during the pandemic.

Within China's HE landscape, the COVID-19 crisis prompted a widespread adoption of online learning, with 1,454 universities launching spring online courses during the peak of the pandemic between January and April 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020). COVID-19 has made online learning likely to become one of the normal learning modes in future education (Chung et al., 2020; Simamora, 2020), and this large-scale and long-term online teaching practice is also considered a new exploration in the history of global HE (Jiang et al., 2021).

Concurrently, the evolving educational theory has spurred increased interest in leveraging Internet technology for educational purposes. Initiatives such as the State Council of China's emphasis on the pivotal role of educational

information in integrating information technology and education (Ministry of Education, 2017), and the Ministry of Education's vision of constructing a comprehensive platform for "Internet + Education" by 2022 (Ministry of Education, 2018), underscore the growing importance of digital technologies in education.

On the premise of ensuring the quality of teaching in colleges and universities, colleges and universities in China are encouraged to carry out online learning and online classroom teaching (Chen & Cao, 2020). The Ministry of Education of China pointed out in the *Key Points of Education Informatisation Work 2017* that one of the important tasks of education informatisation work is to deepen the development and application of digital educational resources, encourage and strongly support domestic undergraduate colleges and universities to build high-quality online courses, and further develop many national-level quality courses (Ministry of Education, 2017). Online course learning is no longer just a supplement to traditional Face-to-Face (F2F) teaching but has gradually developed into a mainstream course learning mode. Since 2017, the Ministry of Education has continuously launched national high-quality online open courses and national virtual simulation experimental teaching projects. Based on the overall consideration of previous construction, the Ministry of Education of China encourages HEIs to launch English international platforms and curriculum resources that represent Chinese universities' quality and international standards (Wu, 2020).

Online education is not the dominant teaching mode in China; instead, it serves as a supplement to traditional teaching. Fully online courses are not common in Chinese HE, and it was not until the outbreak of COVID-19 that Chinese HEIs were forced to start full-scale online education practices (Li & Jhang, 2020). The online teaching practice under the pressure of the epidemic has greatly accelerated the application of Internet educational technology in China (Wu & Li, 2020). On April 10, 2020, the Chinese Ministry of Education held a video conference on the construction of an international platform for online teaching in HEIs. The meeting pointed out that online practical teaching during the epidemic was the first exploration in the history of world higher education. The Chinese Ministry of Education has been committed to actively discussing the integration of online and offline education in the post-epidemic era, promoting the concept change and model innovation of studying abroad in China under the conditions of "Internet +", encouraging HEIs in China to make full use of online education mode to attract high-quality international students, innovating training models, strengthening brand online curriculum construction, realising the sharing of high-quality course resources, and seizing the territory of online education (Ministry of Education, 2021).

Early research has underscored the significant advantages and potential development of online courses, particularly highlighting scholars' attention to learners' needs and the evolving trend of online education (Muljana & Luo, 2019). Within the realm of Higher Education (HE), recent scholarly discourse has increasingly concentrated on evaluating the quality and satisfaction of students with online courses (Abdous, 2010). Notably, scholars such as Pham

et al. (2019) and Dondi et al. (2006) have emphasised the pivotal role of student satisfaction in assessing the quality of e-services, thus advocating for its effective evaluation to enhance the efficiency of online courses. Furthermore, the importance of student satisfaction extends to its correlation with students' willingness to persist in learning (He et al., 2014; Rajeh et al., 2021). Moreover, interaction emerges as a critical factor in improving the effectiveness of online teaching, with studies indicating a significant relationship between interaction and students' satisfaction (Kuo et al., 2014; Ngo & Ngadiman, 2021; Ossiannilsson et al., 2015; Zhao et al., 2005). Consequently, investigating the satisfaction of online course interaction holds substantial significance for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of online education.

Furthermore, the internationalisation level of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) serves as a crucial indicator of a country's HE quality (Guo et al., 2018). While the precise definition of HEIs internationalisation remains debatable, it is widely acknowledged that curriculum internationalisation constitutes a key component (Guo et al., 2018). The internationalisation of curriculum directly reflects the educational quality and level of HEIs, making it a vital indicator for their assessment. To enhance the internationalisation level of online courses in HEIs, it is imperative to continually measure and ensure the satisfaction of key stakeholders, particularly international students, with the courses and their willingness to engage with them. Consequently, the establishment of a Student Satisfaction Model (SSM) for evaluating the interaction of online international courses holds promise for promoting the reform of online courses, enhancing

the satisfaction and loyalty of international students, and facilitating Chinese universities' efforts to attract and retain international students.

1.2 Problem Statement

Previous research has shown that online learning is more attractive and effective than offline learning in improving the knowledge and skill levels of undergraduates (Pei & Wu, 2019). Online courses are closely related to the development of network technology, which is not limited by time and space, and has wide application prospects (Hodges et al., 2020; Simamora et al., 2020). The research problem primarily involves the low retention rates in online courses and three existing research gaps in the relevant literature.

First, despite the great development potential and advantages of online courses, and the considerable popularity and high attention in HE, some studies have shown that compared with traditional F2F courses, the retention rate of students participating in online courses is relatively lower (Chung et al. 2020; Muljana and Luo, 2019; Tight, 2020). The retention rate of students taking online courses is one of the key issues that need attention in the development of online education (Heyman, 2010). The low retention rate of students taking online courses has long been considered a great challenge for educators in Chinese universities (Xu & Xu, 2019). Online course retention rates are closely related to students' satisfaction (He et al., 2014).

In addition, although the number of international students enrolled in Chinese universities has increased year by year, the international education service quality and overall competitiveness of Chinese universities still need to be improved (Lin et al., 2020; Yang & Welch, 2012). To attract and retain domestic and international students, HEIs around the world are constantly striving to improve the satisfaction of students (Kanwar & Sanjeeva, 2022). High student satisfaction with educational services is considered an important factor that can help HEIs stand out from the fierce competition (McLeay et al., 2017). According to the research of Lin et al. (2020), HE is seen as a commercial service industry, and whether it can meet customer needs has also become a problem of high concern (Feifei, 2021). International students are considered to be the main customer group of online courses in HEIs, and whether they can meet their learning requirements is a research point worthy of high attention. Chinese colleges and universities are expecting to play a greater role in the international education market, so the development of an online course satisfaction model for international students is meaningful.

Finally, there are still obvious theoretical gaps, practice gaps, and empirical gaps in the related literature on the development of international students' satisfaction with online courses. A clear theoretical gap is that previous theories on the student satisfaction model tend to focus primarily on educational service management (Abu-Rumman & Qawasmeh, 2022; Kuo et al., 2014; Temizer & Turkyilmaz, 2012), and it does not encompass the new paradigm of online course research (Zhang et al., 2008). The practice gap is that while research on interactions predicting the satisfaction of students has

matured, little practical research has focused on students' satisfaction ratings of online course interactions (Ngo & Ngadiman, 2021; Wong & Chapman, 2023). The empirical gap is that most of the research on students' satisfaction with online learning is based on empirical research on domestic students, and these research results are not necessarily suitable for international students (Kanwar & Sanjeeva, 2022). Rajabalee et al. (2020) also mentioned that the literature on studying the impact of students' satisfaction during COVID-19 is not sufficient.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to develop an International Student Satisfaction Index Model (ISSM) for investigating the potential factors affecting international student satisfaction with online course interaction. To further investigate the relationships between Student Expectations (SE), Perceived Quality (PQ), Perceived Value (PV), Technological Performance (TP), and Student Satisfaction (SS) within the developed ISSM model, this study examines the mediating role of perceived quality and perceived value on student satisfaction.

Based on the aforementioned general research objectives, this study proposes the following four specific objectives:

1. To investigate the relationships among four antecedent variables (SE, PQ, PV, and TP), one target variable (SS), and one outcome variable (SL) within the developed ISSM model.

2. To examine whether there are statistically significant differences among students of different genders and majors.
3. To investigate the role of Perceived Quality (PQ) as a mediator for international student satisfaction with online course interaction.
4. To investigate the role of Perceived Value (PV) as a mediator for international student satisfaction with online course interaction.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the above research objectives, the following five issues need to be addressed in the process of developing an ISSM for online course interaction:

1. Is there a direct positive effect between the four antecedent variables (SE, PQ, PV, and TP) and the target variable (SS)?
2. Is there a direct positive effect between the target variable (SS) and the outcome variable (SL)?
3. Is there a direct positive effect among the four antecedent variables (SE, PQ, PV, and TP)?
4. Do the two variables (SG and SM) have a significant effect on each latent variable?
5. How do two mediators (PQ and PV) mediate the relationship between two antecedent variables (SE and TP) and the target variable (SS)?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

This study aims to develop an ISSM for international students in terms of online course interaction. Based on the discussion of the research objectives, referring to the ACSI model, ECSI model, and TAM, the following 15 research hypotheses are proposed.

Objective 1

H1: There is a direct and positive relationship between student expectations and student satisfaction.

H2: There is a direct and positive relationship between student expectations and perceived quality.

H3: There is a direct and positive relationship between student expectations and perceived value.

H4: There is a direct and positive relationship between perceived quality and perceived value.

H5: There is a direct and positive relationship between perceived quality and student satisfaction.

H6: There is a direct and positive relationship between perceived value and student satisfaction.

H7: There is a direct and positive relationship between student satisfaction and student loyalty.

H8: There is a direct and positive relationship between technical performance and perceived quality.

H9: There is a direct and positive relationship between technical performance and student satisfaction.

Objective 2

H10: Student gender has a significant effect on each latent variable.

H11: Student major has a significant effect on each latent variable.

Objective 3

H12: Perceived quality mediates the relationship of student expectations on student satisfaction with online course interaction.

H13: Perceived quality mediates the relationship of technical performance on student satisfaction with online course interaction.

Objective 4

H14: Perceived value mediates the relationship of student expectations on student satisfaction with online course interaction.

H15: Perceived value mediates the relationship of perceived quality on student satisfaction with online course interaction.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The model (ISSM) developed in this study is significant in the following three aspects.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The literature review section of this study elaborates on online interaction, students' satisfaction, and other related literature, and provides a theoretical reference for exploring various studies that may affect students' satisfaction with online course interaction. Based on ACSI, ECSI, and TAM, and referring to the previous literature research on customer satisfaction and student satisfaction, this study constructs the ISSM conceptual model and analyses it through empirical data. The variable relationship hypotheses proposed in ISSM are verified. To a certain extent, this model fills the theoretical gap (Abu-Rumman & Qawasmeh, 2022; Kuo et al., 2014; Temizer & Turkyilmaz, 2012) existing in previous studies and enriches and develops relevant theoretical studies on online international student satisfaction.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

This study focuses on online teaching interaction. Based on the participation of international students in online course practice during COVID-19, a more realistic online course Interaction Student Satisfaction Index Model (ISSM) is developed, which has important practical significance. The development of this

model also provides online course developers and educators with an online course problem diagnosis perspective (Ngo & Ngadiman, 2021; Wong & Chapman, 2023), which promotes the improvement of online course quality, online course retention rate, and students' willingness to continue learning. Further, the development of this model also provides a practical basis for the improvement of the internationalisation level of online courses in HEIs.

1.6.3 Significance of Research Innovation

Overall, this study may fill theoretical gaps, practical gaps, and empirical gaps in the existing literature on student satisfaction models research on online international course interactions in the internationalisation of HE. Narrowing these gaps is more likely to promote the reform of online course teaching and interactive methods, improve the quality and internationalisation level of online international courses, and then help to enhance China's competitiveness in international education. The construction and empirical research of this model (ISSM) is based on the practice of large-scale online courses during COVID-19, taking international students in HEIs as the research object, which is innovative not only in Chinese universities but also in global HEIs.

1.7 Study Limitations

This study was limited to the collection of data from 320 international students from a university in Zhejiang Province, China due to time issues. The extent to which data analysis results and satisfaction models can be extended to other

colleges and universities is still limited. The online courses for international students during the pandemic lasted nearly two years, and the data during this period may differ from the data during the non-pandemic period. Students' perceptions of online course interaction can change as online courses continue to extend, which cannot be quantified in online survey tools.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The focus of this research is online course interaction, and the research object is 320 international students at a university in Zhejiang Province, China. Due to the impact of the epidemic, these international students were unable to enter China to take F2F courses, and most of them received fully online courses during the COVID-19. The structural variables of the model (ISSM) proposed are TP, SE, PQ, PV, SS, and SL. The language of instruction for the online international courses in this study is English, and the language proficiency of international students is not included in the scope of the survey.

1.9 Definition of Terms

This study focuses on online interaction and proposes an online course interaction satisfaction model suitable for international students in Chinese public universities. The aim is to investigate factors influencing international students' satisfaction with online interaction and their willingness to continue learning. The model comprises six latent variables. The following are definitions regarding online interaction, online courses, student satisfaction models, and the six latent variables.

Online Interaction

Moore and Kearsley (2011) believed that the interaction of distance education refers to the communication between two or more people, which is two-way rather than one-way. In this study, the process of online interaction is the complete process of two-way information interaction. For this study, the four dimensions of online interaction were defined as student–content interaction, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, and student–interface (technology) interaction (Gunesequera et al. 2019; Kumar et al., 2021).

Student Satisfaction Index Model

The model refers to a structural model (Kärnä & Julin, 2015; Lin et al., 2020). In this study, the developed model includes antecedent variables, target variables, and outcome variables.

Student satisfaction (SS)

In this study, student satisfaction refers to students' overall subjective perception and evaluation of online course interaction (Kotler et al., 2014; Xiao & Li, 2021) after comparing their expectations before participating in online learning with the actual perceived learning experience effect.

Student Expectation (SE)

In this study, the concept of SE comes from customer expectation (Voss et al., 2007), which refers to the overall expectation of students on their online interaction ability before participating in online courses (Palulun et al., 2021).

Perceived Quality (PQ)

PQ refers to students' feelings about the quality of education services (Lin et al., 2020). In this study, PQ refers to students' actual subjective perception of the quality of online interaction after participating in online courses.

Perceived Value (PV)

PV refers to the overall assessment of the utility of the product based on perceived total effort and aggregate benefit (Sharma & Klein, 2020). Based on the purpose of this study, the PV is defined as students' overall evaluation of online courses based on their comparison with traditional F2F courses.

Technical Performance (TP)

Based on the purpose of this study, TP was defined as the usefulness of E-learning technologies and the ease of use of online platforms (Li & Li, 2009).

Student Loyalty (SL)

SL is the willingness to actively share college experiences with relatives or friends (Wong & Chapman, 2023). In this study, SL refers to students' recognition of online learning, that is, willingness to actively share their online learning experience with relatives or friends and recommend the online courses they have accepted.

1.10 Overview and Organisation of the Study

With the intensifying competition in the international Higher Education (HE) market and the ongoing rise in popularity of online learning, it becomes imperative to leverage the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) theory models to attract and retain international students (Kärnä & Julin, 2015; Mihanović et al., 2016; Pham et al., 2019; Wong & Chapman, 2023). This entails exploring and developing an international student satisfaction index model on the interaction of online international courses in Chinese universities. Drawing from extensive online course practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, this study concentrates on online course interaction, drawing upon the typical CSI models, culminating in the development of an interaction-oriented international student online course interaction satisfaction model. The research is structured across five chapters, with the overall organisational framework depicted in Figure 1.1:

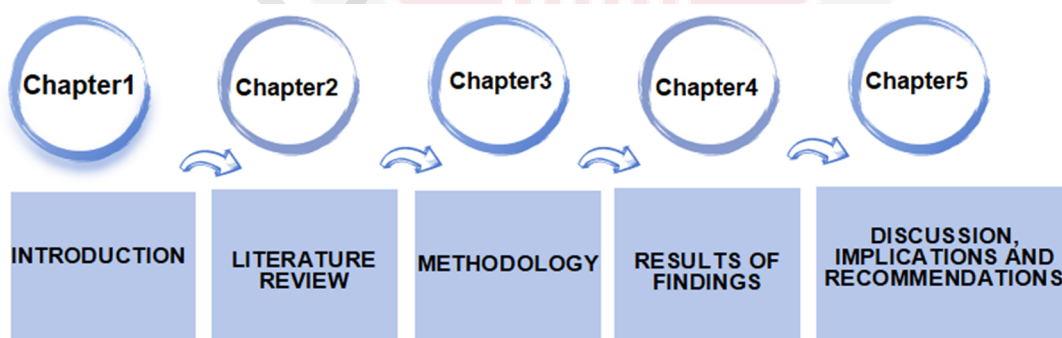


Figure 1.1: Overall Structure of the Study

1.11 Conclusion

In the context of HE internationalisation, this chapter states three problems given the current development status of online courses in China and proposes the research objectives, research hypotheses, research questions, research significance, limitations, and delimitations of the study. It also describes the key definitions and concludes with an overview of the organisation of the study. In conclusion, this chapter makes a clear plan for the following chapter.

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